

# Crawford Family Wines: Unlocking Varietal Flavor Part 2

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Mark Horvath poured his Crawford Family Wines Pinot Noirs for LA Wine Writers.  
*Patricia Decker*

Next up, a study of Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir. The **2013 Crawford Family Wines Radian Vineyard Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills** channels Pinot's dark cherry fruit and touch of earth, but with higher acidity and a vein of minerality. Radian Vineyard is young, a four-year-old windswept parcel that has a serpentine granite ribbon in its midst. According to Mark, "layers of texture, acidity, minerality, and tannic structure will become seamless over time". Aged in neutral barrels, the fruit sports a tea-like quality from the stems of the whole clusters added, only about a third, that contributes to the long finish. The minerality shines through the berry fruit, reflecting the ancient seabed soils from which it sprang.

The **2012 Crawford Family Wines "Walk Slow" Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills** is dense and concentrated, a blend of 50% Bentrack Vineyard and 50% Babcock Vineyard fruit. The Bentrack Pinot is angular, with more acidity and tannin, the Babcock Pinot is rich and plush, with less tannin. It took 16 different tries to find the right blend, mixing Bentrack's young vine fruit with Babcock's older vines. Aged in one year old barrels, there is a subtle but persistent hint of oak. With aromas

of cherry, earth, and spice, the acidity and long finish contribute to a wine that you will want to linger with, truly a “Walk Slow” tasting experience.

You can smell the difference in the **2013 Crawford Family Wines "Walk Slow" Pinot Noir Sta. Rita Hills** version. The blend is 65% Bentrack Vineyard and 35% Radian Vineyard. The aromatics are distinctive and lifted, with intense young vine fruit the primary impression. Aged in 30% new French oak, this wine unfolds in the glass, as the mineral and acid reveals itself within the fine tannic grip. Fresh, intense cherry cola and dark raspberry fruit, with an earthy accent and touch of smoke and spice makes this another “Walk Slow”, savor the moment wine.



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These three Pinots were paired with Braised Wild Boar, with Truffled Polenta and Crispy Brussel Sprouts, with each wine deliciously contributing to the complex flavors, while drawing out the earthy notes, a profile of three California Pinots from the unique Santa Rita Hills appellation.

Finally, the **2013 Crawford Family Wines Second Street Cuvée Ballard Canyon** is a blend of Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvedre in the Côtes du Rhône style. Juicy dark fruit, pepper and spice, a whiff of violets, and vibrant acidity flesh out this inaugural release, it's a food friendly and very drinkable wine whose fruit comes from two steep hillside blocks of Tierra Alta Vineyard and the small Lavando Vineyard. Paired with Grilled Teres Major, with Wild Mushroom Risotto and Spring Pea Purée, the wine's complexity is accented alongside its balance.

Crawford Family Wines are available at their **tasting room** in Buellton, open to the public Saturday and Sunday, 11am-4pm, and by appointment, Monday through Friday. They can be bought online or at the tasting room, and certainly are worth the drive to experience what quality wines are all about. Mark and Wendy Horvath await you, with the key that unlocks the treasure chest of Crawford Family Wines.



**Patricia Decker**

Burbank Wine Shopping Examiner

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