

**Domenico Wines****2005 Pinot Noir
(Santa Cruz Mountains)**

Dominick Chirichillo grew up in New York in a typical Italian family that made wine in the basement. He credits his grandfather with instilling in him a love of winemaking, which he has parlayed into quite the commercial enterprise, Bacchus Winemaking Club. Targeted at amateur winemakers, the facility has custom labeled over 200K cases for home winemakers on

both coasts. Located in San Carlos, CA, Domenico Winery was started by Dominick and his wife Gloria in 1995. Being a part of the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation, they own no vineyards in the area, so in order to get on the Pinot bandwagon, as it were, Dominick began to look for appropriate sources for this increasingly coveted fruit. He was fortunate to score some from Deer Park Vineyard in Aptos.

This wine was whole berry fermented in small lots. 10-12 days maceration with 2 to 3 hand punch downs per day. It was aged in 60% new French oak for 9 months and released to the tasting room in July of 2006 (just 126 cases). A mere child as far as Pinots go.

This zesty wine made a fine debut along with its sister and brother Santa Cruz Mountains Pinots at [Pinot Paradise](#) earlier this month: it was certainly among my favorites of the tasting. Big and lovely earthy aromas tinged with Santa Rosa plum and strawberry, lead to red raspberry, mulberries and spice box flavors, with an intriguing hint of forest. The mouthfeel is gorgeous, with some chewy cherry edges. Impressive baking spices kick in on the finish, which, with the tannin and oak, makes for a significant experience. Ginger and cinnamon dance on your tongue like Pop Rocks, and the fine oak swings a fairly big bat. Like most Santa Cruz Mountains Pinots that are picked under 26 Brix, the acidity in this wine is brilliant. It takes flight like a Cessna, soaring over your palate with glistening wings. The alcohol level alone, which is quite low for this vintage in general, should prepare you for the acid level of this wine. It just keeps soaring til you think it will never end, but then all those fruit and spices nudge it back down to earth. A nice flight, indeed!

(Alc: 13.2%, Retail: \$40)

Reviewed March 28, 2007 by [Laura Ness](#).

Other Awards & Accolades

Gold Medal -- 2007 Grand Harvest Awards

THE WINE

Winery: [Domenico Wines](#)
Vintage: 2005
Wine: Pinot Noir
Appellation: [Santa Cruz Mountains](#)
Grape: [Pinot Noir](#)
Price: \$40.00

THE REVIEWER**Laura Ness**

A wine writer and wine judge for major publications and competitions around the country, Laura Ness likens wine to the experience of music. She is always looking for that ubiquitous marriage of rhythm, melody, and flawless execution. What is good music? You know it when you get lost in it. What is good wine? It is music in your mouth.