

WINE RECOMMENDATION



Morgan Winery

2005 Pinot Noir, Tondre's Grapefield (Santa Lucia Highlands)

Dan Lee, owner of [Morgan Vineyards](#), has been dealing with fruit from the Santa Lucia Highlands for as long as almost anyone in Monterey County. A key to making great Pinot Noir in that location, he points out, is the late-afternoon wind that runs down the Salinas Valley from deep-trenched Monterey Bay. By slowing down the ripening cycle, the stiff breezes create a faint herbal note in Pinot Noir. It is this very note that gives Lee's Morgan Vineyards Pinots a "Monterey classic" aroma, meaning they have a distinctive green pea or tobacco/spinach note alongside penetrating cherry flavors.

Still, as delightful as these wines have been, and as commercially successful, Lee's quest to find proper sites for a more Eurocentric-classic (Burgundian) lilt to the fruit has led him to a number of vineyards on the Santa Lucia Highlands bench that really deliver distinctive flavors. His recent releases have included vineyard designates "**12 Clones**" (\$30), one from the acclaimed "[Gary's Vineyard](#)" (\$55), and from his own "Rosella's Vineyard" (\$55).

However, when the four wines are tasted side-by-side, the clear winner is this wine from [Tondre Grapefield](#), a vineyard that has been used to great effect in the last few years by David Bruce and a handful of others.

This wine delivers a startling aroma of ripe, fresh strawberries and has lesser notes of dried herbs and spices (like nutmeg) along with a complexing trace of petroleum. There is brilliant fruit and structure here and a load of flavor. It is one of the best Pinots I have had in years.

Reviewed May 16, 2007 by [Dan Berger](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Morgan Winery](#)

Vineyard: Tondre's Grapefield

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Pinot Noir

Appellation: [Santa Lucia Highlands](#)

Grape: Pinot Noir

Price: \$55.00

THE REVIEWER



Dan Berger

Dan Berger has been reviewing wine for 30 years, always seeking character related to varietal type and regional identity. He has never used numbers to rank wine and doesn't plan to start any time soon. He believes that weight and concentration aren't the only worthy aspects of wine and is especially smitten by cool-climate and food-friendly wines that offer distinctiveness.