



## Santa Lucia Highlands: 6 Pinot Noirs & Chardonnays to Try

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Santa Lucia Highlands Artisans Paint Beautiful Pictures of Vintage 2011, 2012: Tasting through a luscious lineup of brilliant Chardonnays and well-schooled Pinot Noirs, all from the Santa Lucia Highlands, is enough to restore your faith in winemaking. With few exceptions, the wines from this region, made by wineries far and wide, are singularly impressive. Each year, attending the Santa Lucia Highlands Artisans trade tasting at Fort Mason proves illuminating, much like a ray of sunshine through a stained glass window. The Chardonnays sing like a halo'd choir and the Pinot Noirs reverberate with a carillon of melodic flavors.

The single vineyard designates keep growing in number, and we had a fine time hunting down the growing number of labels making wines from the Sierra Mar and Soberanes vineyards, both managed by Gary Francioni and Mark Pisoni.

6 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noirs & Chardonnays Along with usual well-known pillars of the AVA who can always be counted on for excellent, consistently well-made wines, among them Bernardus, Hahn, La Rochelle, Morgan, Pisoni/Lucia, Roar, Scheid and Wrath, there were outstanding efforts from new to the group producers, including Black Kite, Cattelya and Hawks View, the latter hailing all the way from Oregon.

The "smooth and sexy" Syrah award goes to Cattelya, Bibiana Gonzales Rave's new 2012 effort from the Soberanes vineyard (barrel sample), excitingly vibrant in the nose, and packed with blueberry, ripe plum and hints of bacon on the finish. Cattelya is the name of the orchid that is the national flower of Bibiana's native country of Colombia. She is married to Jeff Pisoni of Pisoni/Lucia wines.

