

Today Tom Rochioli, Joe Jr.'s son, is at the helm as winemaker. He continues to produce wines that help define the Russian River Valley's plush, fruity style. Unlike some of the leaner, more vogueish renditions from the Sonoma Coast, these Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays would be hard to mistake for Burgundy. But they are expertly crafted nonetheless, and often more generous and immediately pleasurable. Imagine Chardonnays that taste like sweet corn in September and Pinot Noirs that taste like Christmas morning – that's the sort of soul-warming nostalgia these wines can evoke.

A tasting at Rochioli is a simple affair – a flight du jour sipped at the horseshoe-shaped wooden bar reminiscent of an oversized barrel. Guests are invited to pack a picnic and enjoy the view from their patio overlooking the estate's undulating terrain.

WHAT TO TRY: Rochioli offers a wide spread of single-block wines from its Russian River Valley property. The main event is Pinot Noir, and make sure to try the West Block if given the opportunity, an immensely satisfying wine with round, gingerbread and cherry cola flavors. Don't overlook their Blanc de Noir, a fresh, luminous sparkling wine made entirely from Pinot. As for the non-bubbly white wines, Rochioli makes ample Chardonnays that capture the generosity of the California style, as well as Sauvignon Blancs that make you question why this hasn't emerged as one of the Russian River Valley's more prominent grape varieties.

INSIDE INFO: Call ahead and find out what they're pouring. The Rochioli wines are highly allocated, and depending on the time of year, they may simply have sold out of any of the Pinot Noirs. On the plus side, if they're down to only a few wines, the tasting is often free.

[Learn More About Rochioli Vineyards >](#)

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