

Pinot Noir Hero: *James MacPhail at Sequana*

AFTER APPRENTICING WITH PINOT NOIR GURUS

Merry Edwards and Gary Farrell in the mid-1990s, James MacPhail created his own label, MacPhail Family Wines, dedicated to producing small lots of Pinot from vineyards in the Sonoma Coast and Anderson Valley appellations. These outstanding wines caught the attention of industry veteran Tom Selfridge, then President of The Hess Collection Winery. In 2007, Selfridge approached MacPhail to create a new winery: Sequana.

Working only with sustainably grown grapes from family-owned, eco-friendly vineyards in the cool-climate Green Valley and the Santa Lucia Highlands AVAs, MacPhail has created an expressive portfolio of three vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs. The use of cold maceration and native yeasts respects the characteristics of each individual vineyard, capturing terroir and enhancing aromas and flavors.

I sat down with James earlier this year to taste through the 2008 releases. Since then, the 2009s have arrived, with a few changes in the line-up; the Sarmento Vineyard release is now labeled simply Santa Lucia Highlands and there is also a lovely Russian River Valley cuvée. Here are my notes on some of the recent Sequana wines.



James MacPhail.

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92 Sequana 2008 Pinot Noir, Sarmento Vineyard, Santa Lucia Highlands (\$32)

Lively red cherry and great acid structure; ripe, sweet fruit and good length; elegant and racy.

92 Sequana 2008 Pinot Noir, Dutton Ranch, Green Valley of Russian River Valley, (\$40)

Lush and meaty with spice and ripe cherry; complex, structured and lovely; rich, layered and long.

90 Sequana 2008 Pinot Noir, Sundawg Ridge Vineyard, Green Valley of Russian River Valley (\$50)

Rich and deep with red cherry and earth; ripe and complex with spice and juicy fruit; long and balanced on the finish.

90 Sequana 2009 Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley (\$38)

Alive with bright acidity, fresh cherry flavors and nice depth; silky, long and complex; fleshy, balanced and stylish.

89 Sequana 2009 Pinot Noir, Santa Lucia Highlands (\$32)

From the Sarmento Vineyard; bright and juicy with smooth texture and lively cherry and spice; long and nicely textured, fresh and balanced.

91 Sequana 2009 Pinot Noir, Dutton Ranch, Green Valley of Russian River Valley (\$45)

Fresh and juicy with black cherry and tangy acidity; lush and ripe with lovely texture and balance; long and stylish with depth and finesse.

*Sequana wines are available through
The Hess Collection.*