

# 2015 PINOT NOIR

SOLOMON HILLS  
SANTA MARIA VALLEY

Okay, I know I've always talked about how much Solomon Hills pinot noir has to say, but this 2015 is just wild! In a lot of vintages this extra-coastal vineyard (the most-so in Santa Maria) struggles to produce a large crop, since a lot of moisture in Spring messes up flower pollination. 2015's fruit set was just that way, and that stacked upon the weary vine vigor from years of drought made for a small crop of deeply flavored fruit.

Now that this has been a year in bottle, when you first pull the cork this one is a savory pinot; lots of earthy garden aromas pop up: spring-tilled clay, herb stems, flowers and mushrooms. Because the fruit set was poor and the summer was warm, the stems on these clusters were nicely ripe so I bumped up the whole cluster use to fifteen-percent (after ten the year before), and that brought a positive bit of greenery and some resinous sandalwood-like spiciness into the fold.

Tasting this on a second and third day, the fruit really emerges into the frame. Dusty cherry and strawberry takes center stage while those earthy-garden elements scoot a bit into the background. Throughout the meandering evolution there's just great texture; it's soft and inviting with some rounding salinity, with stems giving a gentle inward pull and herbal flair in the finish. This wine is young and will do a lot over a long life. There's nothing that would make one regret opening this soon (especially if you like earthiness and structure), but decant it though or tuck it away over the next few years if you want to reveal this wine's lurking exuberance.

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**BLEND** 100% Pinot Noir

**VINEYARDS** Solomon Hills

**AVA** Santa Maria Valley

**ALCOHOL** 12.5%

**VINIFICATION** Open top fermentation with 15% whole clusters

**BARREL AGING** 15 Months in 20% New French Oak

**TOTAL PRODUCTION** 138 Cases

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## PRESS REVIEWS

### Jeb Dunnuck

"Another beauty is the 2015 Pinot Noir Solomon Hills, and it sees just a touch of whole cluster (15%) and is brought up mostly in neutral barrel. It's lighter ruby color is followed by a darker fruited, earth, damp earthy quality that I love. It's not a big wine, but it has plenty of tension, fine tannin and lots of saltiness that comes out with time in the glass. - JD **92+ Points**

### Antonio Galloni's Vinous

"The 2015 Pinot Noir Solomon Hills is a very pretty wine, but it also shows quite a bit of whole cluster influence in this vintage. Dried flowers, tea leaves, mint, pine and sweet dried cherries all lift from the glass, while silky tannins in the background provide a supportive underpinning. Readers who enjoy floral, savory Pinots will find much to admire. I confess I prefer the Solomon Hills when it has a bit more fruit and midpalate stuffing." – AG **90 points**

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