


# VINBLADET

## Fakta om Vin siden 1992

Finally, the Sonoma Coast has been given its proper appellation

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 [vinbladet-dk.translate.google.com/endelig-har-sonoma-coast-faaet-sin-rette-appellation](https://vinbladet-dk.translate.google.com/translate/origurl/https://www.vinbladet.dk/nyheder/2024/05/25/sonoma-coast-faaet-sin-rette-appellation)  
Henrik Steen Andersen 25. maj 2024



For many years, Sonoma Coast has been one of my favorite appellations – or AVA, as it is called in those parts. And those edges are California, after all. I remember on a

wine trip one fairly early morning driving up through a mountain area on my way out to one of the legends, David Hirsch, who was among the first to discover this rather unique climate. On the way up, we drove through a very peculiar forest with a lot of green growth hanging from the trees - it looked like something from Lord of the Rings. We just waited for either orcs or dwarves to tumble out of the forest floor. The growths obviously come from the high humidity on the outer edge of northern California – a consequence of the meeting between the always cold Pacific Ocean and the sun-warmed inland. Therefore, almost every morning there is a dense fog until well into the morning. And there we have one of the reasons why you can make airy, almost ethereal wines in the area. Especially pinot noir, but also chardonnay and eventually syrah. The cool climate with cold nights and mornings and a life-giving sun when we come to the day. On a sunny day in May, there was a presentation of the AVA and a wide range of wines from some of the best producers in Copenhagen.



Littorai Wines' Pivot Vineyard in the Sonoma Coast is owned by Heidi and Ted Lemon. Their wines are sold in Denmark by DH Wines.

### **The Sonoma Coast is great**

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The AVA Sonoma Coast is actually very large and extends into the clearly warmer Russian River Valley – and of course also out to the coast with the cool climate. Until

two years ago. Because 15 years of footwork succeeded in convincing the authorities that it did not make sense to have such a large AVA, but that the special coastal climate should have its own sub-AVA. And it is logically called the West Sonoma Coast. It contains the fields that have made the Sonoma Coast something special - and in my view is what you look for when you choose a wine from the (West) Sonoma Coast.

The first fields were planted a little over 50 years ago and quite a few fields and producers have come over the last 20-25 years. It is quite understandable as the temperature in, for example, Napa Valley and the lack of rainfall challenge the possibilities of landing balanced wine - to put it mildly! But the coastal area has both sufficiently low temperatures and rainfall for the wines to have lightness, nicely low alcohol, good acidity and juicy fruit. The first pioneers in the area were discouraged from starting to grow wine by UC Davis several years ago. They became wiser at UC....

Sonoma Coast has 4 times as much rain as London and 2 times as much as Seattle. But not very much rain during the growing season, which is good. The Pacific Ocean is always 11 degrees on those sides and thus a significant stabilizing factor. In addition to the morning fog, a cold wind often blows in the afternoon, so the sun never burns the grapes. Overall, there are good conditions for organic cultivation and a great many are also organic and some are on the way to biodynamics - although only a few show this on the labels. An overall conclusion is that the threatening climate changes have not had the same impact on the Sonoma Coast, but it was mentioned that the flowering time now varies much more than before, without any obvious explanation for this.



Akiko and Ken Freeman founded Freeman Vineyard & Winery in 2001. The vast majority of producers are family-owned with dedicated owners who want to challenge the expensive Burgundies. However, some of the larger players are coming into the area, but it is limited how much you can expand the cultivated areas, as much simply cannot be cultivated. Speaking of expensive Burgundies: the Sonoma Coast wines are not cheap either - expect approx. DKK 400-500 for entry level and up to

around DKK 1,000+ for the most expensive single fields. But a good Burgundy producer quickly takes away 1,000-2,000 kroner for a premier cru. So there is something to save - although I would think that you get more for your money in Oregon. However, you don't get the very special airiness that the Sonoma Coast has.

## TASTING

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There were wines from 7 of the better producers for tasting in Copenhagen. Ernest Vineyards has no Danish importer – Laudrup Vin has two: Cobb and Littorai, Wayfarer is sold by Uhrskov Vine and Fine Wines . Fine Wines also has Peay, Senses is sold by Vestergaard Wines and finally Freeman is sold by DH Wines . I would have liked to see Hirsch as well, but not everything could be included.

The focus was on pinot noir, but there were also several fine chardonnays. In general, the level was as expected high and the wines were fresh, acidic, airy and elegant. Freeman was perhaps the richest style, while Littorai and Peay represented the coolness and lightness most. Aromatically, we were in pinot noir in the light, red berries such as raspberries and strawberries – both light and slightly darker. The character on the barrel was moderate – most people dose the barrel discreetly, which is wise so as not to overpower the pure fruit.

There was nice acidity in almost all wines that were from 2021. They

already taste nice now and will be hard to keep away from, but most have nice aging potential. The production of the individual wines is a few thousand bottles, but there are both entry level and single field wines, so overall the production is larger. But they remain niche wines with a certain exclusivity, which the prices somewhat suggest. But it's a cheap way to get chambolle-like wine!



Freeman is sold in Denmark by DH Wines

Cobb is sold in Denmark by Laudrup Vin