



## At Cattleya, Names Have Meaning, Wines Have Soul

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### Bibiana González Rave Blends the Soul of California with Her Love of Colombia, Her Home Country, in Each Bottle of Cattleya Wines

I always look forward to the opportunity to chat with and sip wines produced by Bibiana Gonzalez Rave, founder and owner of Cattleya Wines. Our latest conversation was with a handful of journalists who had been sent four bottles of beautiful Cattleya wines (as samples) for tasting and learning. As always, Bibiana was as comfortable sharing her expertise via wines with us during a zoom call as she is in the vineyards monitoring the progress of her grapes. This

time around, three wines of Pinot Noir and one wine of Syrah were opened and appreciated.

For those not familiar with Bibiana Gonzalez Rave, you will find her story compelling.

At the age of 14, Bibiana González Rave knew that she wanted to be a winemaker. Although she had little to no exposure to the wine world in her home country of Colombia, she knew that wine, considered by her



*But how about the name, Belly of the Whale? “The passage through the magical threshold of the transition into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale. The hero, instead of conquering or accumulating the power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, appearing to have died. 2017 marks a transition for Cattleya from vineyard names to symbolic name that represents Bibiana’s journey.”*



family as a luxury, revealed an incredible amount of history and tradition. Bibiana was hooked. In Colombia, she studied chemical engineering and business after which she excelled in her studies of viticulture and oenology in Cognac, France; that French education is the foundation of her winemaking philosophy. Her resume is extensive and lauded. She worked with some of the most highly regarded wineries in France and learned that “what you give to the land and your day-to-day dedication will always be present in the wines you craft.”

Bibiana’s first California vintage was 2004 and since then, she has worked harvest in South Africa and at a plethora of wineries in California. After a stint as winemaker at Lynmar Estate from 2009 to 2012, she started her own label, Cattleya Wines, showcasing terroir driven, small production wines. Shared Notes is a joint venture with husband Jeff Pisoni. Bibiana is also Consultant Winemaker for wineries in Sonoma and Napa Valley where her philosophy and reputation are noted.

Cattleya Wines is named after the national flower of Colombia, a fitting homage to Bibiana’s native home. Alma de Cattleya, another project, signifies the “soul of the land that gives life to her wines as well as her own soul put into each drop of wine that makes it to the bottle.” (Alma is the Spanish word for “soul.”) Bibiana González Rave wants her wines to be accessible, affordable and, of utmost importance, to be shared and enjoyed with friends and family. With each sip, these wines embrace the soul of her California home with its vineyards, orchards and farms. Clearly, as a nod to Colombia, she desired

her wines to honor the love for her homeland and those who are important to her there.

#### **Four Cattleya Wines to Find Now**

Each wine we opened was a reflection of its location, block, vintage, and the heart and soul of Bibiana. And each wine was given a name of significance.

**Belly of the Whale 2017 Cattleya Pinot Noir** from the Collection Series is from grapes cultivated in the coolest area of the Carneros-Sonoma Coast AVA. Specifically, grapes were sourced from the Donum Estate, a stunning 45-acre estate from where high quality fruit is found. On the nose I found raspberries and hints of underbrush. Bright acidity, soft tannins, vibrant fruit and minerality framed this fresh, pure wine. After 16 months in 50% new French oak, the wine was bottled unfined and unfiltered.

Fruit grown in the Sun Chase Vineyard in the southeastern portion of the Sonoma Coast appellation is found in **Belly of the Whale 2024 Cattleya Pinot Noir**. From this high elevation vineyard with a variety of microclimates, each sip was elegant and complex. Rich cherries, pepper, and savory spice wafted from the glass and concentrated flavors of lush, expressive red fruit on a foundation of moderate acidity and satin-like tannins led to a lingering finish. Ever so balanced, the wine was racked to 75% new French oak barrels for 18 months before bottling unfined and unfiltered.

A single vineyard, the Goldrock Vineyard, in the Sonoma Coast AVA was the home of Pinot Noir fruit in **The Goddess**



*According to Bibiana, “the goddess is the epitome of all that is feminine. The meeting with the goddess is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love. This is seen as the ultimate adventure and represented by the marriage of the hero to the goddess. Here we taste femininity and masculinity converged in this singular wine.”*



**2024 Cattleya Pinot Noir.** On top of an interior ridge only five miles from the Pacific Ocean, high elevation above the fog line leads to optimal exposure to the sun and ripening conditions for Pinot Noir. This beauty was aged in 80% new French oak barrels chosen from a cooperage in Cognac for 18 months then bottled unfinned and unfiltered. Bibiana shared that this wine is of the “darkest and deepest Pinot Noir.” Aromas of bright cherries raspberries, plums, cranberries, purple florals and a hint of anise were a delightful entry. On the palate, firm tannic structure and precise acidity were on point, as were food friendly flavors of herbs, cherry compote, and balsamic.

Bibiana noted that “I have more experience with Pinot Noir, but I love Syrah!” And anyone who tasted **The Initiation 2024**



**Cattleya Syrah** may feel the same. Born in the Soberanes Vineyard located in the Santa Lucia Highlands appellation in Monterey County, grapes were farmed by the Pisoni and Francioni families. Vines enjoy the cool site and benefit from foggy mornings and winds from the Pacific Ocean. Thanks to exposure to light and wind and soils of sandy loam on an alluvial fan, Syrah thrives. Intense aromas of dark plum, violets, and black currant were mesmerizing. On the balanced palate, I noted a creamy mouthfeel and flavors of more purple and floral fruits, punctuated with black pepper and a lingering finish. 100% new French oak barrels were used for malolactic fermentation and aging for 17 months after which the wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.