



**Arlequin One-Bottle Club**  
**October 2018**  
**Radio-Coteau Pinot Noir Terra Neuma**  
**Sonoma Coast 2014**

**Grape Varieties:** 100% Pinot Noir

**Winemaker:** Along with names like Littorai, Lioco, Failla, Peay and Pax, Radio-Coteau belongs to an elite cadre of terroir-driven winemakers that define modern Californian wine's search for nuance and a sense of place. Its low-key founder and winemaker, Eric Sussman, crafts cool-climate reds and whites that, at their best, offer a thrilling combination of purity, vibrancy and complexity. A New York State native, Sussman studied agriculture at Cornell, before a nascent passion for winegrowing led him west, to Washington's Yakima Valley. He then apprenticed in France, working on two exceptional vintages—1995 in Bordeaux, at Baron Phillippe de Rothschild—and 1996 at two legendary Burgundy domaines: Comte Armand in Pommard and Jacques Prieur in Meursault. There, Sussman developing a belief in minimal intervention in both the field and the cellar. In 2002, he founded Radio-Coteau. It's a colloquial French term for "word-of-mouth". Literally meaning "broadcasting from the hillside", it's a phrase that neatly limns Eric's interpretation of the winemaker's role: "to broadcast the vineyard in the bottle."

**Vintage:** Continuing drought resulted in another light crop from Terra Neuma Vineyard in 2014—enough for just four barrels of this wine. A warm, steady summer provided ideal weather throughout the rest of the growing season. A lack of both heat spikes and rain allowed grapes to get perfectly ripe, with harvest occurring on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Vineyard:** The Terra Neuma Vineyard is part of a sixth-generation, family-owned ranch on Sonoma's far western coast, that sits on a

bluff above the hamlet of Bodega. The whiteish soils here are predominately Goldridge—a fine sandy loam that's famous for yielding prized Pinot Noir. This wind-scrubbed site sits squarely in the Petaluma Gap, a low channel through Sonoma's coastal hills through which a thick river of sea-borne fog flows most summer mornings. This is marginal territory for grapes: Crop yields are miniscule, and in cool years, waiting for fruit ripen before the rains arrive requires nerves of steel. The payoff comes in Pinot Noir of thrilling complexity—the kind that only low yields and a long, cool growing season can provide. The meticulous, labor-intensive farming is done organically and biodynamically by the Benziger family, one of California's most respected names in grapegrowing.

**Winemaking:** Eric Sussman doesn't so much "make" his wines, as he lets the wines make themselves. His resolutely minimalist, non-interventionist approach means that he eschews not just fining and filtration, but also the addition of yeast or any other additives, other than a touch of sulfur at bottling. After the grapes for this wine were picked by hand (before dawn, to keep them cool), he transferred most of the clusters to a basket press for crushing. Sussman reserved a small portion—about 15 percent—to ferment as whole clusters.

**Tasting Notes:** The 2014 Terra Neuma Pinot Noir is at a wonderfully expressive stage. Upon exposure to air, the wine's aromas begin to open up: A spicy, sweet-and-savory mix of ripe red plums, fennel, sage, and mushroom mix with a floral top note suggestive of violets. The palate is fresh, pure and long, with electric notes of red cherries and plums mixing with an earthy, savory edge.

**Food Pairing:** : This fine-boned Pinot Noir has the structure to stand up to duck, pork and rabbit, and makes a lovely companion to milder meats, too, such as turkey and chicken. For accent flavors, play to the wine's earthy and herby notes with ingredients such as mushrooms, sage, fennel and anise. Fennel-rubbed pork tenderloin, bacon-and sage-wrapped chicken breasts and roast herbed duck all make superb pairings. For vegetarian options, look to dishes starring mushrooms, such as mushroom ravioli with a brown butter sage sauce. Serve slightly chilled (60°F), and, if consuming within the next few years, decant at least two, and up to five, hours before serving.