

Rounding up the Cattleya (Part 1)

by Drunken Cyclist / www.drunkencyclist.com / posted on August 7, 2026

There are not many days that go by that I don't consider myself pretty darned lucky. Over the past fourteen plus years, I have travelled to some spectacular places, met some incredible people, and tasted thousands of wonderful wines.

While many of those memories have occurred away from home, the majority have taken place with a corkscrew, a glass, and my kitchen table. That was the case a few weeks ago when I was invited to participate in an online tasting with Bibiana González Rave, the ubër-talented, Colombian-born winemaker behind the Cattleya Wines.

I have been fortunate enough to taste her wines from her second label, Alma de Cattleya, for several years, but this was my first chance to taste multiple wines from the flagship Cattleya line. Here are the first four wines I tried, I will be back next week with the other three...



2024 Cattleya Chardonnay, Sonoma Coast, CA

Retail \$65. Very Heavy Bottle (711g; 25.0g). Under cork. 18 months on French oak (70% new). This is, I believe, my first go around with the Cattleya Chardonnay and I certainly hope it will not be my last. I would say that this is past straw and well on its way to a brilliant yellow in the glass with loads of tree fruit initially on the nose (peach, pear, even some green apple), but as I persisted (and the wine began to warm), some tropical notes started to emerge (pineapple, guava), as did some impressive floral notes (honeysuckle, acacia flower), and noticeable oak. Immediately upon opening, it was that last note that was rather dominant; this was pretty oaky (which, by the way, I like, but I know it is the subject when it comes to American consumers of Chardonnay). I was advised to leave it and revisit a bit later, which I did, and as promised, the oak, while still present, had diminished considerably, revealing all of that fruit that the nose suggested. There was also a tartness that rendered this wine to near-perfect balance and ushered on through to one of the more lengthy finishes I have experienced in a while. Make no mistake, there is oak on this wine, but, if you give it a solid decant (an hour should do it) and serve it closer to cellar temperature (a half-hour in the fridge would suffice), you will be treated to a spectacular Chardonnay, one that I would put right up there with the best from the region. **Outstanding. 94 Points.**



2024 Cattleya Pinot Noir Belly of the Whale, Sonoma Coast, CA:

Retail \$85. Very Heavy Bottle (714g; 25.1oz). Under cork. Very limited production (~125 cases). 16 months French Oak, 80% new. Another beautiful wine from Bibiana, quite dark in the glass, even close to inky dark with an abundance of dark fruit: black cherry, blackberry, even a hint of plum, with a smattering of dark (naturally) earth, and distinct violet notes on the nose. The palate is exquisite with loads of that dark fruit from the jump, followed by a zingy, near-lip-smacking acidity, and a healthy amount of weight. Some spice comes in right before the finish, which seems to last for minutes. Again, I have limited experience with these Cattleya wines (although considerably more with the Alma de Cattleya second label), but those that I have tried have been close to other-worldly. **Outstanding. 96 Points.**



2024 Cattleya Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, CA

Retail \$65. Very Heavy Bottle (713g; 25.1oz). Under cork. Fruit is sourced mainly from the Nightwing Vineyard (Petaluma Gap) with an average elevation of 1,200 feet. 18 months in French Oak (60% new). Whoa. I have been tasting Bibiana's wines for several years real years now, but this marks only the second time that I have tried wines from the top tier Cattleya line (I've almost exclusively sampled the Alma de Cattleya wines, which I have thoroughly enjoyed). This Sonoma Coast Pinot is gorgeous from the jump with medium to dark color, loads of dark red fruit (black cherry, raspberry), floral notes (red rose), and a spicy element (cumin? cardamom?) that hints at Bibiana's love for Syrah. The palate is even more enticing with lovely fruit upfront, a weighty, tangy midpalate, and some spice comes in on the lengthy finish. Even though this spends a year and a half on oak, you would never guess it, since Bibiana is close to militant about her barrel selection, and the effects it has on her wines. And it pays off in spades, this is gorgeous. **Outstanding. 95 Points.**

2017 Cattleya Pinot Noir Belly of the Whale, Sonoma Coast, CA

Retail \$85. Very Heavy Bottle (705g; 24.8oz). Under cork. Although I have never met her in person (I did just complete a Zoom with her, though), Bibiana seems as though she is a bit of a throwback. At a time when winemakers in this country are hyper-concerned with Gen Z, attracting younger consumers, and producing wines designed to be consumed now, Bibiana remains steadfast. She is going to produce the best wine possible, often with minimal regard towards cost, and create wines that will actually get better with age. Case. In. Point. We tasted this aside the 2024 and while the younger wine was completely fantastic, it was a bit nervous. Not the worry here. Still has surprising fruit, a wheelbarrow full of still vibrant acidity, and completely integrated tannins. Yeah. Whoa. This is a show-stopper and a testament to how well Bibiana's wines can age. **Outstanding. 97 Points.**



Rounding up the Cattleya (Part 2)

by Drunken Cyclist / www.drunkencyclist.com / posted on August 14, 2026

There are not many days that go by that I don't consider myself pretty darned lucky. Over the past fourteen plus years, I have travelled to some spectacular places, met some incredible people, and tasted thousands of wonderful wines.

While many of those memories have occurred away from home, the majority have taken place with a cork-screw, a glass, and my kitchen table. That was the case a few weeks ago when I was invited to participate in an on-line tasting with Bibiana González Rave, the ubër-talented, Colombian-born winemaker behind the Cattleya Wines.

I have been fortunate enough to taste her wines from her second label, Alma de Cattleya, for several years, but this was my first chance to taste multiple wines from the flagship Cattleya line. Here are the last two wines I tried.



2024 Cattleya Pinot Noir The Goddess, Sonoma Coast, CA

Retail \$125. Very Heavy Bottle (718g; 25.3oz). I have been tasting Bibiana's wines for a few years now, but mostly the Alma de Cattleya wines, the "second" wines, if you will. This year, though, she also sent me the Cattleya "mother ship" wines, and, well, whoa. Don't get me wrong, the Alma wines I have tried have been Excellent (or better), but these Cattleya wines? Whoa. Case in point. This Goddess, according to the website, claims to be the "feminine" version of Pinot Noir, but, like Bibiana (and my wife, for that matter), this is what every father wants their daughter to be (I am guessing, as I only have boys): strong, assertive, intriguing, and even on the verge of boisterous. From the nose through the finish, the fruit requires, no, demands, attention as it is upfront and certainly "present". The acidity peeks its head above the horizon somewhat timidly, but remains active to the end, never directly challenging the fruit, although it seems that it really would like to do so. Yeah, this is a bold Pinot, one that might scream at the TV during a World Cup match, or strongly suggest that you do your own laundry, but also one that envelops, enthralls, and even consumes you until the very last drop. This is no shrinking violet (although there is plenty of violet among the aromas and flavors), and by mid-glass (bottle?), you realize you wouldn't have it any other way. **Outstanding. 96 Points.**





the drunken cyclist

2024 Cattleya Syrah The Initiation, Soberanes Vineyard, Santa Lucia Highlands, CA

Retail \$70. Very Heavy Bottle (709g; 24.9oz). 100% Syrah, 16 months in French Oak (80% new). Bibiana, the heart, soul, and winemaker behind Cattleya, spent a significant amount of time in France, specifically the Northern Rhône region, where Syrah reigns supreme. Once she ventured out on her own, she knew that she had to make Syrah, and it was the first wine she ever produced. Now, even though she focuses mainly on Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, she still makes a bit of Syrah, and she gets the fruit from the Soberanes Vineyard, which many would consider a “Grand Cru” along the Central Coast. Quite dark in the glass, with plenty of dark fruit (cassis, plum, wild blackberry), this certainly brushes up against “brooding” on the nose. Some spice (black pepper, cardamom), a Syrah calling card, wiggles through eventually, as does a floral note (violet) at the very end. The palate continues on with this theme; there is plenty of rich, dark fruit (I might even say “oodles”), with the spice (more of a Christmas spice vibe here) even more prevalent. There is also a salinity here, an earthy, maybe more of a black olive aspect that seems to be really in search of food. This is big, even really big, but the zippy acidity comes roaring in right after the fruit to keep all in check. Did I mention yet that this is on the “big” side? It is, but it is also balanced and delightful. We popped this with a roast pork dish, and it was fantastic! **Outstanding. 94 Points.**

