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2008 Samsara Pinot Noir Ampelos Vineyard

Rating: 91+
Drink: 2011-2021

The 2008 Pinot Noir Ampelos Vineyard (biodynamically farmed site with clay soils utilized by Brewer-Clifton as well) has deep, rich plum and black currant fruit with some roasted herbs, damp earth, and spice box. It is a chewy, structured wine, large-scaled, full-bodied but tannic, although not as backward as the Turner (no doubt because it possesses more richness and density). Patience is suggested, as this wine will benefit from 1-2 years of bottle age and keep for at least a decade or more.

This is the personal project of Ron Melville's son, Chad. He has turned in some impressive efforts in previous vintages and the 2008s are, for the most part, as good as his brilliant 2007s. Chad Melville tends to use approximately 50% stems/whole clusters for all of his Pinot Noirs with the exception of the Las Hermanas, which is only 25% whole cluster. His alcohols are moderate to moderately high by Santa Rita Hills standards – 14.1% is the lowest (for the Melville) to 14.7% the highest (for the Turner Vineyard). They are all 100% Pinot Noir and mostly made from various clones, including the newer Dijon clones, 115 and 667, and some of the older California clones such as Pommard. His oak regime is different from that of his mentors, Greg

- Robert Parker (August, 2010)

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2008 Samsara Pinot Noir Las Hermanas

Rating: 93
Drink: 2010-2017

Very limited in production, the 2008 Pinot Noir Las Hermanas (only about 100 cases) displays sweet plum, boysenberry, and black cherry fruit with some incense, underbrush, and spice. The wine has a deep ruby/plum color, a broad, savory mouthfeel, supple tannins, and a velvety, opulent finish. Drink it over the next 6-7 years.

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2008 Samsara Pinot Noir Melville Vineyard

Rating: 94
Drink: 2010-2018

The brilliant 2008 Pinot Noir Melville combines impressive elegance with fruit intensity and power. Deep ruby/purple in color, with notes of blueberry pie interwoven with raspberries and black cherries, this is a long, heady wine with a subtle touch of oak, superb concentration, and a full-bodied mouthfeel. Combining finesse with density, this wine should drink nicely for 7-8 years.

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2008 Samsara Pinot Noir Turner Vineyard

Rating: 88+
Drink: 2011-2019

The most backward, structured, and most difficult wine to evaluate is the dark plum/ruby/purple 2008 Pinot Noir Turner Vineyard. This wine is tannic, slightly austere, but exhibits loads of earthiness with hints of fresh mushrooms, roasted herbs, forest floor, and red and black fruits. Give it another 1-2 years of bottle age and drink it over the following 7-8.

This is the personal project of Ron Melville's son, Chad. He has turned in some impressive efforts in previous vintages and the 2008s are, for the most part, as good as his brilliant 2007s. Chad Melville tends to use approximately 50% stems/whole clusters for all of his Pinot Noirs with the exception of the Las Hermanas, which is only 25% whole cluster. His alcohols are moderate to moderately high by Santa Rita Hills standards – 14.1% is the lowest (for the Melville) to 14.7% the highest (for the Turner Vineyard). They are all 100% Pinot Noir and mostly made from various clones, including the newer Dijon clones, 115 and 667, and some of the older California clones such as Pommard. His oak regime is different from that of his mentors, Greg Brewer and Steve Clifton, since he prefers to use 20-25% new oak, except in the case of the single-barrel (new) wine,

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2008 Samsara Syrah Ampelos Vineyard

Rating: 91+
Drink: 2010-2020

A beautiful effort, the opaque ruby/purple-hued, Mediterranean-styled 2008 Syrah Ampelos Vineyard exhibits a meaty, spicy, peppery personality revealing lots of roasted herb notes. Fleshy and medium to full-bodied, it should improve with another year or two in the bottle, and keep for at least a decade.

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2008 Samsara Syrah Melville Vineyard

Rating: 94
Drink: 2010-2018

The real blockbuster is the 2008 Syrah Melville Vineyard, a California version of a French Cote Rotie. The small amount of Viognier included in the blend has resulted in an exotic floral character intermixed with notes of Allspice, black raspberries, black currants, and bacon fat. The incredibly complex aromatics are followed by a full-bodied, opulent, voluptuously textured wine with silky tannins as well as abundant character and personality. Drink it over the next 7-8 years.

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