

A Passion for Pinot Noir

“I’M THE ONLY GUY WITH A SPECTROPHOTOMETER in my kitchen,” says TJ Rodgers, owner of Clos de la Tech. The outspoken Silicon Valley power player—founder and CEO of Cypress Semiconductor—is also one of the most ambitious wine producers in the country. And his passion is Pinot Noir.

When he first set out to make Pinot, Rodgers says he was determined to “beat DRC,” referring to Burgundy’s iconic Domaine de la Romanée-Conti (where in 2002 he finally got a personal tour with owner-director Aubert de Villaine after two years of petitioning). Today, after nearly a decade of experience, Rodgers realizes that California is a very different place from Burgundy, and that comparing his wines to red Burgundies is beside the point: “In California, make California Pinot Noir.”

The chip that’s embedded in crimson wax on the crest of each Clos de la Tech bottle is “honest-to-god battle-grade silicon,” straight off the production line at Cypress Semiconductor—Rodgers’s way of putting his own art, i.e., computer chips, on his wines.



93 **Clos de la Tech 2009 Pinot Noir,**
Domaine Lois Louise, Santa Cruz
Mountains (\$42) Dark and lush with savory notes,
black cherry and minerality; spice, pepper and great
length and grip.

95 **Clos de la Tech 2009 Pinot Noir,**
Domaine Valeta Sunny Slope, Santa
Cruz Mountains (\$62) Plush and juicy with tangy
cherry, raspberry and lots of lift; smooth, fresh and
finishing with a bit of herb.

90 **Clos de la Tech 2009 Pinot Noir,**
Domaine Lois Louise Cote Sud,
Santa Cruz Mountains (\$62) Silky and
elegant with subtle, balanced style; juicy, bright and
lovely red cherry fruit; racy and graceful with a
lovely finish.



93 **Clos de la Tech 2009 Pinot Noir,**
Domaine Lois Louise Twisty
Ridge, Santa Cruz Mountains (\$82)
Dense and big with gobs of wood, savory
black cherry and sweet spice; good structure
and soft tannins; rich on opening and then
complex and nuanced on the finish.

96 **Clos de la Tech 2009 Pinot**
Noir, Domaine du Docteur
Rodgers, San Francisco Bay (\$102)
Lovely cinnamon in the nose; smooth, savory
and bright with juicy, ripe cherry fruit and
mouth-filling flavor; minerals, spice and juicy,
ripe flavors; long and sensuous.