the hilt

The Hilt champions pinot noir and chardonnay from the climate margins of California's coastal winegrowing regions—Santa Barbara County's Sta. Rita Hills and Santa Maria Valley AVA's prominent among them. Two schools of winemaking form The Hilt's view of chardonnay and pinot noir:

THE OLD GUARD

The Old Guard wines encompass a restrained elegance and balance. Flavor and textural elements take on a new complexity-and minerality is often more notable. The aromas and flavors of The Old Guard tend to be more savory, and quietly forceful. A rooted sensibility overtakes brash exuberance.

THE VANGUARD

The Vanguard focuses on what is new in the world, if you will, which is often anchored by wines that are produced with lusher, fleshy, fruit-driven qualities-often referred to as baby fat-a style that owns a distinct place in the chardonnay and pinot noir field. The aromas and flavors in The Vanguard are more round and more forward-bristling with enthusiasm and elegance.

2011

THE OLD GUARD
PINOT NOIR
STA. RITA HILLS

CASES: 200
ALC: 13.0%
BARRELS: 30% new French oak,
70% neutral French oak

As it is poured, it immediately fills the room with explosive notes of perfumed red fruit, ground white peppercorns, candied strawberries and dried tobacco. The nose is highlighted by a pretty touch of matchstick, ash and allspice. Reserved and tight at first, but with time in glass it shows off a velvet-like texture of fresh raspberry fruit. The tobacco note is reminiscent of chewing on a Cohiba cigar. Perfect amount of vinous stem character and typical earthy notes of the old vines. A tightly coiled wine that is framed by refreshing acidity and benefits greatly from decanting (or cellaring). Like a classical music piece that builds slowly from an ethereal whisper to a full sweeping symphony. A complete and stunning wine that speaks volumes of the power and reserve of the old vines.
— *Matt Dees, Winemaker*

93 Points
The Wine Advocate August 2013
94 Points
Vinous Antonio Galloni July 2013