

BLACK KITE

CELLARS

2014 VINTAGE PINOT NOIR

PURELY DOMESTIC WINE REPORT | DOUG WILDER

90PTS 2014 Black Kite Pinot Noir Angel Hawk Anderson Valley, 14.8%, 152 cs., \$85 The nose is a cocoa, cherry, toffee and a finely balanced perfume of blossoms and orange peel. The palate is a supple blackcherry, blackberry, earthy tar, graphite and mint. *Drink 2017 – 2022*

92PTS 2014 Gap's Crown Vineyard, 14.6%, 292 cs., \$60 The nose is a lean perfumed red fruit with a savory, cedar laced backbone. Supple, spiced notes on palate entry, the core is a lush yet structured velvet-like red berry through to the finish. *Drink 2017 – 2023.*

89PTS Kite's Rest 14.9%, 1254 cs., \$50 The nose is a dried tomato, spice box and cherry in a shroud of black fruit imbued heat that dissipates with air. The palate is a bright, crisp cherry entry leading to a wellstructured core where the supple red fruit takes on rounded tobacco and licorice. *Drink 2017 – 2022.*

91PTS 2014 Redwood's Edge 14.7%, 193 cs., \$60 The nose is a sultry black raspberry with notes of spice, dried orange peel and licorice. The palate is smooth and supple on entry with a firm, tactile and waxy core of blackberry, strawberry and cocoa all punctuated by crisp textural acidity. *Drink 2017 – 2022.*

92PTS 2014 River Turn 14.9%, 193 cs., \$60 The nose is a tobacco, black fruit, fig and cedar. The palate entry is focused on a richly abundant mouth-coating silky cherry with notes of Christmas candy spice finishing with a supple, bright acidity. *Drink 2017 – 2022.*

92PTS 2014 Stony Terrace 14.8%, 193 cs., \$60 The nose is a bright sappy black cherry with notes of sweet plum and spice. The palate entry is bright and textured with a beautifully nuanced core of crisp and full black fruit with textured crisp red fruit finish. *Drink 2017 – 2021.*

90PTS 2014 Soberanes Vineyard 14.8%, 572 cs., \$50 The nose is an intense herb and tobacco with notes of bright red cherry, licorice and nectarine. The palate is lush and lively on entry, silky in the mid-palate of herb, cherry and mint finishing with mouth-coating graphite firmness. *Drink 2017 – 2022.*

TASTING PANEL | ANTHONY DIAS BLUE

94PTS 2014 Black Kite Gap's Crown Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast

92PTS Black Kite Cellars 2014 Pinot Noir, Kite's Rest Vineyard, Anderson Valley (\$50)

Ripe and lush with smooth texture and rich cherry fruit; mellow, deep and savory with lovely depth and finesse; long and balanced.

92PTS Black Kite Cellars 2014 Pinot Noir, Sierra Mar Vineyard, Santa Lucia Highlands (\$50)

Silky and fresh with bright, ripe cherry fruit; juicy and smooth with hints of toasty oak and spice; fresh and charming.

92PTS Black Kite Cellars 2014 Pinot Noir, Redwoods' Edge Vineyard, Anderson Valley (\$60)

Smooth and lush, dense and ripe cherry fruit with velvety texture; elegant and savory with deep, rich style; balanced and long.

92PTS Black Kite Cellars 2014 Pinot Noir, Stony Terrace Block, Anderson Valley (\$60)

Silky and smooth with ripe, dense black cherry and blackberry fruit; rich, generous and luscious; deep, balanced and long.

92PTS Black Kite Cellars 2014 Pinot Noir, River Turn Vineyard, Anderson Valley (\$60)

Silky and juicy with rich black cherry and savory notes; deep, lush and balanced; ripe and long.

WINE SPECTATOR

90PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Anderson Valley "Angel Hawk" Pure and rich, with a broad array of red and dark berry fruit, offering plum, blackberry and black cherry flavors and touches of spice and floral. Ends with a strong, full finish. *Drink now through 2024.*

90PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Kite's Rest | Succeeds with a delicate mix of red plum, cherry, light spice and oak. Charmingly elegant, finessed and long, presenting a clean finish. Shows promise for the future. *Drink now through 2021. 1,254 cases made. –JL*

90PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Anderson Valley River Turn | Displays a mix of juicy cherry and wild berry flavors, with fresh earth and gravelly notes. There's plenty to enjoy now, as the fruit is ripe and juicy, but this should benefit from short-term cellaring. Drink now through 2021. 193 cases made. *-JL*

88PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Stony Terrace - A subdued effort, medium-weight and moderately flavored, making for a pleasing if unexceptional effort as the simple cherry-berry fruit doesn't quite match up to the tannic muscle. Ends dry and gravelly. *Drink now through 2022.*

91PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard | Pure Pinot aromas echo cherry, raspberry and fresh earth, with a touch of cedary oak. Wood is a dominant theme in this youthful version, yet the juicy fruit pushes forward. Drink now through 2021. 292 cases made. *-JL*

88PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Sierra Mar Vineyard - Offers dusty, savory dried berry flavors. May come together with short-term cellaring. *Drink now through 2021*

88PTS Black Kite Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Soberanes Vineyard - Exhibits a core of dusty dried berry, underbrush and oak, with a hint of suppleness in texture that gives way to more assertive tannins. A touch of smoky oak adds dimension. *Drink now through 2022*

WINE ENTHUSIAST

94PTS Black Kite "Angel Hawk" Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley Consistently outstanding Pinot Noir producer Black Kite has done it again. This bottling comes together in a seamless symphony of aromas and flavors. Ripe fruit, subtly spicy oak and forest floor notes fill the glass. Its opulent texture unfolds into layers of baking spice, earthiness, and red and black cherry fruit, with a long, complex finish

93PTS Gap's Crown Vineyard Pinot Noir Smoky bacon and a bittersweet element of black tea make for an exotically spicy, complex and full-bodied wine from the mighty vineyard site overlooking the Petaluma Gap. Black cherry, pomegranate and cardamom are wrapped in a swaddling of toasted oak, while the mouthfeel is dense and concentrated.

94PTS Cellar Selection Black Kite 2014 Stony Terrace Pinot Noir Anderson Valley This is a fabulous wine, a notch above the three other vineyard-designated

Pinots from Black Kite. Black tea, black cherry and herbal aromas blend with focused cherry, rhubarb and cranberry flavors in this full-bodied, complex wine. It's balanced by moderate tannins, giving it both structure and texture, and will drink best after 2020.

93PTS Editors' Choice Black Kite 2014 Redwoods' Edge Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Well structured and appetizingly tannic, this full-bodied wine from a consistently excellent producer has opulent fruit flavors, mouth-filling texture and wonderful ripeness. Black cherry, blackberry and a touch of cranberry meld with mild oak spices—a combination that lingers nicely on the finish. Best after 2019.

93PTS Editors' Choice Black Kite 2014 Kite's Rest Pinot Noir Anderson Valley Great fruit concentration and grace make this wine a winner. It feels medium-bodied despite its high degree of ripeness, showing that balance is attainable with significant power. It has ripe, plummy aromas, fresh red cherry and cranberry flavors, supportive tannins and excellent acidity.

92PTS Black Kite 2014 River Turn Pinot Noir Anderson Valley This wine is so ripe, rich and generous in flavor it's almost jammy, but there's no denying the appeal of all that fruitiness. Full body, velvety texture and soft acidity make it plush on the palate, helping the rich finish linger. Although it was aged in French barriques—two-thirds new—it's by no means an overoaked wine.

92PTS Black Kite 2014 Soberanes Vineyard Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands There's an intriguing mix of smokiness, tangy cranberry and sanguine notes on the nose of this bottling from a winery obsessed with the Burgundian style. The palate combines aromatic and woody flavors of juniper, pine needle, bay leaf and eucalyptus with base notes of baked red cherry. Fascinatingly, it's richer in spice than in fruit.

CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE:

***90PTS BLACK KITE 2014 Angel Hawk** If at first teasing with pretty and somewhat delicate, gently oaked aromas of wildflowers and cherries, this wine does a turnabout on the palate where it reveals itself as a bigger, far richer Pinot than promised and impresses with its great sense of depth. It is full, firm and still a touch rough at the margins, but its single and very forgivable sin is that of extreme youth, and, if refinement and beauty might not arrive for another five or six years, it is a guaranteed bet that they will.

****93PTS** BLACK KITE River Turn Anderson Valley 2014 Nicely focused and fairly complex with concentrated aromas of ripe cherries, toast and a muted touch of flowers that are followed in kind by juicy, generously fruited flavors that hint at increased layering to come, this expressive youngster shows fine continuity in both definition and richness, and, while comfortably balanced and a tasty morsel at the moment, it has plenty of potential for growth. Drink it now if you must, but know that it is several years away from its best. 1 B I \$60.00

****92PTS** Black Kite Kite's Rest Anderson Valley 2014 On the comparatively weighty side of things for a Pinot from the Anderson Valley and showing clear kinship with its fully ripened cellarmates from the Santa Lucia Highlands, this wine starts out with a precise, specifically cherry-like nose and follows up with juicy, near-plummy flavors that hold a good fruity line from entry to finish. Its supple beginnings gradually give way to balancing acidity without becoming edgy or stiff, and its combination of inviting richness and control is the mark of a wine that will grow effortlessly for a half-dozen years even while being wonderfully tasty right now. 1 B I \$50.00

***91PTS** Black Kite Sierra Mar Vineyard 2014 Santa Lucia Highlands. Here is a substantial, generously filled Pinot Noir that is ripe, well-balanced and deeply fruity with an ample complement of sweet oak and toasty top notes providing a boost in overall richness, yet it never once threatens to be too much of a good thing and shows a great deal of polish for a wine of its volume and size. Although it is both bright and juicy and affords plenty of short term appeal, it will age gracefully owing to its careful composition and is bound to reward three to five years of patience. O B I \$50.00

***90PTS** Black Kite Stony Terrace Anderson Valley 2014 Relatively restrained on the nose when measured against its more outgoing mates and a Pinot that similarly proves to be a bit tight and unevolved on the palate, the Stony Terrace bottling is the wine most in need of aging among the several new Black Kite offerings. That is not to say that it lacks for substance or fruit and, in fact, it has plenty of both, but its extra astringency and the acidity that pushes it forward warn off hasty drinking. Allow for a few years of cellaring here. O B A \$60.00

***88PTS** Black Kite Gap's Crown Vineyard 2014 Sonoma Coast. Combining elements of cherries and ripe plums with nominal oak and distinctive touches of tea and dark earth that separate it from its many mates, this bottling from Gap's Crown Vineyard is at once full,

slightly viscous and a bit grippy all at once. Its back-palate tightness belies its early inklings of softness, and, although it is a reasonably rich wine, its potential for real refinement is not guaranteed. O B I \$60.00

***88PTS** BLACK KITE Redwoods' Edge Anderson Valley 2014 Rich, well-ripened and built along fairly solid and structured lines, this comparatively weighty effort is a wine that once again shows its maker's preference for Pinots of substance and size, and it sits at the more savory end of the varietal spectrum. While its flavors are foreshortened by tannins just now, it is not unduly tough, and it will shed much of its back-end astringency with a few years of rest. O B A \$60.00

***88PTS** BLACK KITE Soberanes Vineyard 2014 Santa Lucia Highlands. Fairly ripe and weighty as is the wont of Pinots claiming the Santa Lucia Highlands as home, this fullbodied offering is more about richness than finesse. Its viscous beginnings are followed up by drying tannins and a bit of late arriving heat, but its very persistent, moderately extracted black cherry fruit works to ameliorate the effects of each and provides reason enough to believe that a few years of age will make a positive difference. 1 B I \$50.00

WINE ADVOCATE

91+PTS 2014 Black Kite Cellars Pinot Noir Soberanes Vineyard | The 2014 Pinot Noir Soberanes Vineyard is a medium-bodied, lively and pure effort that offers classy notes of black raspberries, toasted spice and sappy herbs. Drink this pretty, elegant Pinot over the coming 6-7 years
– *Jeb Dunnuck*

88PTS 2014 Black Kite Cellars Pinot Noir Gap's Crown Vineyard Medium ruby in color, the 2014 Pinot Noir Gap's Crown Vineyard offers a lovely Pinot perfume of ripe red cherries, violets, lavender and underbrush. Medium to full-bodied in the mouth, the freshness lends great drinkability to the relative weightiness of this wine, supported by ripe, grainy tannins and finishing pleasantly savory.

ANTONIO GALLONI'S VINOUS

93PTS Black Kite Sierra Mar Vineyard Pinot Noir Brilliant yellow. Displays fresh melon, Meyer lemon and pear skin scents that are sharpened by a suggestion of dusty minerals. Seamless and sharply focused in the mouth, offering juicy citrus and orchard fruit flavors. A jolt of quinine adds a refreshingly bitter

edge. Deeper notes of honey and toasty lees come out on the penetrating finish, which hangs on with excellent tenacity.

- *Josh Raynolds*

92PTS 2014 Black Kite Cellars Soberanes Vineyard Pinot Noir Limpid gold. Aromas of candied citrus fruits, yellow apple, fig and white flowers are sharpened by a zesty mineral flourish. Juicy and tightly wound on entry and then more fleshy in the middle, offering intense orchard and pit fruit flavors and a bracingly bitter touch of quinine. Orange zest and ginger notes drive a long, silky finish that features a subtle touch of buttered toast.

- *Josh Raynolds*

CALIFORNIA GRAPEVINE

93PTS 2014 Black Kite "Angel Hawk", Anderson Valley - Medium-light to medium ruby color; attractive, forward, deep, intense, cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of baking spices and forest floor; medium-full body; deep, textured, well balanced, elegant, red and black fruit flavors with herbal notes and a hint of mocha; medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Opened and developed with airing in the glass to show appealing richness and some complexity, though deserving several more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 152 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released February 2017.

92PTS 2014 Black Kite, "River Turn," Anderson Valley - Medium ruby color; attractive, forward, fragrant, deep, complex, black raspberry and black cherry fruit aroma with herbal notes and hints of cola, blacktea, and forest floor; medium to medium-full body; rich, fleshy, black cherry and red berry fruit flavors with good depth and balance, bright acidity, and a velvety mouthfeel; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to drink now as it developed with airing in the glass, though best to bottle age for a few more years. Very highly recommended. 14.9% alcohol; 193 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released Fall 2016.

92PTS 2014 Black Kite, "Redwoods' Edge," Anderson Valley - Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, fragrant, deep, strawberry and black cherry fruit aroma with spicy notes and hints of cardamon, cola, and forest floor; medium to medium-full body; deep, rich, nicely balanced, red fruit flavors with a velvety mouthfeel; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to drink now and over the next year or two. Very highly recommended. 14.7% alcohol; 193 cases; 100% PN; released Fall 2016

91PTS 2014 Black Kite, "Stony Terrace," Anderson Valley Medium-light ruby; attractive, forward, fragrant, cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of black tea, sandalwood, and Asian spices; medium body; elegant, spicy, nicely balanced, red and dark fruit flavors with good depth, bright acidity, and a hint of cola; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very appealing to drink now and over the next year or two. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 193 cases; 100% PN; released Fall 2016.

90PTS 2014 Black Kite, "Kite's Rest," Anderson Valley Medium-light to medium ruby; fragrant, spicy, raspberry and red cherry fruit aroma with hints of Asian spices; medium body; forward, elegant, red and dark berry fruit flavors with good depth and richness; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. 14.9% alcohol; 1,254 cases; 100% PN; released Fall 2016

91PTS 2014 Black Kite, "Soberanes Vineyard," Santa Lucia Highlands - Medium-light ruby color; attractive, forward, fragrant, red cherry and raspberry fruit aroma with spicy notes and hints of dried herbs, rose petal, milk chocolate, and forest floor; medium to medium-full body; forward, rich, fleshy, elegantly styled, red fruit flavors with herbal notes, bright acidity, a hint of cola, and a velvety mouthfeel; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed depth and some complexity as it aired in the glass, and very appealing to drink now, though best to bottle age for a few more years. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 572 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN); released September 2016.

91PTS 2014 Black Kite, "Sierra Mar Vineyard," Santa Lucia Highlands - Medium-light to medium ruby; fragrant, ripe, black cherry, raspberry, and cranberry fruit aroma with spicy notes and a hint of mocha; medium body; rich, fleshy, red and dark fruit flavors with bright acidity, and a silky mouthfeel; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Showed good depth and some complexity as it aired in the glass. Appealing now, though best to age for a few more years. Very highly recommended. 14.6% alcohol; 120 cases; 100% PN; released September 2016.

91PTS 2014 Black Kite, "Gap's Crown Vineyard," Sonoma Coast - Medium-light ruby; attractive, forward, earthy, Bing cherry and raspberry fruit aroma with floral notes and hints of clove and forest floor; medium body; rich, fleshy, spicy, red fruit flavors with earthy notes and bright acidity; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Nicely balanced and showing richness and elegance. Very appealing to drink now, though deserv-

ing several more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. 14.6% alcohol; 292 cases; 100% PN; released September 2016.

2014 VINTAGE CHARDONNAY

WINE SPECTATOR

90PTS Black Kite Chardonnay Santa Lucia Highlands Sierra Mar Vineyard | The fruit vibrancy at the core pairs well with smoky, toasty oak and subtle tropical fruit, pear and honeydew notes. The texture is pithy but the flavors glide through. Drink now. 264 cases made.

– JL

88PTS Black Kite Chardonnay Santa Lucia Highlands Soberanes Vineyard | Fresh and zesty, with flavors of green apple, lemon-lime and tangerine. Ends long and clean. Drink now. 212 cases made.

– JL

93PTS BLACK KITE Chardonnay Sonoma Coast Gap's Crown Vineyard | Exhibits a charming mix of buttery oak, rich fruit, baking spice nuances and an overall sense of harmony and finesse. The core apple, melon and apricot flavors are intense without being weighty, and the finish displays a measure of grace. Drink now. 201 cases made.

– JL

WINE ENTHUSIAST

93PTS 2014 Soberanes Vineyard Chardonnay | Lightly buttered popcorn aromas are cut by lime blossoms, sea salt and jasmine on this delicate while extremely fragrant nose. A laser-like acidity slices through the palate, where pan-seared apple flavors are lifted by lemon pith, mandarin orange skins and orange blossoms.

92PTS 2014 Sierra Mar Vineyard Chardonnay | Peach blossoms, fresh apricot, light jasmine and a warm white peach cream character show on the nose of this bottling. There is a nice sizzle of acidity right away on the palate, and a pithy, cement-like grip, as well as full flavors of apple and peach blossoms that are rich and yet not overpowering.

91PTS 2014 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay | This is a ripe, succulent white, dark golden in color, that's lush and expansive on the palate in fleshy tropical and stone fruit. Toasted oak comes forward on the finish, accentuating the wine's nearly full-bodied nature, never getting in the way of the minerality.

ANTONIO GALLONI'S VINOUS

92PTS 2014 Black Kite Gap's Crown Chardonnay Light bright yellow. Sexy, oak-spiced citrus and orchard fruit and jasmine scents show impressive clarity and pick up a smoky mineral nuance with air. Sappy and concentrated yet lithe, offering palate-staining Meyer lemon, pear nectar and honeysuckle flavors underscored by a current of juicy acidity. Finishes very long and stony, with subtle vanilla and ginger notes lingering behind.

– Josh Reynolds

92PTS Black Kite Sierra Mar Vineyard Chardonnay Brilliant yellow. Displays fresh melon, Meyer lemon and pear skin scents that are sharpened by a suggestion of dusty minerals. Seamless and sharply focused in the mouth, offering juicy citrus and orchard fruit flavors. A jolt of quinine adds a refreshingly bitter edge. Deeper notes of honey and toasty lees come out on the penetrating finish, which hangs on with excellent tenacity.

– Josh Reynolds

91PTS 2014 Black Kite Soberanes Vineyard Chardonnay Limpid gold. Aromas of candied citrus fruits, yellow apple, fig and white flowers are sharpened by a zesty mineral flourish. Juicy and tightly wound on entry and then more fleshy in the middle, offering intense orchard and pit fruit flavors and a bracingly bitter touch of quinine. Orange zest and ginger notes drive a long, silky finish that features a subtle touch of buttered toast.

– Josh Reynolds

WINE ADVOCATE

93PTS 2014 Black Kite Cellars Chardonnay Soberanes Vineyard. The 2014 Chardonnay Soberanes Vineyard offers lots of citrus blossom and white flowers in a clean, crisp, medium to full-bodied style. Its acidity is beautifully integrated, it's impeccably balanced and a true gem in the vintage.

– Jeb Dunnuck

88PTS 2014 Black Kite Cellars Chardonnay Sierra Mar Vineyard. The first vintage from this vineyard, the 2014 Chardonnay Sierra Mar Vineyard is a rich, full-flavored effort that lacks a touch of the vibrancy of the other releases, yet still offers plenty to love. Flowers, brioche, ripe peach and spice all emerge from this well-made, thoroughly enjoyable Chardonnay that will drink well for at least 3-4 years.

– Jeb Dunnuck

88PTS 2014 Black Kite Cellars Chardonnay Gaps Crown Vineyard | The 2014 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay is a little closed on the nose, offering subtle notes of ripe golden delicious apples, white peaches, fresh straw and lightly browned toast. Medium-bodied with appealing freshness in the mouth, the fruit is fading just slightly, but there is still a lot to love about this wine with its generosity and good length

FREDRIC KOEPEL, BIGGER THAN YOUR HEAD

50 GREAT WINES OF 2016 - 2014 Black Kite Soberanes Vineyard Chardonnay, Santa Lucia Highlands

CONNOISSEUR'S GUIDE

90PTS 1 puff 2014 Black Kite Gap's Crown Chardonnay The medium-rich aromas are highlighted here by somewhat bright, tightly fruited notes and hints of roasted grains in the background, and the wine, while on the full side keeps its youthful figure intact by virtue of its commendable balance on the palate. Its flavors follow suit with both tight, minerally fruit and references to crisp apples and supportive oak. It is a likeable wine in the near term and holds out the possibility of improved richness with a bit of aging.

88PTS 1 puff 2014 Soberanes Vineyard Chardonnay Given the more southern provenance of this wine and its mate immediately below, as compared to the Gap's Crown bottling, one could very well expect a fleshier, riper rendition, but, instead these wines have quite similar structures and balance. This one runs to the mineral and stones side of the spectrum at the slight expense of fruit at its heart, but its solidity and potential for better make it a wine ticketed to be enjoyed a few years hence.

87PTS 1 puff Black Kite Sierra Mar Vineyard Chardonnay Another from the Santa Lucia Highlands that defies expectations by being fairly tight and not all that open in its current state, this wine sports light pineapple notes and a whiff of lemon zest in its aromas, and while it suggests a certain suppleness at entry, it firms up quickly and keeps its energetic fruit under wraps for the time being.

2013 VINTAGE PINOT NOIR

ANTONIO GALLONI'S VINOUS

93PTS 2013 Angel Hawk Pinot Noir Vivid ruby. A suave, highly complex bouquet evokes fresh red and dark berries, incense, candied flowers and vanilla, accompanied by a sexy Asian spice overtone. Stains the palate with sweet black raspberry, cherry cola and spiced flavors that are sharpened and given spine by zesty acidity. Plays richness off vivacity with a deft hand and finishes very long, sweet and seamless, with gentle tannins building slowly.

- Josh Reynolds

92PTS 2013 Redwoods Edge Pinot Noir Deep red. High-pitched red berry, cherry and rose scents are complemented by suggestions of smoky minerals and Asian spices. Energetic and appealingly sweet, offering concentrated raspberry liqueur and floral pastille flavors underscored by juicy, enlivening acidity. Shows excellent clarity and lift on the clinging finish, which features smooth tannins and an echo of juicy, spice-tinged red fruit.

- Josh Reynolds

92PTS 2013 Rivers Turn Pinot Noir Limpid ruby-red. Expressive, oak-tinged red fruit liqueur, Asian spice and candied rose scents, along with hints of wood-smoke and cola. Lithe and sharply focused, offering vibrant raspberry and spiced flavors that show surprising heft for their vivacity. Fresh, alluringly sweet and seamless on the impressively long finish, which features supple tannins and lingering mocha and raspberry notes.

- Josh Reynolds

91PTS 2013 Gap's Crown Pinot Noir Bright ruby-red. Pungent dark berry, cherry pit and vanilla scents are lifted by a suggestion of peppery spices and a smoky mineral quality. Juicy black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors unfold slowly and gain sweetness in the glass. Shows very good depth as well as energy, and finishes with a jolt of peppery spices, gentle sweetness and slow-building, harmonious tannins.

- Josh Reynolds

91PTS 2013 Kite's Rest Pinot Noir Brilliant ruby-red. Ripe red berries, candied rose and a hint of mocha on the pungent nose; a peppery quality adds spiciness. Supple and focused on the palate, offering juicy cherry and raspberry flavors and a hint of bitter rhubarb. Becomes sweeter with air and finishes with solid thrust, supple tannins and a subtle vanilla nuance that lingers with very good persistence.

- Josh Reynolds

91PTS 2013 Stony Terrace Pinot Noir Dark red. Energetic spice- and mineral-accented red fruit aromas show very good clarity and pick up a floral accent with aeration. Taut, juicy and focused, offering sappy cherry, raspberry and floral pastille flavors with zesty white pepper and mineral accents. Expands and deepens with air, finishing gently sweet, smooth and long, displaying gentle tannins and a suggestion of peppery spices.

- Josh Raynolds

2013 KITE'S REST PINOT NOIR, ANDERSON VALLEY

92PTS Black Kite's remarkable Pinot patch in the Anderson Valley is divided into distinctive blocks that each produce a stunning and unique expression of Pinot Noir from vintage to vintage. Then there is Kite's Rest, which is a blend of the blocks crafted by winemaker Jeff Gaffner. The 2013 is a beautiful blend that exhibits bright aromas of raspberry and strawberry, with a cola note in the background and earthy minerality. The tannins are slightly grippy, but this will resolve with time in the cellar.

- Robert Whitley, *Wine Review Online*

91PTS This sophisticated and compelling wine combines full body and a muscular texture with very tasty, solid fruit flavors. The balance between acidity, tannin and flavor is good, and the finish is tangy and lingering.

- *Wine Enthusiast*

90PTS 14.7% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.60, 995 cases., Dijon 114 and 115 and Pommard clones planted at Kite's Rest Vineyard. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. • Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly aromatic, offering scents of macerated cherry, peppery spice and a hint of toast. The wine offers a forward drinking essence of cherry fruit framed by modest tannins and a measured riff of oak. Upbeat and easy to like, with a silky mouthfeel and a timid but flavorful finish. The lightest weight wine in the 2013 Black Kite lineup, but not at all wimpy.

- Rusty Gaffney, *Prince of Pinot*

88pts Its aromas of red cherries with a whiff of dried strawberry also carry a distant brushy adjunct that emerges as the wine sits in the glass. Still, the nose is relatively accessible, albeit with just a bit of youthful reluctance at present, and that same ready-to-develop character is part and parcel of the slight narrow focus of the flavors as well. It needs a couple of years at a minimum while it opens up, and five would be better.

- *Connoisseur's Guide*

2013 REDWOODS' EDGE PINOT NOIR, ANDERSON VALLEY

93PTS Redwoods' Edge is another in a fine string of Pinots from Black Kite in the very good 2013 vintage. This example exhibits an earthy nose, with hints of cola and forest floor and a touch of oak vanillin. On the palate it shows good balance, layers of ripe black raspberry and blackberry, with firm tannins that will lose their edge after another year or two in the bottle.

- Robert Whitley, *Wine Review Online*

92PTS If slightly quiet at first pass, yet possessed of very solid Pinot Noir credentials and rich in crème brûlée oak, this nose never stints on the range, depth or richness of top bottlings. It is supple, quite full in feel with the tighter underbelly that shows up in most of the Black Kite bottlings from 2013, and its deep black cherry fruit stays the course even as youthful tannin makes itself known at the finish. It is tasty enough today to go with savory roasts and can age for a bit as well.

- Charles Olken, *Connoisseur's Guide*

91PTS This wine is bold and full bodied, big enough for a grilled steak, with powerful ripe fruit flavors like black cherry and blackberry. Firm-enough tannins add grip to the texture, with slightly smoky, peppery accents on the finish.

- *Wine Enthusiast*

90PTS Enticingly delicate, with attractive lavender and floral scents, fine-grained tannins and a mix of raspberry, cherry, plum and light loamy earth flavors. Ends clean and persistent, retaining grace. Drink now.

- Jim Laube, *Wine Spectator*

90PTS 14.8% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.58, 335 cases. Dijon 114 and 115 clones planted at Kite's Rest Vineyard. 321 feet elevation, north facing, loam soils. Yields 1.5-2.0 tons per acre. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. • Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of macerated dark cherries and spicy, smoky oak lead to a charming medium-bodied core of cherry and huckleberry fruit flavors underlain with smoky oak and a touch of umami. The tannins are balanced and the finish is courageous and juicy. The wine is lavishly oaked and shows a slight bit of alcoholic warmth on the finish, but still has a lot to recommend.

- Rusty Gaffney, *Prince of Pinot*

2013 STONY TERRACE PINOT NOIR, ANDERSON VALLEY

96PTS Winemaker Jeff Gaffner's hot streak with Pinot from the 2013 vintage continues with this blockbuster from Black Kite. Stony Terrace exhibits that rare tension between fruit, tannin and acid that delivers exquisite balance. The palate is layered with aromas of black raspberry and fragrant strawberry, notes of spice, cola and earth, with firm grip that indicates the potential for long life.

– Robert Whitley, *Wine Review Online*

93PTS 14.8% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.58, 350 cases, \$60. Pommard clone grown at Kite's Rest Vineyard. Elevation 217 feet, north facing, gravelly loam soils, yields 1.0-2.5 tons per acre. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. • Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very fragrant, with aromas of black cherry, black raspberry, woodlands, sous-bois and a floral note elevating from the glass. Inviting richness of darker cherry and berry flavors are backed by mildly firm tannins and juicy acidity. Silky in the mouth, with a vibrant and flavorful finish that really hangs on.

– Rusty Gaffney, *Prince of Pinot*

93PTS A touch of rosemary and other savory nuances add complexity to the classic cherry, mushroom and forest-floor impressions in this full-bodied and fascinating wine. Firm tannins and supportive acidity are balanced by a sense of lushness in the texture. The finish is long and delicious.

– *Wine Enthusiast*

91PTS Medium-light ruby; attractive, deep, earthy, spicy, raspberry, cherry, and blackberry fruit aroma with hints of sandalwood and tobacco leaf; medium to medium-full body; rich, textured, nicely balanced, red and black fruit flavors with bright acidity and a hint of cola; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Shows some elegance and very appealing to drink now. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 175 cases; 100% PN.

– *California Grapevine*

89PTS Built along the same ripe and decently structured lines as most of the Black Kite wines here, this one does suggest a bit higher ripeness in its aromas and in the early fleshiness of its texture. It carries the convincing fruit that is a common trait of this wholly enjoyable group, and it keeps that fruit going from front to back without ever resorting to excess. Like its mates, it would reward a short stay in the cellar.

– Charles Olken, *Connoisseur's Guide*

2013 RIVER TURN PINOT NOIR, ANDERSON VALLEY

93PTS River Turn from this vintage impresses with its density and brooding earthiness. The fruit profile runs to the dark side, and there is a strong wood note that gives the wine warmth and a hint of spice. Yet there is every reason to think this wine has much more to give but will only express its buried treasure with considerable time in the cellar. This is a Pinot to lay down for at least another two to five years. That's not advice you often hear in connection with most California Pinot.

– Robert Whitley, *Wine Review Online*

93PTS Effusive and inviting fruit and spice aromas plus tangy, tasty black-cherry and cranberry flavors inhabit this full-bodied, beautifully focused wine. It's solidly balanced, not at all shy about oak flavors and engagingly complex. Drink now through 2020.

– *Wine Enthusiast*

92PTS 14.6% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.62, 352 cases, \$60. Pommard clone planted at Kite's Rest Vineyard. Elevation 130 feet, north facing, sandy and silty loam soils, yields 2.5 tons per acre. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. • Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Initially shy aromas of oak-kissed black cherry fruit pick up intensity over time in the glass. Intense attack of cherry and strawberry fruit with an earthy bent. Structured with well-proportioned tannins, a measured use of oak, and an edgy, generous and lengthy finish.

– Rusty Gaffney - *Prince of Pinot*

91PTS Medium-light ruby; fragrant, cranberry and black cherry fruit aroma with light smoky notes and hints of cinnamon and Asian spices; medium to medium-full body; soft, supple, earthy, well balanced, elegantly styled, red and black fruit flavors; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering after-taste. Easy to drink now. Very highly recommended. 14.6% alcohol; 176 cases; 100% PN.

– *California Grapevine*

91PTS The firmest of the Black Kite Pinots, this one shows particularly well in the nose where its well-defined, vigorous red cherry fruit is joined by the nicely mated richness of crème brûlée oak and a whiff of dried twigs. Full-bodied and yet fairly lively, it is supple and inviting at the front of the palate and firmly structured from middle to finish without let up despite some coarse edges that come into play. With both enticing character and sturdy framing, this is a wine for the future, and we would not be averse to cellar time of five or six years.

– Charles Olken, *Connoisseur's Guide*

2013 ANGEL HAWK PINOT NOIR, ANDERSON VALLEY

97PTS 2013 Black Kite 'Angel Hawk' In the vast universe of Black Kite pinot noir, the Angel Hawk Reserve is the most elegant. It is a pinot structured for the long haul, with firm tannins and bright acidity that lend gravitas, while the palate shows alluring layers of raspberry, strawberry and black cherry, complemented by a touch of wood spice. You won't go wrong if you pop the cork and enjoy now, but another five to seven years in a good cellar will reward the patient. Easily one of winemaker Jeff Gaffner's finest pinots to date.
– Robert Whitley

93PTS 14.6% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.60, 163 cases. Released February 2016. Dijon 114 and 115 and Pommard clones. 2-day cold soak, inoculated with RC212 yeast and punched down three times daily. After fermentation, the wine first rested for 10 months in a mix of 33% new and 1-year-old French oak barrels. The best barrels were aged for another 12 months for a total of 22 months in barrel. • Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is practically orgasmic, offering soaring aromas of dark red grapes, berries and cherries accompanied by a woodland scent. The rich core of cherry, raspberry and cranberry fruits are well-spiced and are accented with weighted notes of anise and caramel. Bold, yet charming, with good restraint and guile.

– Rusty Gaffney, *Prince of Pinot*

92PTS Medium-light ruby; attractive, forward, spicy, strawberry and black cherry fruit aroma that developed depth and some complexity as it aired in the glass; medium to medium-full body; deep, rich, elegant, red and black fruit flavors with bright acidity and a hint of cola; medium to medium-full tannin; lingering aftertaste. Deserves a few more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. 14.6% alcohol; 163 cases; 100% PN.

– California Grapevine

93PTS Editor's Choice This wine is the top of the line for Black Kite, and it certainly does not disappoint. Tea leaves, raspberry and cherry make a great blend of aromas, while the fruit flavors are bright like red cherries, the texture lively and fresh, and the overall impression very elegant. Best now through 2020.
– The Wine Enthusiast

2013 SOBERANES VINEYARD PINOT NOIR, SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS

95PTS The Santa Lucia Highlands arrived late to the pinot noir party, but better late than never. These days this region at the northern tip of Monterey County is on a par with the more hallowed Russian River Valley and not as prone to vintage variation. Black Kite's effort from the Soberanes Vineyard in the 2013 vintage is impressive, showing complex layers of black cherry, raspberry and strawberry fruit, with a subtle spice note in the background and firm but nicely integrated grape tannins. Give this wine another three to five years to show its best.

– Robert Whitley, *Wine Review Online*

92PTS 14.8% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.58, 423 cases. Pisoni clone. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. • Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very engaging nose offering hi-tone aromas of cherries, red berries and latte. Succulent on the palate, with flavors of pie cherry, red berries and cola dancing in harmony with a deft touch of oak. Impressive harmony and a consuming finish that seems to last and last.

– Rusty Gaffney, *Prince of Pinot*

92PTS Cinnamon and spearmint elements give depth to the pinpoint, laser-sharp fruit notes of cherry blossom and strawberry on this bottling. Strong herbal flavors of thyme and marjoram and spices of green cardamom of peppercorn hit the palate right away, seasoning cranberry and pomegranate fruit, and finishing on a slate minerality.

– Wine Enthusiast

90PTS Medium-light to medium ruby; attractive, earthy, cedary, spicy, black cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of milk chocolate and forest floor; medium to medium-full body; forward, rich, fleshy, red and black fruit flavors with herbal notes and a hint of cola; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Developed depth and some complexity as it aired in the glass. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 423 cases; 100% PN.

– California Grapevine

89PTS The ripest tasting of the Black Kite clan, although not by much, this wine focuses on sweet, concentrated cherry notes in its aromas and adds in suggestions of brush and woodsiness. Full and rounded on the palate with a fleshy, viscous tilt to its texture, it leaves little to the imagination and is able to be served today despite its moderated tannins that will hold the wine steady for up to a half-decade.

– Charles Olken, *Connoisseur's Guide*

2013 SIERRA MAR PINOT NOIR

91PTS Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, fragrant, spicy, tangerine and green apple aroma with a hint of lychee; medium-full body; rich, fleshy, citrus and green apple flavors with a slight hint of residual sugar and a stylish creaminess in the mouthfeel; lingering after-taste. Very highly recommended. 14.1% alcohol; 264 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML.

– *California Grapevine*

2013 GAP'S CROWN PINOT NOIR, SONOMA COAST

95PTS Black Kite's best Pinots typically come from the winery's phenomenal Anderson Valley vineyard, but winemaker Jeff Gaffner can ring the bell even when Black Kite sources grapes from other vineyard sites. This Gap's Crown from the Sonoma Coast is a sensational Pinot that offers impressive dimension. It is beautifully structured and suave on the palate, with deep aromas of raspberry and blueberry as well as an intriguing spice note on the finish.

– *Robert Whitley, Wine Review Online*

91PTS Firm and rich without being weighty, this features tannins that add grip and density to the forest floor and earthy components, given voice by notes of blackberry and blueberry. Long and lingering on the finish. Drink now through 2022.

– *Jim Laube, Wine Spectator*

91PTS From the producer best known for its own Anderson Valley estate wines, this Pinot is varietally rustic in pine needle, dark, baked plum and smoky oak, the oak stylistically reminiscent of many of its other wines. Mellowed acidity complements the burliness and ripeness of the fruit before a lengthy, Asian-spiced finish.

– *Wine Enthusiast*

91PTS Even with hints of dried cherries and cranberries in its aromas, this wine is guided first by youthful alive scents of fresh red cherries, a slight dusty rose aspect and creamy, rich oak. Full on the palate and supple in feel, it is admittedly a mouthful of flavor that does not quit and earns its high regard both for its depth and for its Pinot Noir texture. It does have a layer of tannin that gives it a useful bit of grip, but the wine is so expressive even now that it could be enjoyed at this still-developing but delicious current state if that is your wont.

– *Charles Olken, Connoisseur's Guide*

91PTS 14.8% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.58, 273 cases, \$60. Dijon 777 clone. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. • Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. I loved the nose which extended aromas of black cherry, dark red raspberry, redwood and anise. An appealing wine with impeccably balanced t'n'a, a creamy mouthfeel, and a noticeable top note of oak.

– *Rusty Gaffney, Prince of Pinot*

91PTS Medium-light ruby color; attractive, forward, cranberry and raspberry fruit aroma with floral notes and hints of clove and cinnamon; medium body; spicy, fleshy, red fruit flavors that tend to be a bit tight on the finish; medium tannin; lingering aftertaste. Nicely balanced and showing some elegance and complexity as it developed with airing in the glass. Deserves several more years of bottle aging. Very highly recommended. 14.8% alcohol; 273 cases; 100% Pinot Noir (PN).

– *California Grapevine*

2013 VINTAGE CHARDONNAY

ANTONIO GALLONI'S VINOUS

92PTS 2013 Gaps Crown Chardonnay Vivid yellow. Bright, tightly focused and vibrant on the nose, displaying intense tangerine, pear and mineral aromas and a subtle touch of honeysuckle. Juicy citrus and orchard fruit flavors meld depth and energy with a deft hand. The floral and mineral notes come back on the incisive finish, which hangs on with strong tenacity.

-- *Josh Raynolds*

91PTS Soberanes Vineyard Chardonnay Bright gold. Ripe honeydew melon, nectarine and pear nectar on the deeply perfumed nose, complicated by hints of smoky lees and vanilla. Juicy and supple on the palate, offering an array of ripe orchard and pit fruit flavors and a zesty jolt of candied ginger. Shows very good energy and thrust on the clinging finish, which features a gentle floral quality.

– *Josh Raynolds*

2014 SOBERANES VINEYARD CHARDONNAY, SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS

92PTS 14.3% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.60, 212 cases. Wente clone. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. • Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Rather subdued but pleasant aromas of lemon-lime, chalk dust and crushed rock. Not as boisterous as the Gap's Crown and more imbued with

salty green apple notes to accompany the flavors of lemon, white peach and caramel. Very smooth on the palate and slightly creamy on the finish.

– *Rusty Gaffney, Pinot File*

92PTS Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, intense, fragrant, earthy, mandarin orange and white peach aroma with mineral notes and hints of honeysuckle and orange blossom; medium-full body; crisp, citrusy, melon, apple and stone fruit flavors with bright acidity and a silky mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Not quite as rich and creamy as Lucia's Soberanes bottling though still very appealing with stylish elegance and some complexity as it developed with airing in the glass. Very highly recommended. 14.3% alcohol; 212 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML.

– *California Grapevine*

2014 SIERRA MAR VINEYARD CHARDONNAY, SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS

93PTS 14.1% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.62, 264 cases, \$48. Wente clone. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. • Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Clean aromas of lemon oil, citrus blossom, vanilla and marzipan. An abundance of citrus spearheads the flavor profile, complimented by notes of pain grille, caramel, butter brickle and pear. Pinpoint balance with a juicy finish that offers a hint of salinity.

– *Rusty Gaffney, Prince of Pinot*

91PTS Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, fragrant, spicy, tangerine and green apple aroma with a hint of lychee; medium-full body; rich, fleshy, citrus and green apple flavors with a slight hint of residual sugar and a stylish creaminess in the mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. 14.1% alcohol; 264 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML.

– *California Grapevine*

2014 GAP'S CROWN VINEYARD CHARDONNAY, SANTA LUCIA HIGHLANDS

94PTS 14.2% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.62, 201 cases. Dijon 76, 95 and 96. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. • Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Highly aromatic with a perfume that sustains over a lengthy time in the glass, featuring lemon cake, pear, nutty pastry creme and clarified butter. This wine comes at you with a flavor stick, exploding on the palate with flavors of lemon, pineapple, peach, pear and a hint of spice and vanilla. Impressive harmony, with a slightly viscous demeanor, and a really long, lip-smacking finish.

– *Rusty Gaffney, Prince of Pinot*

93PTS 2014 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay "Exhibits a charming mix of buttery oak, rich fruit, baking spice nuances and an overall sense of harmony and finesse. The core apple, melon and apricot flavors are intense without being weighty, and the finish displays a measure of grace." Jim Laube, Wine Spectator
91pts Medium-light golden yellow; attractive, fragrant, spicy, tangerine and green apple aroma with a hint of lychee; medium-full body; rich, fleshy, citrus and green apple flavors with a slight hint of residual sugar and a stylish creaminess in the mouthfeel; lingering aftertaste. Very highly recommended. 14.1% alcohol; 264 cases; 100% Chardonnay; 100% BF; 100% ML.

– *California Grapevine*

