

# OF THE EARTH

LET'S TALK  
ABOUT  
TERROIR.

American anthologist Clifton Fadiman is credited with describing wine as “poetry in a bottle.” If that’s true, then terroir is surely the adjective that gives each line its flair. From soil to climate, the ecological makeup of a vineyard lends itself to distinctive characteristics in vino. In essence, terroir-driven wines reflect the essence of the land on which the grapes are grown. While often synonymous with “drinking dirt” (a reference to earthiness and minerality typically found in wines from the Old World), terroir can be tasted in varietals across the globe. We rounded up a few standouts available in the Coachella Valley, so you can pique your palate with different experiences of expression.

1 | Spain’s Calatayud wine region produces the grapes for the peppery **2014 Honoro Vera garnacha** – a concentrated expression of plum comes from vines that grow gnarled on mountain slopes irrigated only by rain and frost. Alicante owner Mindy Reed visited Bodegas Ateca’s sister wineries this summer and called the vines the “most stressed” she’s ever seen. Available by the bottle at Alicante and Zin American Bistro, Palm Springs.

2 | The **2011 Domaines Schlumberger Pinot Gris Les Princes Abbés** is “not the pinot gris you’re going to expect,” says La Brasserie Bistro & Bar chef-owner Emmanuel Janin, as it’s a bit sweeter than American palates may be used to. The style is grown in volcanic soil in Janin’s hometown of Alsace, France; south-facing slopes offer optimal sun exposure. Available by the glass and bottle at La Brasserie Bistro & Bar, La Quinta.

3 | Renowned sommelier Matthew Kaner recently signed on as a partner at Palm Springs bar Dead or Alive – all the more reason to visit and sip his **2013 AM/FM pinot noir**. “Some pinot noirs are so delicate, like silk,” says co-owner Christine Soto. “This definitely has a little bit more grip to it.” Stem inclusion from grapes grown in one of Santa Barbara County’s oldest vineyard is a unique part of the process; expect this wine to keep changing in the bottle. Available by the glass or bottle at Dead or Alive, Palm Springs.

4 | A **2012 Leonetti Cellar cabernet sauvignon** from the winery’s highly exclusive collection “is a great example of what Walla Walla [Valley in Washington state] produces,” says La Quinta Resort & Club sommelier Lisa Tussing. “It’s extremely tannic but in a very structured, organized way.” Intense heat in July and August is ideal for ripening grapes. Available by the bottle at Morgan’s in the Desert, La Quinta. 🍷

— Kristin Scharkey

