

Vineyard	Wine	Exper	Purchases	Comments
Fess Parker	★★	★★		Fess Parker has a good reputation and a significant number of 90+ Wine Spectator ratings for both reds and whites. Their tasting campus is large, modern, and elegant. Their servers were knowledgeable and attentive. However, to us their wines lacked character, flavor, and depth of the grape(s). Admittedly, they are very light by design and by the region. Perhaps our palates just weren't up to the task this day, but the quality wasn't consistent with the (substantial) prices. For the first time in a long time, we didn't buy anything.
Margerum	★★★	★★★	2023 Estate Viognier 2022 Black Oak Grenache 2021 Estate Syrah	This is a small boutique winery with a tiny tasting room in Los Olivos. They make a variety of whites and reds using French grapes. They tend to live in the cool side of the region and generally make subtle, "elegant" wines. All the wines we tasted were generally light compared anything made north of Santa Barbera. We liked, but didn't love, everything we tasted.
Foxen	★★½	★★½	2020 Block 43 Pinot 2021 John Sebastiano Pinot 2023 Rose of Pinot Noir	Like many of the wineries in Santa Rita Hills, Foxen's focus is Pinot Noir. They are located way off the beaten path in a beautiful and serene valley setting with outdoor tastings. We tasted a half dozen pinots that were all "light", even more so than Willamette. They were all quite good and several had outstanding reviews and ratings. A bit "underpowered" for Bill's tastes.
Cambria	★★★	★★★½	2022 Clone 4 Pinot 2022 Katherine's Signature Chard 2023 Julia's Rose of Pinot	For many years we've enjoyed their Katherine's Vineyard Chardonnay. It has been consistently excellent and affordable – a go-to chard that you can find at most wine stores in the US. However, they also make outstanding pinots and other great chardonnays in smaller quantities. The place is in a beautiful remote place surrounded by mountains. We were there on a weekday and enjoyed a great custom tasting with an excellent senior server. This winery perfectly filled a hole in our wine clubs, so we joined theirs.
Rancho Sisquoc	★½	★★	2022 Santa Barbara Pinot Betty's Unfiltered Olive Oil	Sisquoc is close to Foxen and Cambria in the Santa Rita Hills district and it just made sense to stop there. We had low expectations and they met them. Their whites, which included the rare Sylvaner, had unusual, but interesting flavors. Similarly, the reds including a pinot, a cabernet, and field blend were also a bit weird. The pinot was by far the best of the lot. We bought their olive oil based solely on the inspirational story of the Grandmother's dream to make olive oil on the family property. She personally planted 100 trees, but passed away before they bore fruit. The family recently brought her dream to life and now sell it at the winery.

Wine - quality of the wines. **Exper** - tasting experience including server, ambience, food, time taken, facilities.

Note: The scores are NOT normalized. They are the raw averages.

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Lincourt	★★	★★		Lincourt was to some degree an instant replay of Fess Parker: good wines at great wine prices. They have a nice winery with pleasant outdoor tasting area overlooking their Sauvignon Blanc vineyard. The serving staff was very courteous and fit us in as walk-ins on a busy weekend. We tasted a couple of nice chardonnays, a couple of decent "lightish" pinots, and a mediocre cabernet. They were all drinkable, but averaged \$75 each. The icing on the cake was that the reds were left in the sun and all served warm. And yes, I'm a hopeless wine snob, but we are talking real money here. Fortunately, I'm not angry (anymore). For the second time in a long time, we didn't buy anything.
Brick Barn	★★	★★½	2021 Syrah 2022 Santa Rita Hills Pinot	Brick Barn has a large tasting room with beautiful outside space. They are located in the Santa Rita Hills and like most of the other wineries we visited, make "light" wines. They had a nice, oaky Chardonnay and a surprisingly good Cabernet Franc. The rest of the whites we're on the tart side of crisp.
Stolpman	★★★★	★★★★	2022 Angeli Syrah 2022 Sangiovese 2022 La Croce Syrah/Sangiovese 2022 L'Avion Roussanne	This was the find of the trip. Our server spent a good hour with us and we tasted about a dozen wines covering most of their cellar. They are located on a rare limestone outcropping that provides a perfect place to grow Syrah, Sangiovese, and Roussanne grapes. The microclimate is very Rhone-like and it results in fabulous GSMs and varietals. Each of the 10 reds we tasted were perfectly balanced and outstanding. We could have easily bought every one of them. It was a no-brainer to join their wine club.
Tensley	★★★★	★★★½	2023 Martian Clairette Blanche 2024 Rosè of Grenache 2023 Santa Maria Valley Syrah 2023 Nolan Red Wine 2023 Colson Canyon Syrah 2023 Turner Syrah	Tensley is a moderate size winery who specializes in Syrah's and Rhone blends. Despite outstanding Wine Spectator scores over the last 20 years, they remain humble and provide incredible value. We tasted a half dozen young, full-bodied reds and a couple of whites. Each of them was amazing. We bought a bottle of nearly everything we tasted, but decided not to join their club because we had already joined Cambria and Stolpman. By the time we got back to our RV, it became clear that we had it all wrong. I drove all the way back to Los Olivos and joined their wine club. Yet another triumph for self-discipline.

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