

**Foxen Winery and Vineyard****2004 Pinot Noir, Sea Smoke Vineyard  
(Sta. Rita Hills)**

The Foxen Boys, Dick Dore and Bill Wathen, have been at it, making wines in that little shack, way out on Foxen Canyon Road in Santa Maria Valley since 1985. They generally stick to their knitting, making wines from that appellation, but how grapes from the near cult Sea Smoke Vineyard ended up in a Foxen bottling is an interesting story.

When the soon to be proprietor of Sea Smoke was looking to purchase land for his vineyard, he enlisted Bill Wathen, a top notch viticulturist, to help him find the right property. They searched Sta. Rita Hills and eventually settled on a site that wasn't really for sale, but to which access rights could be purchased and vineyard blocks planted. The rest, as they say, is history.

So now, every year, Foxen gets a couple tons of Sea Smoke Vineyard Pinot Noir grapes in appreciation. The only place you'll see a Sea Smoke Vineyard designation, other than on their own bottlings, is on a Foxen label. The Foxen 2004 version shows dark, earthy aromatics, with plenty of that mushroom and forest floor effect going on, then the perfume of black currants hits you like a knockout punch. Deep dish plum, dark berry and mushroom flavors are wrapped around each other in a weighty, full bodied package. The wine has a fantastic intensity and purity of fruit, coupled with a richness that sweeps across the palate to a scintillatingly fresh finish. This is the best Sta. Rita Hills Pinots I've ever tasted, perhaps the best Pinot in all of Santa Barbara County.

Reviewed March 28, 2007 by [Dennis Schaefer](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Foxen Winery and Vineyard](#)

**Vineyard:** Sea Smoke Vineyard

**Vintage:** 2004

**Wine:** Pinot Noir

**Appellation:** [Sta. Rita Hills](#)

**Grape:** Pinot Noir

**Price:** \$64.00

**THE REVIEWER****Dennis Schaefer**

Dennis Schaefer has been tasting and writing about wine for over 30 years, propelled by a continuing curiosity and burgeoning enthusiasm for discovering what's in the bottle. Blessed with catholic tastes, he enjoys everything from the obvious to the sublime. A

major requirement is that the vineyard, winery and winemaker consistently perform well and fulfill their potential. Balance, concentration and complexity are key to the tasting experience but, in the end, the purpose of wine is simply to give pleasure.