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MICHAEL'S INSIDER CONCIERGE – CALIFORNIA WINE APPELLATION SPECIALIST® ONLINE

Hello My Wine Friend,

The warm summer is finally upon us and it is time to think of wines to enjoy outside.

Lately, I have been deeply engrossed in a professional wine course on the Appellations of California. [California Wine Appellation Specialist® Online](#) is by [Master Sommelier David Glancy](#) through his San Francisco Wine School. I highly recommend this course as I am learning a lot!

I am studying each individual California AVA (American Viticultural Area) for its unique soil and climate as it relates to the best quality for the grapes grown. I will be using this valuable information in my upcoming book: **Exploring Wine Regions - California**. In the mean time, I am giving you the inside track of some of the wines I have discovered. These are truly outstanding wines of impressive quality. This I share with you.

- Livermore AVA – Wente Vineyards, Chardonnay
- Russian River Valley AVA – Dusk To Dawn Vineyards, Pinot Noir
- Santa Lucia Highlands AVA – Hahn Estate, Pinot Noir
- Knights Valley AVA – Beringer Vineyards, Cabernet Sauvignon

Sip with me. We have a beautiful summer ahead.

Michael C. Higgins, PhD
Insatiable Traveler and Explorer



Wente Vineyards

Riva Ranch Chardonnay

Livermore AVA -
Located just west of
the San Francisco
Bay Area. This is
not where you
would expect a wine
region. It is though,
the birthplace of
Chardonnay
in California.

Fascinating Fact:
80% of all the
Chardonnay planted
in California can be
traced back to
the Wente Clone.

I am generally not a
Chardonnay drinker;
however, this wine
will make you notice
what is great about

Chardonnay.

This is a rich, full-bodied Chardonnay, with rich pear flavors. It is unusually tropical in the nose and mouth. This Chardonnay is an impressive wine, at a very impressive price (\$13.99).

WenteVineyards.com



**Dusk To Dawn
Vineyards
Pinot Noir**

Russian River
Valley AVA -
Located in northern
Sonoma County,
just south of the
historic little town of
Healdsburg.

The Russian River
Valley is known for
its cool climate to
produce
extraordinary
Pinot Noir. There is
a gap in the coastal
mountain range that
allows the cool
ocean breezes and
fog to flow into the

Russian River Valley to produce an optimal cool environment perfect for Pinot Noir grapes to grow.

This is an excellent Pinot Noir with delicious juicy cherry flavors. There are beautiful cherries and vanilla on the nose with bigger red cherry in the mouth. Rich and elegant, with a hint of the sweetness of caramel.
(\$29.95)

DuskToDawnWine.com



Hahn Estate SLH Pinot Noir

Santa Lucia Highlands AVA
- Located just south of the Monterey Bay in the Salinas Valley. The deep Monterey Bay blows cold air and fog into this valley. The Santa Lucia mountain range faces northeast into this valley giving the vineyards morning sun after the fog break, with afternoon cool breezes flowing through the valley.

The Santa Lucia Highlands is a magical environment for growing Pinto Noir

grapes. Seeing this AVA on the label, you can pretty much count on excellent Pinto Noir. And Hahn uses the SLH initials of the AVA to denote their special wine.

Big nose of black fruit and spices. Plum and deep black cherries in the mouth, with subtle earthy spices. (\$29.99)

HahnWines.com



**Beringer
Vineyards
Knights Valley
Cabernet
Sauvignon**

Knights Valley AVA
- Located in the far
northeast of
Sonoma County, to
the east of the
Alexander Valley
AVA in the wooded
mountains at the
border of Napa
Valley.

Since this is a very
remote
mountainous region,
it really does not
have wineries.
Instead, smart
wineries like
Beringer, have
vineyards here to
grow extraordinary
Cabernet

Sauvignon, the special grape of the Knights Valley AVA.

This wine has a big nose of blackberries and licorice. The mouth is even bigger with delicious blueberries, blackberries and dark coffee, with a hint of coco. This wine is silky smooth and so well balanced. Big tannins though and needs decanting and even better to hold for 10 to 20 years. (\$29.95)

Beringer.com

This blog was contributed by:

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