

**Willowbrook Cellars****2006 Pinot Noir
(Marin County)**

Willowbrook Cellars in Sebastopol California is a dreadfully underrated and under the radar winery specializing in Pinot Noir from diverse locations. Joseph Otos, its deft winemaker, makes small lots at surprisingly tempting prices. Willowbrook's 2006 Marin County Pinot Noir is an great example. Priced at \$38, this wine saw only 245 cases produced.

Marin is perhaps better known as the suburb county just over the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. While much of the county is agrarian, just a mere 200 acres is planted to vineyards. The Devil's Gulch vineyard from which Otos got his Pinot Noir grapes lies at the northernmost end, bordering Sonoma. This is an area that experiences lingering fog and seemingly endless Pacific Ocean winds. Accordingly, harvests are "devilishly" small but with surprisingly delightful full-flavor and soft tannins.

After painstaking, labor-intensive wine making production, this Pinot spent nearly a year in small French oak barrels. The result should be a wine that you'd think would put the spotlight on Marin County grapes. Brimming with aromas of black cherry, pomegranate, and earthy mushrooms, the wine opens up immediately with flavors of raspberries, cherries, and plums. Although the tannins are light and accessible immediately, the texture is velvety and plush. The long hang time required by the harsh climate gives this Pinot a snappy acid that balances the perception of any indulgent sugars. Grab this one while its still under the radar. You know what happens when word gets out. Okay, I won't say another word.

Reviewed September 30, 2008 by [Michael Lasky](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Willowbrook Cellars](#)

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Pinot Noir

Appellation: [Marin County](#)

Grape: Pinot Noir

Price: 750ml \$38.00

THE REVIEWER**Michael Lasky**

APPELLATION AMERICA's Deputy Managing Editor, Michael Lasky, has been writing about food and wine for over 20 years. His work has appeared in national magazines such as *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Parade*, and newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His wine reviews focus on the aroma, taste, and visual appeal of what's in the glass. He is decidedly not a wine snob and prefers to describe its virtues in conversational prose that speaks to everyone from wine neophytes to veteran connoisseurs. He only reviews delicious wines.