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Leading the pack in this report are four classic-scoring wines, each at 95 points, all richly styled and all hailing from Sonoma County, pointing to its continued dominance in producing the state's greatest Pinot Noirs. They also come from winemakers and vintners with long experience honing their craft—Mark Aubert (Aubert), Matt Courtney (Ferren), Anne Moller-Racke (Donum) and Bob Cabral (Three Sticks).

Durell stands out in this group because its location, at the southern end of Sonoma Valley, straddling Carneros at the tip of the sprawling Sonoma Coast appellation, shows that top wines can be sourced from outside the confines of the Russian River drainage (the home of its classic-scoring peers in this report). Durell, owned by Three Sticks proprietor Bill Price since 1997, benefits from the experience of head winemaker Bob Cabral, who came to the winery from Russian River Pinot pioneer Williams Selyem in 2015.