



FILM NOIR

The latest instalment of The Drinks Business Global Masters series saw the spotlight turned on in-vogue Pinot Noir, with the competition highlighting the importance of a sensitive portrayal by its winemakers, writes *Gabriel Stone*

THERE'S LITTLE doubt that Pinot Noir is fashionable these days, but such a sensitive grape's transition into the mainstream is hardly guaranteed. By bringing together over 350 examples from 16 countries to be scrutinised by some of the trade's most experienced MW and MS palates, The Drinks Business Pinot Noir Global Masters offered a perfect opportunity to assess the status quo.

One thing the results made abundantly clear is that top quality examples of this grape variety can now come from just about any of the world's major wine producing regions. Represented among

this year's gold medal winners were New Zealand, South Africa, Austria, Australia, Chile, Germany and Italy. Although both California and Oregon failed to achieve the same level of accolade as last year, they were nevertheless well represented in the medal table along with Romania, France, Argentina, Canada, Bulgaria, Spain, Switzerland and indeed England.

"My overall impression is that the competition is hotting up," remarked Sebastian Payne MW, buyer for The Wine Society. "There seem to be more and more places all over the world getting things right." While noting the particular

strength of New Zealand, whose clutch of gold medals and a Master proved its ongoing prowess, Payne added:

"Countries like South Africa and Chile show steady improvement, and there were some surprisingly good wines at under £10 a bottle, which used to be a price point to avoid for Pinot Noir."

Nevertheless, the feeling among most of the panel chairs was that the perfume and charm that are so intrinsic to Pinot Noir's appeal tend to emerge at higher price brackets. "It is a tough ask to expect to produce good Pinot at under £10 a bottle with the UK tax regime and generally you

Sparkling white Pinot Noir

Company	Wine	Vintage	Country	Medal
£10-£20				
Ca' del Gè	Pinot Nero Metodo Classico	2009	Italy	Bronze
Gauchezco Wines	Gauchezco Sparkling Extra Brut	2014	Argentina	Bronze
Travaglino	Gran Cuvée Oltrepò Pavese Pinot Nero DOCG Metodo Classico	2008	Italy	Bronze
£20-£30				
Champagne Gremillet	Blanc de Noirs	NV	France	Silver
The Daily Drinker	Champagne Larnaudie-Hirault Blanc de Noirs	NV	France	Silver
Champagne Devaux	Blanc de Noirs	NV	France	Silver
Akarua	Akarua Brut	NV	New Zealand	Silver
Tenuta Fornace	Pinot Nero Metodo Classico 66	2008	Italy	Bronze
Juvé & Camps	Blanc de Noirs	2011	Spain	Bronze
£30-£50				
Champagne Gremillet	Millésime 2009	2009	France	Silver
Champagne Philipponnat	Blanc de Noirs	2008	France	Silver
Akarua	Akarua Vintage Brut	2010	New Zealand	Silver
Over £50				
Champagne Chassenay d'Arce	Cuvée Confidences	NV	France	Silver

Sparkling rosé Pinot Noir

Under £10				
Cono Sur	Sparkling Rosé	NV	Chile	Silver
£10-£20				
Familia Schroeder	Rosa De Los Vientos	2014	Argentina	Silver
Freixenet	Elyssia Pinot Noir	NV	Spain	Bronze
Manuelina	Metodo Classico Pinot Nero Brut DOCG Cruasé "145"	2011	Italy	Bronze
Quaquarini Francesco	Oltrepo Pavese DOCG Metodo Classico Pinot Nero Brut Cruasé	2010	Italy	Bronze
Juvé & Camps	Brut Rosé	NV	Spain	Bronze
Canals & Munné	Cava Pinot Noir Brut	2012	Spain	Bronze
Edoardo Miroglio	EM Brut Rosé	2009	Bulgaria	Bronze
£20-£30				
Akarua	Akarua Rosé Brut	NV	New Zealand	Silver
Giorgi	Cruasé	2010	Italy	Silver
Halewood Romania	"Rhein Extra" Brut Rosé, Cramele Halewood	NV	Romania	Bronze

Pinot Noir Masters 2014: Sparkling red Pinot Noir

£30-£50				
Schug Carneros Estate Winery	Schug Rouge de Noirs Brut	2011	US	Bronze

The judges: Pictured (left to right): Demetri Walters MW, Anthony Foster MW, James Handford MW, David Bird MW, Justin Knock MW, Patrick Schmitt, Matthieu Longuère MS, Gabriel Stone, Jonathan Pedley MW, Sebastian Payne MW, Richard Bampfield MW, Mark Savage MW, Hugo Rose MW

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White Pinot Noir

Company	Wine	Vintage	Country	Medal
£10-£20 Litmus Wines Edoardo Miroglio	Litmus White Pinot Noir EM Blanc de Noirs	2011 2012	England Bulgaria	Silver Bronze

Rosé Pinot Noir

£10-£20 Juvé & Camps	Aurora D'Espiells Rosé	2013	Spain	Bronze
£20-£30 Ousterhout Wine Vineyard	Woods Vineyard	2013	US	Silver

Unoaked red Pinot Noir

Under £10 Bouchard Aîné et Fils	Pinot Noir Réserve du Conseiller	NV	France	Bronze
Sileni Estates	Grey Rock Pinot Noir (UK bottled)	2014	New Zealand	Bronze
Domaines Paul Mas	Domaines Ferrandière Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
Cramele Recas	Paparuda Pinot Noir	2013	Romania	Bronze
Trapiche	Mar & Pampa Pinot Noir	2014	Argentina	Bronze
Sileni Estates	Sileni Nano Pinot Noir (French bottled)	2014	New Zealand	Bronze
Boutinot	Le Fou Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
Domaine De Castelnaud	Domaine De Castelnaud, Les Mûriers Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
Halewood Romania	Surprisingly Good Pinot Noir, Cramele Halewood	2014	Romania	Bronze
Zimmermann-Graeff & Müller	Peter & Peter Pinot Noir Trocken	2012	Germany	Bronze
Sileni Estates	Sileni Cellar Selection Pinot Noir (UK bottled)	2014	New Zealand	Bronze

need to set the sights a bit higher if you want to be rewarded," commented Mark Savage MW, managing director of UK merchant Savage Selection. "There are certainly some possibilities at around £15," he continued. "At over £25 then you deserve to see a good depth of Pinot character." Excitingly for fans of this variety who are prepared to pay a bit more to indulge their passion, there was certainly no shortage of successfully ambitious examples at these upper price points. Indeed, observed Payne pointedly, "Burgundy seems too scared to enter many wines; perhaps they have more and more reason to watch the competition."

TENDER LOVING CARE

So what is it that winemakers around the world are getting right to produce such

an abundance of high quality styles? According to *the drinks business* editor in chief Patrick Schmitt, "Something positive that was immediately apparent among this year's entries to our Pinot Masters was a more sensitive handling of the grape. Not only did we rarely encounter harsh tannins from heavy-handed

'There appeared to be a better balance between fruit sweetness and freshness among 2015's entries'



Unoaked red Pinot Noir

Company	Wine	Vintage	Country	Medal
£10-£20				
Sileni Estates	Grey Rock Pinot Noir (NZ bottled)	2014	New Zealand	Silver
Juris	Pinot Noir Selection	2012	Austria	Silver
Direct Wines	Le Secret des Etoiles Pinot Noir, Le Chai au Quai	2013	France	Silver
Sileni Estates	Overstone Pinot Noir (NZ bottled)	2014	New Zealand	Bronze
Mario J Burkhart	2 Gewächs Blauer Spätburgunder	2012	Germany	Bronze
Domaines Paul Mas	Domaines Martinolles Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
£20-£30				
Schug Carneros Estate Winery	Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir	2013	US	Silver
Sileni Estates	Cellar Selection Pinot Noir (NZ bottled)	2014	New Zealand	Bronze

Oaked red Pinot Noir

Under £10				
Domaine des Dieux	Josephine Pinot Noir	2011	South Africa	Silver
Trapiche	Oak Cask Pinot Noir	2014	Argentina	Silver
Gérard Bertrand	Domaine de l'Aigle Pinot Noir, IGP Haute Vallée de l'Aude	2013	France	Silver
Trapiche	Broquel Pinot Noir	2014	Argentina	Silver
Domaines Paul Mas	Paul Mas Estate Pinot Noir	2013	France	Silver
Australian Vintage	Nepenthe Altitude Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Silver
Montgras Estates	Degras Reserva Pinot Noir	2014	Chile	Bronze
Viña San Pedro	Castillo de Molina Reserva, Curico Valley	2013	Chile	Bronze
Carolina Wine Brands	Viña Casablanca Cefiro Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Bronze
Maycas del Limari	Sumaq Pinot Noir	2014	Chile	Bronze
Chateau de la Tour	François Labet Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
Domaines Paul Mas	La Forge Estate Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
Vistamar	Sepia Reserva Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Bronze
Crown Cellars/Carlsberg UK	Las Ondas Pinot Noir, Cono Sur	2013	Chile	Bronze
Creemaschi Furlotti	Single Vineyard Pinot Noir	2014	Chile	Bronze
Domaines Paul Mas	Domaines Astruc Reserve Pinot Noir	2013	France	Bronze
Terranoble	Reserva Terroir Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Bronze

extraction methods or too much new oak, but there appeared to be a better balance between fruit sweetness and freshness among 2015's entries." What's more, he noted, "fewer examples had fallen victim to the raisined flavours or alcohol burn that can result from picking too late in a warm climate."

This analysis was echoed by Payne, who pointed to "much subtler wood treatment than I remember from last year, with a touch of American oak working quite successfully on some lower-priced wine."

For those producers working to make good quality Pinot Noir at the commercially important sub-£10 price point, consultant Richard Bampffield MW had the following advice: "Restrict yields as much as possible, don't try too hard on extraction and try to add an oak

component, even if small." More generally, Savage highlighted the right picking date as being "crucial" for producers' success. "A day or two too early and you will get green tannins, while a day or two beyond optimum and you may have prune juice," he warned.

For all the evidence that excellent Pinot Noir can come from very different corners of the world, he linked this picking decision closely to the importance of finding the right spot to plant such a sensitive variety. "You need to be confident that the vineyard site will allow for marginal ripening with maturity in the fruit that will render unnecessary any correction by either chaptalisation or acidification," insisted Savage, adding: "The vast majority of vineyard locations in the world will not be suitable." >



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Oaked red Pinot Noir (continued)

Company	Wine	Vintage	Country	Medal
£10-£20				
Framingham Wines	Ribbonwood Marlborough Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Gold
De Bortoli Wines	Villages Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Gold
Viña Errazuriz	Pinot Noir Max Reserva	2013	Chile	Gold
Accolade Wines	Waipara Hills Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Gold
MP Wines	Salentein Barrel Selection Pinot Noir	2013	Argentina	Silver
Stoneleigh	Latitude Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Silver
Albert Bichot	Bourgogne Pinot Noir "Secret de Famille"	2013	France	Silver
Flat Rock Cellars	Pinot Noir	2012	Canada	Silver
Edoardo Miroglio	EM Pinot Noir Reserve	2011	Bulgaria	Silver
Stonier	Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Silver
Brancott Estate	Letter Series T Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Silver
TerraVin Wines	Pinot Noir Estate	2011	New Zealand	Silver
Heirloom Vineyards	Adelaide Hills Pinot Noir	2014	Australia	Silver
Framingham Wines	Marlborough Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Silver
Jascots Wine Merchants	The Quercus Vineyard, Bellvale, Gippsland	2009	Australia	Silver
Singlefile	Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Silver
Matahiwi Estate Winery	Holly Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Silver
Marisco Vineyards	The King's Wrath Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Silver
Cono Sur	20 Barrels	2012	Chile	Silver
TerraVin Wines	Pinot Noir Estate	2012	New Zealand	Silver
Vinultra	Insight Single Vineyard Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Silver
Viña Tarapacá	Tarapacá Gran Reserva Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Silver
Sileni Estates	Selection "The Plateau" Pinot Noir (NZ bottled)	2013	New Zealand	Silver
Viña Valdivieso	Single Valley Lot Reserva Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Silver
Carolina Wine Brands	Viña Casablanca Single Vineyard Nimbus Pinot Noir	2012	Chile	Silver
Moehr-Niggli Wines	Pinot Noir Maienfeld	2012	Switzerland	Silver
HDN Wines	Bourgogne Pinot Noir, Lucien M	2012	France	Bronze
Cockburn + Campbell	Mission Vineyard Selection Pinot Noir, Mission Estate	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Viña Valdivieso	Single Vineyard Pinot Noir	2014	Chile	Bronze
Lawson's Dry Hills Wines	Reserve Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Familia Schroeder	Saurus Barrel Fermented Pinot Noir	2013	Argentina	Bronze
Matahiwi Estate Winery	Wairarapa Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Viña Valdivieso	Single Vineyard Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Bronze
Kellerei Meran Burggräfler	Alto Adige Blauburgunder Riserva Zeno	2012	Italy	Bronze
Brancott Estate	Terroir Series Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Wakefield/Taylor's Wines	Wakefield Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Bronze
Cavit	Bottega Vinai Pinot Nero Trentino DOC	2012	Italy	Bronze
Edoardo Miroglio	EM Pinot Noir	2012	Bulgaria	Bronze
Australian Vintage	Nepenthe Good Doctor Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Bronze
Accolade Wines	Mud House Central Otago Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Viu Manent	Secret of Viu Manent Pinot Noir	2013	Chile	Bronze
Elephant Hill	Elephant Hill Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Bronze
Halewood Romania	La Catina Vineyard Single Vineyard Pinot Noir	2011	Romania	Bronze
Maycas del Limari	Reserva Especial Pinot Noir	2014	Chile	Bronze
Iona	Mr P	2013	South Africa	Bronze
Hush Heath Estate	Hush Heath Manor Pinot Noir	2013	England	Bronze
Viña Errazuriz	Pinot Noir Aconcagua Costa	2013	Chile	Bronze
Stoneleigh	Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Cavit	Masi Trentini Pinot Nero Trentino Superiore DOC	2011	Italy	Bronze
Marisco Vineyards	The Ned Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Bodega Luigi Bosca, Familia Arizu	Luigi Bosca Grand Pinot Noir La Consulta	2013	Argentina	Bronze
Elephant Hill	Elephant Hill Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Celler de Capçanes	Pinot Noir de Capçanes	2012	Spain	Bronze
Gonzalez Byass UK	Jackson Estate Vintage Widow Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Bronze
The Goose Wines	Pinot Noir	2012	South Africa	Bronze
Bolney Wine Estate	Foxhole Vineyard Pinot Noir	2013	England	Bronze
Stoneleigh	Rapaura Series Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Bodega del Desierto	Desierto 25 Pinot Noir	2013	Argentina	Bronze
Edoardo Miroglio	Soli Pinot Noir	2012	Bulgaria	Bronze
Ehrmanns Wine	Giesen The Brothers Pinot Noir	2011	New Zealand	Bronze
Viña Valdivieso	Winemaker Reserva Pinot Noir	2014	Chile	Bronze
Marisco Vineyards	The King's Wrath Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Familia Schroeder	Saurus Select Pinot Noir	2013	Argentina	Bronze
Stonier	Reserve Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Bronze

Oaked red Pinot Noir (continued)

Company	Wine	Vintage	Country	Medal
£20-£30				
Accolade Wines	Mud House Estate Claim 431 Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Master
Cederberg	Ghost Corner Pinot Noir	2013	South Africa	Gold
Akarua	Pinot Noir	2011	New Zealand	Gold
Lowburn Ferry Wines	Home Block Pinot Noir	2011	New Zealand	Gold
Santolin Wines	Individual Vineyard Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Gold
Cantina Andriano	Anrar Pinot Noir Riserva Alto Adige	2012	Italy	Silver
Colombo, Cascina Pastori	Apertura, Piemonte Pinot Nero DOC	2011	Italy	Silver
Rex Hill	Willamette Valley Pinot Noir	2012	United States	Silver
Vinultra	Little Beauty Black Edition Pinot Noir	2010	New Zealand	Silver
Bottega Family Wines	Whalehaven Conservation Coast Pinot Noir	2013	South Africa	Silver
Lemelson Vineyards	Six Vineyards	2012	US	Silver
Hahn Family Wines	Hahn SLH Pinot Noir	2012	United States	Silver
Rockburn Wines	Central Otago Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Silver
Schug Carneros Estate Winery	Carneros Pinot Noir	2013	US	Silver
Hamilton Russell Vineyards	Pinot Noir	2013	South Africa	Silver
Jackson Family Wines	Cambria Julia's Pinot Noir	2012	US	Silver
Akarua	Akarua Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Silver
Chehalem Winery	Three Vineyard Pinot Noir	2012	US	Bronze
Akarua	Akarua Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
De Bortoli Wines	Riorret Ponderosa	2012	Australia	Bronze
Juris	Pinot Noir Breitensteil	2012	Austria	Bronze
Cristom Vineyards	Mt Jefferson Cuvée Pinot Noir	2012	US	Bronze
Cantina Terlano	Montigl Pinot Nero Alto Adige Riserva	2012	Italy	Bronze
Moss Wood	Pinot Noir	2012	Australia	Bronze
Borgo Isolabella	Pinot Nero, Brico Del Falco	2010	Italy	Bronze
Iona	Pinot Noir	2013	South Africa	Bronze
Seifried	Aotea by Seifried Nelson Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Bronze
Maycas del Limari	San Julian	2013	Chile	Bronze
Moehr-Niggli Wines	Pilgrim, Pinot Noir Maienfeld	2012	Switzerland	Bronze
Boutinot	Assmannshäuser Höllenberg Spätburgunder QBA Trocken Crescentia'	2012	Germany	Bronze
MP Wines	Salentein Single Vineyard Pinot Noir	2012	Argentina	Bronze
Juris	Pinot Noir Haide	2012	Austria	Bronze
Franz Keller Scharzev Adlev	Spätburgunder "S"	2012	Germany	Bronze
Bomb Wines	Oregon Pinot Noir	2011	US	Bronze
TerraVin Wines	Pinot Noir Hillside Reserve	2011	New Zealand	Bronze

FORGETTING THEIR ROOTS

Despite the abundance of high quality Pinot Noirs emanating from different corners of the world today, Bampffield questioned the clarity with which these wines express their origin. In contrast to the deeply nuanced distinctions displayed so famously by the grape in Burgundy, he remarked: "I don't think that national and regional differences are yet nearly as clear in Pinot as they are with grapes such as Cabernet and Shiraz." With entries for the Masters series arranged by price bracket rather than country of origin and all wines tasted blind, Bampffield suggested that it would have been "extremely difficult" to pin down wines to specific parts of the world, "whereas, with Cabernet I think I would be more sure of my ground," he remarked. Indeed, looking ahead to the

evolution of this competition in years to come, Bampffield predicted that the lineup is likely to become "more and more interesting as new sites in the New World in particular are developed."

That suggestion certainly opens up an exciting future direction for Pinot Noir's international development. As this in-depth assessment of the current state of affairs demonstrated, winemakers have certainly secured a solid base of quality on which to refine their offer in ever more nuanced directions. db



pinot noir masters

Oaked red Pinot Noir (continued)

Company	Wine	Vintage	Country	Medal
£30-£50				
Leo Hillinger	Pinot Noir Terroir	2013	Austria	Gold
Ehrmanns Wine	Giesen Single Vineyard Selection Brookby Road	2012	New Zealand	Gold
Mario J Burkhart	Rarus Noir Blauer Spatburgunder 1 Gewächs	2012	Germany	Gold
Castelfeder	Pinot Nero Riserva Alto Adige DOC 'Burgum Novum'	2011	Italy	Gold
Moorooduc Estate	The Moorooduc McIntyre Pinot Noir	2010	Australia	Gold
Accolade Wines	Eillen Hardy Pinot Noir	2012	Australia	Gold
Pol Roger Portfolio	Pinot Noir Los Carneros, Robert Sinskey Winery	2011	US	Silver
Cono Sur	Ocio	2012	Chile	Silver
Weingut Markgraf Von Baden	Durbacher Schlossberg "Sophienberg" VDP Grosselage	2012	Germany	Silver
TerraVin Wines	Pinot Noir Eaton Family Vineyard	2011	New Zealand	Silver
Cakebread Cellars	Two Creeks Vineyards Pinot Noir Anderson Valley	2012	US	Silver
Jackson Family Wines	Hartford Court Russian River Pinot Noir	2013	US	Silver
Tapanappa Wines	Foggy Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir	2013	Australia	Silver
Ehrmanns Wine	Giesen Single Vineyard Selection Clayvin Pinot Noir	2012	New Zealand	Silver
Bouchard Finlayson	Galpin Peak Pinot Noir	2013	South Africa	Silver
Jackson Family Wines	La Crema Willamette Pinot Noir	2012	US	Bronze
Chehalem Winery	Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir	2012	US	Bronze
Jackson Family Wines	Champ de Rêves Pinot Noir Anderson Valley	2012	US	Bronze
Cristom Vineyards	Jessie Vineyard Pinot Noir	2012	US	Bronze
The Eyrie Vineyards	Pinot Noir Willamette Valley	2012	US	Bronze
Sileni Estates	Sileni Exceptional Vintage Pinot Noir	2013	New Zealand	Bronze
Lemelson Vineyards	Thea's Selection	2012	US	Bronze
Bomb Wines	Carden Willamette Valley Pinot Noir	2011	US	Bronze
Over £50				
Bouchard Finlayson	Tête de Cuvée Pinot Noir	2012	South Africa	Gold
Albert Bichot	Chambolle Musigny Les Chabiots	2010	France	Bronze



About the competition

In a crowded wine competition arena, *the drinks business* Global Pinot Noir Masters stands out for its assessment of wines purely by grape variety rather than region.

Divided only by price bracket and, for ease of judging, whether the style was oaked or unoaked, the blind tasting format allowed wines to be assessed without prejudice about their country of origin.

The wines were scored out of 100, with those gaining more than 95 points being awarded the top title of Master. Those earning more than 90 points were given a gold, those more than 85 points a silver, and those more than 80 points a bronze.

The wines were judged by a group of Masters of Wine and Master Sommeliers on 4 February at The Drapers Arms in Islington, London.