

# Fabulous pinots from Central Otago

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## Mark Henderson savours some fine wine from Central Otago.

In an age where the majority of New Zealand wines are sealed with a screw cap, today's clutch of wines had four sealed with a cork, three of those from biodynamic producers.

Seven of the eight wines were the product of a single vineyard and all eight were quite simply fabulous.

At the Central Otago Pinot Celebration earlier this year, I noticed a nuance of wild herb or lavender in many of the wines: this was far less evident today, requiring yet more "study" for this enthusiast!

I lined up these wines blind, and in random order, and was joined by my regular panellist Mr Mac and Sarge, who thoroughly enjoyed their morning's work.



### 2014 Valli Gibbston Vineyard Pinot Noir

**Price:** \$65

**Rating:** Excellent to outstanding

Fragrant with dark fruits, spice, oak and earthiness; evidently ripe fruit. Some funky corruption with air. Quite powerful; dark and red fruits, a delicious salty/soy/umami note, then fine tannins and fresh acidity bringing a zingy top note. Youthful, vibrant and still coming together but all the elements in place.

Finish dry and chewy with tobacco nuances.

[www.valliwine.com](http://www.valliwine.com) (<http://www.valliwine.com>)



### 2013 Rippon Emma's Block Pinot Noir

**Price:** \$95

**Rating:** Outstanding

Powerful nose, at first hinting at tar/smoke and menthol before moving into pepper and red fruits. Powerful tannins drive the wine with a schisty minerality and leafy freshness before the crisp, dry refreshing finish. Intense yet elegant with the mouthfeel tilting towards Europe.

Real energy here, aeration brings meaty savoury notes.

[www.rippon.co.nz](http://www.rippon.co.nz) (<http://www.rippon.co.nz>)



### **2014 Valli Bendigo Vineyard**

#### **Pinot Noir**

**Price:** \$65

**Rating:** Excellent

Dark fruits and black cherry with savoury Marmite and oak seasoning. Rich and weighty, almost brooding, with raspberry joining the cherry notes on the silky entry; this has a youthful rawness to the fruit before powerful tannins take over.



Delicious, but some extra time in bottle will make this all the more compelling.

[www.valliwine.com](http://www.valliwine.com) (<http://www.valliwine.com>)

### **2014 Valli Bannockburn Vineyard Pinot Noir**

**Price:** \$65

**Rating:** Outstanding

Savoury nose and a light funky hint before the cherries and spice take over. Initially this felt understated yet not underpowered with fine, elegant balance, albeit with tannic backbone.

This wine swelled with aeration, showing succulent cherry and plum, superb velvetyess, and a finish that went on and on.

[www.valliwine.com](http://www.valliwine.com) (<http://www.valliwine.com>)



## 2013 Rippon Tinker's Field Pinot Noir

**Price:** \$105

**Rating:** Outstanding

Distinctly savoury, a yeasty Marmite note, hints of char and a compelling fragrance. Powerfully structured with a salty/saline note and a chalky, mineral finish hinting at Europe. Complex, dark and savoury, dutch licorice, and the fruit building in intensity before the lovely, chewy, dry finish.

Would be great with food.

[www.rippon.co.nz](http://www.rippon.co.nz) (<http://www.rippon.co.nz>)



## 2013 Rockburn Pinot Noir

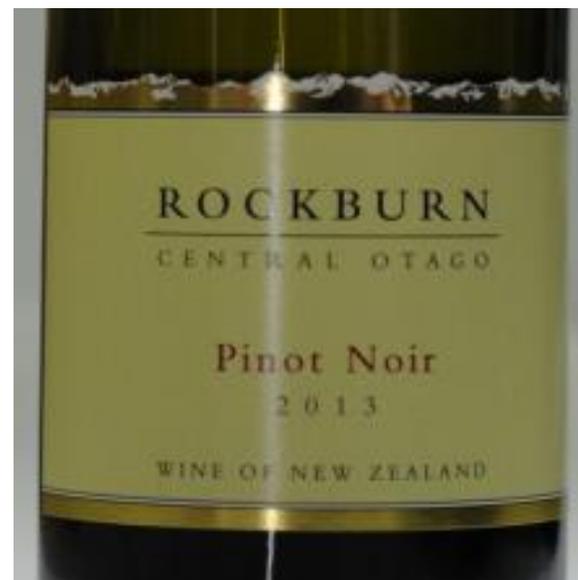
**Price:** \$50

**Rating:** Excellent to outstanding

The nose a little shy here but dark fruits, umami and more evident oak. A wave of fruit explodes on the palate, plum and dark fruits with oak nuances and a yummy, savoury note. The ripe fruit is not at all over-sweet and has structure to back it up.

This drinks well, finishing both sweet and savoury, with a lovely freshness.

[www.rockburn.co.nz](http://www.rockburn.co.nz) (<http://www.rockburn.co.nz>)



## 2014 Burn Cottage Valli Vineyard Pinot Noir

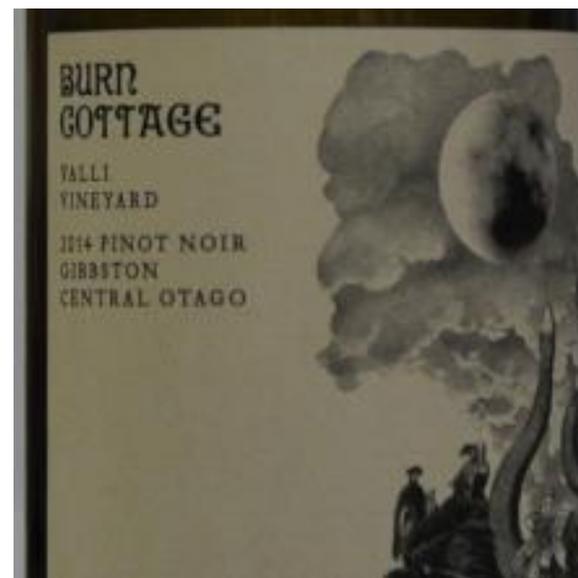
**Price:** \$63

**Rating:** Excellent to outstanding

Bright fruit; perfumed, with wild herb and lavender nuances. This shows a cool elegance and silky texture, dancing on the palate with its finesse. The fruit sweetness builds, as do the tannins, with a fresh, sappy (whole bunch?) note adding lift.

This becomes richer and more savoury, finishing very long, gaining lots of interest.

[www.burncottage.com](http://www.burncottage.com) (<http://www.burncottage.com>)



## 2013 Folding Hill Orchard Block Pinot Noir

**Price:** \$60

**Rating:** Excellent

Quite different on the nose; perfumed, with cranberry, wild herb and damp fur: changing and evolving. Liqueur fruit, almost candied and with a balsamic note at first followed by beef jerky. Powerful, clearly ripe with structure to match showing more and more savoury elements and raspberry essence.

A fascinating wine, that is a little different.

[www.foldinghill.co.nz](http://www.foldinghill.co.nz) (<http://www.foldinghill.co.nz>)



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