

Delivert Delivers

NEW TOLOSA WINEMAKER FRED DELIVERT DEBUTS HIS SIGNATURE IN THE 2017 VINTAGE

by Meredith May / photos by Duane Hall



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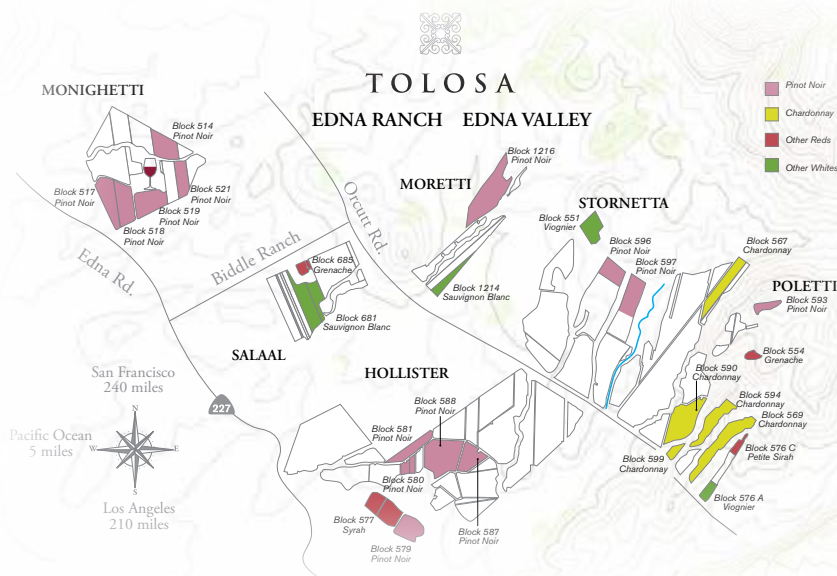
THERE'S A LOT of tension in San Luis Obispo County's Edna Valley: not in terms of anger or politics, but instead in the exceptional traits of the 2017 Tolosa Chardonnay and Pinot Noirs that result from Fred Delivert's handiwork. Thanks to Edna Valley's climate—the coolest not only in California's Central Coast, but the entire state—and its long growing season, the new Tolosa winemaker has everything he needs to uplift the prowess of these Burgundian varieties.

"I do take advantage of Mother Nature," says Delivert, who was born and raised in France. After earning his master's degree in agricultural sciences in 1995 from the École Supérieure d'Agriculture de Purpan (ESAP) in Toulouse, he was drawn to California, where he worked in many of Napa

Tolosa's Edna Ranch vineyard comprises six distinct sections with 60 soil types and an array of microclimates. Sections such as Poletti, Moretti, Stornetta, and Monighetti are named after Italian-Swiss dairy-farming families from the 19th century.

and Sonoma's sub-appellations. However, it was Edna Valley and, particularly, Tolosa's Edna Ranch site that ultimately hooked him.

"There are 50–60 different soils types in this region," he tells *The SOMM Journal*, "including sediment and seabed. My goal is to always stay true to the nature of balance and elegance naturally offered here." Cold Pacific winds whip down the coast and into this valley—a mere 5 miles from the ocean—where Tolosa owns 728 acres planted under vine, yet keeps the top 150 acres for the winery. SJ



2017: A Good Year for Fred Delivert and Tolosa Winery

Introduced Tolosa by its vintner/owner Robin Baggett prior to the 2017 harvest, Delivert took the soil composition and Pacific influences under consideration when crafting his first vintage. I was honored to taste alongside him at the winery in early January.

We started with the **Tolosa 2017 1772 Chardonnay (\$58)**, which aims to celebrate the terroir and heritage of Edna Valley as a selection for the winery's wine-club members. Aged nine months and with a low ABV of 13.4%, the **Tolosa 1772 Pinot Noir (\$72)** represents various clones and vineyard exposures while showing the true essence of Edna Valley. Aromas of earth, flint, and saddle sweat lead to a powder-puff lightness on

the tongue as the wine captures brightness with roses, raspberry, and a slight, back-of-the-palate hint of black pepper. "I don't like heavy Pinots," Delivert explains. "They don't have to be dark to be good." With a 1,000-case production, Tolosa's 1772 tier is geared toward direct-to-consumer sales while also being highly allocated to on-premise.

The **Tolosa 2017 Poletti Chardonnay (\$92)**, meanwhile, is a single-vineyard expression from Edna Ranch with sensuous and sweet notes of tropical pineapple and key lime on the nose. In this serious white, which exhibits that aforementioned tension so admired by Delivert, a texturally unique "shyness" on the palate glides easily across the mouth with a backdrop of apricot nectar.

Another fine single-vineyard offering is the **Tolosa 2017 Solomon Hills Pinot Noir (\$125)** from Santa Maria Valley. Dark and savory but still texturally light on its feet, this red channels the valley's transverse sandy soil with its flavors of tobacco and black plum. Lean and acidic at first, the wine soon spreads out as it develops volume. "It has shoulders," Delivert notes.

From the western side of Edna Ranch on a sandy and rocky limestone knoll comes the winery's darkest Pinot yet: The single-vineyard **Tolosa 2017 Hollister Pinot Noir (\$125)** is a focused, deep-diving red with notes of dark chocolate, coffee, and Worcestershire. Balanced even at 14.5% and high in acid, the refined wine shows ripe strawberry with hints of orange peel.



Tolosa's flagship wine, named Primera, is a cellar selection of the best barrels of estate Pinot Noir. The 2017 vintage (\$140) exudes fresh soil on the nose with mocha and raspberry. "I want to keep elevating the quality of the wine and the region, and Primera is the most elegant Pinot Noir we can get off of our estate," Delivert says.