

**Anderson
Valley
Part II**

PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 6, Issue 28

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The Wineries, The Pinot

One of the most vivid memories I have of Anderson Valley are the unique split-rail redwood fences originally built to surround pastures, but now bordering vineyards like those at Navarro, Husch and Handley along Hwy 128. Covered with moss and thoroughly weathered, they conjure an image of the 1800s when farmers in the Anderson Valley took local Pomo Indians into the forests to retrieve redwood. Fences were an absolute must to protect the crops from the many voracious animals that roamed the pastureland and hills. These crooked fences remain as an enduring reminder of the farming heritage of this bucolic valley



Anderson Valley and Mendocino in general is now involved with promoting a different image. For years, winemakers in Sonoma and Napa have eagerly sourced Mendocino-grown grapes and to this day approximately 75% of the grapes from Mendocino are purchased by wineries outside of the county. The grapes were often blended into wines with another county's name on the bottle. The early pioneers of the 1970s such as Husch, Lazy Creek and Navarro made very credible wines, but it took Roederer Estate in the early 1980s to bring true validation to the region as a premium grape-growing area. Roederer, and subsequently Schraffenberger, made stellar sparkling wines from extensive Chardonnay and Pinot Noir varieties planted for their value in making bubbly. Recent years have brought an emphasis on cultivating Pinot Noir clones appropriate for still wine, and even Roederer produces still Pinot Noirs. The current class of Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs can hold their own with any appellation in California, and winemakers outside Anderson Valley are fighting for grapes. Still, the perception of quality among the trade and public has lagged. Prices for Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

trail all of the other major Pinot Noir growing counties of California. To raise the profile of Mendocino grapes, a promotional organization, the Mendocino Winegrape & Wine Commission, has been formed. Recently, the Commission conducted trade tastings to demonstrate the high standards of wines produced in Mendocino and has significantly increased its advertising commitment.

The Pinot Noir wineries of Anderson Valley are profiled in the following pages. For locations of major wineries and vineyards in the Anderson Valley refer to the map on page 3 (courtesy of the Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association). Current winery releases are included.

Baxter Winery. Father Phil Baxter and son Phil Jr. produce single-vineyard Pinot Noirs from their family farm in Elk in the Mendocino Ridge appellation. They also craft a number of other red varietals under the Baxter Winery label and the Philippe-Lorraine label. Phil has many years of wine-making experience in the wine industry including stints at Charles Krug, Souverain, Rutherford Hill and Domaine Michel. Phil Jr. is a University of California Davis graduate who trained in France, including time in the vineyards of Domaine de la Vougeraie. The wines are available retail, with no internet sales. The new website is www.baxterwinery.com. No tasting room. 28000 Greenwood Rd, Elk, 95432, 707-877-3727. 2004 Baxter Winery Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (185 cases, \$40), 2004 Baxter Winery Oppenlander Vineyard Mendocino Pinot Noir (43 cases, \$40).

Black Kite Cellars. This is a new label committed to producing small lots of premium Pinot Noir. Don and Maureen Green purchased their vineyard in 1995. It is located in the coolest part of the “deep end” of the Anderson Valley overlooking the Navarro River. The vineyard consists of 3 4-acre blocks planted to Pommard and Dijon 114 and 115 clones. In the future, the owners plan to produce distinct wines from each block in the Burgundian mold. The Greens are avid ornithologists and have named their Pinot Noirs after the beautiful black-shouldered kite (hawk) which is an endangered species in the Anderson Valley. The winemaker is Jeff Gaffner who has made special Zinfandels and Pinot Noirs for years under his family label, Saxon-Brown. The winemaking regimen includes aging in 100% new French oak for 10 months. 2005 Black Kite Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (289 cases, \$35), 2005 Black Kite Redwood’s Edge Vineyard Block Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (73 cases, \$40), and 2005 Black Kite Stony Terrace Vineyard Block Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (73 cases, \$48). The wines are sold on the website, www.blackkitecellars.com. Limited retail distribution. No tasting room. 415-923-0277.



Breggo Cellars. A new label and winery located on Hwy 128 just south of the town of Philo. The winery was profiled in the *PinotFile* previously (Volume 6, Issue 17). Breggo means sheep in Boontling and is derived from the Spanish word *Borrego* of the same meaning. Breggo’s young owner and winemaker, Douglas Ian Stewart, grew up in Sonoma and was convinced that cool and marginal sites produced the best wines. In 2000, along with his wife Lucia Benitez-Stewart (an Ecuadorian whose family had ranching roots), he bought an old 203-acre sheep ranch. At one time it was part of the huge Rawles Ranch, a 4,000 acre property homesteaded by the Rawles family in the 1850s. Knowing that sheep and grapevines flourish in areas considered climatically and geographically undesirable, Stewart laid down his roots. He renovated the house on the property and built a small winery. He sourced premium grapes from notable Anderson Valley vineyards, and hired a consulting winemaker, Ryan Hodgins, from Hanzell Vineyards in Sonoma. Stewart purchased the latest in gentle



winemaking technology, including the first-of-its-kind Coquard Bucket Press invented by Anderson Valley's own Michel Salgue. The winery and tasting room are located at 11001 Hwy 128, Boonville 95415. Wines may be purchased online at www.breggo.com or through retail stores. The phone is 707-895-9589. 2005 Breggo Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (679 cases, \$35), 2005 Breggo Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (193 cases, \$50), and 2005 Breggo Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (165 cases, \$50).

Brutocao Cellars. The Brutocao family was originally from Italy and after immigrating to California, married into the Bliss family of farmers. Irv Bliss bought his Anderson Valley property in the mid-1940s and the family began making wine in 1991. The label features the Italian Lion of St. Mark, a symbol of family tradition and quality. Brutocao Cellars produces many varietals including Pinot Noir from 425 acres farmed in the southern areas of Mendocino County. The winemaker is Fred Nickel. The winery's two tasting rooms are in Hopland and Philo. The tasting room in Philo is a picturesque wood barn-like building open daily from 10-5 at 7000 Hwy 128, Philo 95466. The wines are sold on the website at www.brutocaozellars.com. The phone is 707-895-2152. Brutocao also operates "Personal Vineyards" at Brutocao which allows consumers to make their own wine (1-800-530-4567).

Christine Woods Winery. The 52-acre vineyard and winery are located across the street from Handley Cellars and have recently been sold to the co-owners of Harmonique Pinot Noir, Bruce and Moira Conzelman and Bob and Claudia Klindt. The vineyard, which will be known as Counzelman Vineyard is being renovated, new plantings of Pinot Noir are going in, and the winery will eventually be producing Harmonique Pinot Noir under the direction of winemaker Bob Klindt. 31255 Hwy 128, Philo 95466.

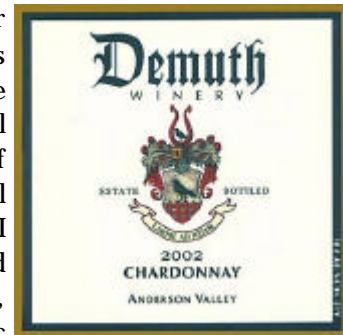
Claudia Springs Winery. In 1989, owners Bob and Claudia Klindt purchased the 20-acre property and winery where Milla Handley (Handley Cellars) crafted her first wines. Along with partner Warren Hein, they also purchased an adjacent undeveloped 20-acre plot (Hein Vineyard photo below, right). Bob Klindt had been a home winemaker for several years and began producing wines under the Claudia Springs label while still living in the San Francisco Bay Area. He concentrated initially on Zinfandel as Pinot Noir grapes were hard to come by. Crafting wines out of a rudimentary and tiny winery under his hillside home, Bob's wines were well received and consistently won medals in every vintage since the first in 1989. The Heins eventually sold their share in the venture. Along with other family members, the Klindts planted 8 acres of Pinot Noir on the property in 1998 (vineyard photo below, left) and released the first Pinot Noir from their own estate vineyard in 2001. The clonal



selection is Pommard and Dijon 113, 115, 667 and 777. Winemaking is traditional using native yeasts and 30% new French oak. Very small quantities of other varietals including Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Pinot Gris and Viognier are also produced. A tasting room is open M-F 11-5 at 1810 Hwy 128 (mile marker 16 next to the Rock Shop) in Philo 95446. If you run into Bob at the tasting room, you are in for a treat. He has a wealth of knowledge about Anderson Valley and can relate many humorous tales of his winemaking career there. The website is www.claudiasprings.com and phone 707-895-3993. 2003 Claudia Springs Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (14.7% alc., 471 cases, \$24) and 2004 Claudia Springs Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (14.7% alc., 300 cases, \$24).



Demuth Winery. Chris and Lyn Demuth farm 8 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the hills just north of Boonville. The vines are 18 years old and planted at 1,600 feet, one of the highest points in the region. The Pinot Noir clones planted here are Pommard and Wädenswil. Small quantities of Pinot Noir are produced under the Demuth label, but most of the grapes are sold to prominent wineries such as Adrian Fog, Ant Hill Farms, Skewis, and Whitethorn. Tour and tasting are by appointment. (I met Chris at the Festival and also talked with some people who have visited and they enjoyed their experience very much). 16125 Deer Meadows Rd., Boonville 95415. The website, www.demuthwinery.com contains basic information only. The wines are sold directly to visitors and through the website. 707-895-3729. 2003 Demuth Winery Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (the 2004 vintage is to be released soon).



Drew. Jason Drew has been making wine since 1980 when he helped out his uncle plant a vineyard in Napa Valley. He received his winemaking education both in California and Australia. In 2000, he formed his own label with his wife Molly while he was Associate Winemaker at Babcock Vineyards and Winery in the Santa Rita Hills. In 2003 he left Babcock to concentrate on his own label, and in 2004 purchased a ridgetop property overlooking the Anderson Valley to the east and the Pacific Ocean 3 miles to the west. A winery was built on the property and the Drews' first estate vineyard is in the planning stages. Molly is actively involved in the family business and is involved in managing the winery's affairs as well as assisting in winemaking and offering her opinions on vintage decisions and blending. Currently, the Pinot Noir lineup of grapes is sourced from Santa Barbara County, Anderson Valley, Sonoma Coast and the Yorkville Highlands. The wines are sold largely to restaurants, through retail channels, and a mailing list. The current releases are not available from the winery's website at www.drewwines.com, but may still be in the marketplace. The winery mailing address is PO Box 313, Elk and the phone is 707-877-1771.

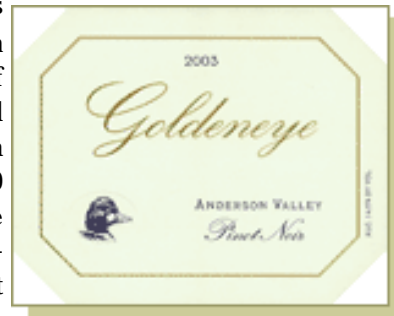


Elke Vineyards. Profiled recently in the *PinotFile* (Volume 6, Issue 24). Mary Elke was pouring her 1997 Donnelly Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir at the Festival, the oldest vintage I saw at the event. It had developed nicely with secondary notes of leather, mushroom, and exotic woods. Who says California Pinot Noir can't age? I also sampled the inexpensive 2005 Mary Elke Pinot Noir (350 cases, \$19) which is touted as an everyday "Pinot for the People." This is also sourced from the Donnelly Creek Vineyard and I found it to be very elegant in style and quite charming. The wines are available on the website at www.elkevineyards.com. The address is 12351 Hwy 128, Boonville 95415. 707-246-7045.

Esterlina Vineyards & Winery. Also profiled previously in the *PinotFile* (Volume 4, Issue 32). The small winery and estate vineyard sit high on a ridge overlooking a magnificent view of the Anderson Valley. Owned by the Sterling family, who also own vineyards in Sonoma (Everett Ridge Vineyards) and elsewhere in Mendocino (Cole Ranch - America's smallest AVA and one of the few AVAs with one owner), this boutique producer is under the direction of father Murio and his sons. Eric Sterling, M.D., is the winemaker as well as a part-time emergency room physician. The Cole Ranch Riesling is particularly noteworthy. 1200 Homes Ranch Rd (a 2 mile drive uphill on a dirt road), Philo 95466. Esterlina wines are sold on the website at www.esterlinavineyards.com. Visits by appointment. 707-895-2920. 2003 Esterlina Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (450 cases, \$35) and 2005 Esterlina Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (730 cases, \$40).



Goldeneye Winery. The Duckhorn Wine Company has brought a large corporate commitment to Anderson Valley Pinot Noir in 1997. They purchased the former Obester Winery, planted 57 acres of Pinot Noir on the property, and subsequently purchased other local vineyards including the former Floodgate Vineyard. They now farm a total of 180 acres in the valley, second only to Roederer Estate's 580 acres. Zach Rasmuson, who previously worked at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and Husch is the winemaker and works with enologist Neil Bernardi and vineyard manager Nathan Miller. Goldeneye sources fruit from seven different vineyards for its "house style" estate bottling.



Rasmuson has 49 different clonal and rootstock combinations of Pinot Noir planted in 80 separate blocks. Single vineyard bottlings are being offered for the first time in 2004 from the Confluence Estate Vineyard and The Narrows Vineyard (formerly Floodgate Vineyard). The tasting room is housed in a charming white cottage that is open daily from 11-4. The address is 9200 Hwy 128, Philo. The wines are sold through a mailing list and also enjoy widespread retail distribution. The website is www.goldeneyewinery.com. 707-895-3202. 2004 Migration Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (a blend of 13 vineyard sources, \$32), 2004 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$52), 2004 Goldeneye Confluence Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$70), and 2004 Goldeneye The Narrows Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$70).

Greenwood Ridge Vineyards. Based on the Mendocino Ridge, this venerable winery has been producing multiple varietals since 1980. The winery's beautiful tasting room is actually located in Anderson Valley on Hwy 128 and can be easily spotted by the colorful flags waving in the breeze at the entrance. This is a special place for a picnic. The wines are bottled with a unique etched design on the front instead of a label. The winery is host to the annual California Wine Tasting Championships. The tasting room is at 5501 Hwy 128 in Philo. Wines are available on the website at www.greenwoodridge.com. 707-895-2002. 2005 Greenwood Ridge Vineyards Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir (125 cases, \$25, sold out).



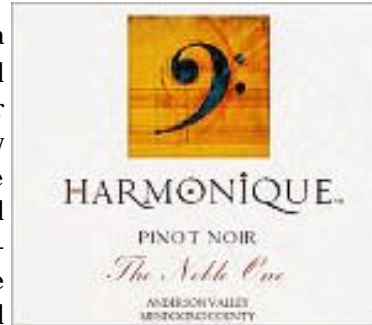
Gryphon Wines. Jonathan O'Bergin has owned land in Anderson Valley since 1978. Currently, he farms 8 acres of Pinot Noir in the "Deep End" of the valley between Philo and Navarro. 831-277-3849 2004 Gryphon Wines Larklinn Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$44).

Handley Cellars. Established in 1982, this winery is one of the few in which both the owner and winemaker are the same woman, in this case, Milla Handley. Milla started out very modestly with 250 cases of Chardonnay made in her home basement. Together with her husband, Rex McClellan, who is now deceased, she built Handley Cellars into a prestigious operation producing 20,000 cases per year and now presides over a 59-acre estate with a state-of-the-art winery. Along the way, she has become both a role model for aspiring women winemakers and a spokesperson for the Anderson Valley. She has been quite innovative and practiced sustainability in her vineyards long before it became fashionable. Milla is the great-granddaughter of the owner of the Blitz-Weinhard Brewery in Portland, Oregon. Raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, she studied at University of California Davis but realized early on that winemaking suited her more than large-scale beer production. After schooling, she studied under two wine masters, Richard Arrowood at Chateau St Jean and Jed Steel at Edmeades. Her estate vineyard of 30 acres is on a south-facing hillside adjacent to the winery. Planting began in 1986 and continued up until 1999. There are 12.5 acres of Pinot Noir in addition to Chardonnay and Gewürztraminer. She also farms vineyards in the Dry Creek Valley of Sonoma (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, Syrah) and the 3-acre T-Rex Vineyard surrounding her Anderson Valley home planted in 1999 and 2001 (Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris). Her charming tasting room is filled with her family collection of Oxacan, Indian and African folk art and includes a serene sculpture garden. The staff here (all women) are most friendly. The wines are sold to wine club members who receive an excellent newsletter in booklet format and are distributed to restaurants and retail stores. The website is www.handleycellars.com. The winery is located at 3151 Hwy. 128, Philo. 1-800-733-3151. 2005 Handley Mendocino County Pinot Noir (3500 cases, \$22), 2005 Handley Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$28), and 2004 Handley Reserve Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (350 cases, \$52). Handley also crafts an excellent sparkler, 2003 Handley Brute Rosé (\$36). The property was so picturesque that I have included several photos from my recent visit.





Harmonique. In 2002, veteran winemaker Bob Klindt of Claudia Springs teamed with Bruce Conzelman, a real estate developer and long-time pinotophile. Their goal was to produce a single Pinot Noir blend from Anderson Valley fruit. The vineyards chosen for the new label included the Wiley Vineyard planted with 29-year-old vines in the westernmost reaches of the valley and the 7-year-old Klindt Vineyard located a mile east of Wiley. While blending the various lots, two distinct wines emerged and were bottled separately: “Delicacé,” a more feminine style, and “The Noble One,” a more opulent and structured Pinot Noir. The two bottlings have been continued, although with the acquisition of the Christine Woods Vineyard, multiple bottlings under the Harmonique label may be in the offering. Success came quickly to Harmonique with the 2002 Harmonique “The Noble One” winning a Double Gold Medal in 2005 at the San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Harmonique currently shares the Claudia Springs tasting room and offers tasting Fri-Sun 11-5. The wines are highly allocated and sold primarily to wine club members through the website at www.harmoniquewine.com. 707-895-3993. 2003 vintage of both wines sold out. 2004 Harmonique “The Noble One” Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$48).



Husch Vineyards. As noted in Part I of this two part coverage of the Anderson Valley, The Knoll Vineyard at Husch was the first planting of Pinot Noir in the Anderson Valley (1968). The Knoll Vineyard was planted to a Wente field selection of Pinot Noir and the first vintage was 1971. Vineyard manager Al White has been at Husch since 1973, and current winemaker, Brad Holstine, has been on board since 2003. Holstine likes to describe Pinot Noir as a “chameleon” in that it is always changing in the bottle and in the glass. He also notes that Pinot Noir “has transcending looks - pale, but flavor-packed.” In the early years of The Knoll Vineyard Pinot Noir, the juice was blended at pressing, pumped over aggressively and subjected to *batonage* (lees stirring). The resultant wines were tannic and aggressive and needed at least five years to come around. The 1974 vintage sold for \$5! During the 1980s, attention was turned to tannin management using more barrel and bottle age. There were significant problems with sterility. In 1985 the wine sold for \$12. Currently the winemaking regimen for The Knoll Vineyard Pinot Noir includes fractional whole clusters, short cold soaks, hand punch-downs, secondary fermentation in barrel, bulldog racking, and 33% new oak for 18 months. Husch also farms the 128 acre La Ribera Ranch in the Ukiah Valley (Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc) and produces a total of 18 different wines. The current owners of Husch are the third generation Oswald family (Hugo Oswald Jr. bought Husch in 1979), Zac Robinson and Amanda Robinson Holstine. Husch’s tasting room is a small, weathered shack that once was a chicken coop and is open daily 10-6. The address is 4400 Hwy. 128, Philo. The website is www.huschvineyards.com. 707-895-3216. The Anderson Valley Pinot Noir is widely distributed. 2005 Husch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (4350 cases, \$21), 2004 Husch ‘Knoll’ Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (265 cases, \$38, sold out).

Lazy Creek Vineyards. Refer to Part I (Issue 27) of the *PinotFile* for the history of this winery. While visiting the Lazy Creek Open House at the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival, I met another couple of ophthalmologists (what is it with wine and eyes? - see article on Londer Vineyards as well). Retired ophthalmologist, David Noorthoek, M.D., is a co-owner of Lazy Creek Vineyards along with the Chandlers, and Beth Chandler’s father is a practicing ophthalmologist in Modesto! The Lazy Creek estate is marked by an old and noble sign as you enter the property through a narrow forested road from Hwy 128. The winery itself is quite small and quaint but very welcoming. Josh



Chandler has an interesting background of varied talents including vineyard grower, trained chef, and landscape architect. The Chandlers have added to the original 19 acres of vineyards they obtained when they purchased the property in 1999, and now farm 30 estate acres. The original Pinot Noir plantings consist of multiple heritage and suitcase clones. Winemaking is unique in that post-fermentation, at least a portion of the Pinot Noir is put into large oak casks. The tasting room at 4741 Hwy. 128, Philo is open by appointment, but if the gate is open, feel free to go in. The small production is sold primarily at the winery. Lazy Creek has a well-deserved reputation for Gewürztraminer as well. A website, www.lazycreekvineyards.com, is under construction. 707-895-3623. NV Anderson Valley Red Table Wine (Pinot Noir), 2004 Lazy Creek Vineyards Anderson Valley Estate Pinot Noir (\$42), 2005 Lazy Creek Vineyards Anderson Valley Estate Pinot Noir (\$42), and 2004 Lazy Creek Vineyards R.P.B. Estate Reserve Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (96 cases). The estate wines are bottled in heavy glass with the Lazy Creek logo (on the entrance sign) embossed in glass on the neck.

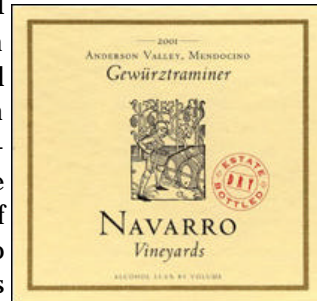


Londer Vineyards. Larry and Shirlee Londer left a comfortable life in Albuquerque, New Mexico (he was an ophthalmologist who directed a large multi-doctor practice and she ran the optical shop) to farm grapes and make wine in the Anderson Valley. In 1999, the Londers teamed with a few investor-friends to purchase a bucolic farm property in Philo. Larry wanted to name the venture Anderson Valley Vineyards, but the name was already taken by a winery in Albuquerque of all places and they wouldn't relinquish the name. The Londers planted a small estate Pinot Noir vineyard and sourced grapes from multiple vineyards (now confined only to Anderson Valley sources). Larry has a rye sense of humor and likes to detail the struggles and hard work that running a small boutique winery entails ("we work 8 days a week and still don't have enough time"), but you sense that he is loving every minute of it. Winemaker Greg LaFollette got them started and still consults, but the current winemaker is talented Richard Davis, who also has his own label in Sonoma, Calstar Cellars, and consults for Halleck, Alcina Cellars, and La Czar. The Londers invite visitors by appointment (707-895-3900). The property is stunning with vineyards encircled by fruit orchards and towering redwoods. The website is www.londervineyards.com. 2005 Londer Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (1,700 cases, \$33), 2005 Londer Parabol Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (500 cases, \$54), and 2005 Londer Estate Grown Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$50). A photo of the Londer Crew at their recent Open House is on page 11.



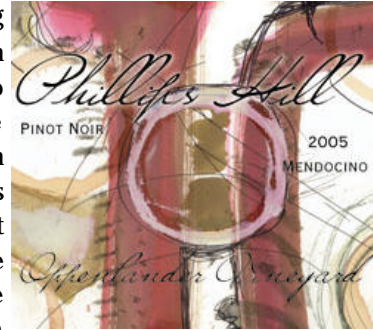


Navarro Vineyards. The winery's profile was featured in Part I (Issue 27) of the Anderson Valley Issue. Navarro began planting grapes in the Anderson Valley in 1974. The children of founders Ted Bennett and Deborah Cahn, Aaron and Sarah Cahn Bennett, are now actively involved in the winery as well. Sarah received a Masters degree in viticulture and enology from University California Davis and has applied her research on the phenolics of Mendocino Pinot Noir to Navarro's already stellar lineup of Pinot Noirs. She is assisting winemaker Jim Klein, who has been at Navarro for over 15 years. Aaron designed Navarro's first website in 1996 and his internet savvy adds to Navarro's impressive marketing history. Navarro now produces 40,000 cases of wine a year, 10,000 cases of which are Pinot Noir. They farm nine vineyard sites and blend 40-54 lots of Pinot Noir prior to bottling each vintage. Navarro has been innovative from the beginning. Most recently when I walked the vineyards, I was struck by a portable chicken house. It turns out, the chickens are a very effective way to mow, sucker and limit pests in the vineyard without using fossil fuels. (Vineyards and Sarah with llama below). The wines are sold online at www.navarrowine.com as well as retail stores nationwide. The tasting room and winery are at 5601 Hwy. 128, Philo. Tasting room hours are daily 10-6 (11-5 in winter). The grounds are perfect for picnicking and viewing llamas (with Sarah below). 707-895-3686.



2005 Navarro Mendocino Pinot Noir (\$18), 2004 Navarro Methode l'Ancienne Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, and 2004 Navarro Deep End Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$45).

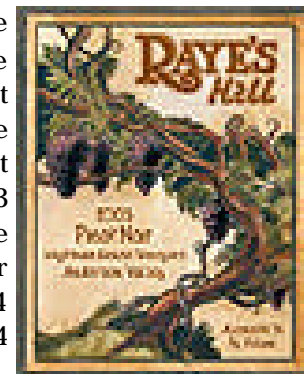
Phillips Hill Estates. This winery has an very interesting background and is best read on the website with a glass of Pinot in hand. Briefly, owner and winemaker Toby Hill grew up in San Francisco and had an accomplished career in the art business in New York. Like so many who long for a less harried lifestyle, he returned to San Francisco and eventually found a piece of heaven in the hills overlooking Anderson Valley. He built a house and an adjacent art studio, but when some unfinished Pinot Noir became available, the studio became a winery and Hill released his first Pinot Noir in 2002. He now sources grapes from the Oppenlander Vineyard on Shandel Ranch in Comptche's Surprise Valley and the Toulouse Vineyard in Anderson Valley. Interestingly, William Shandel planted 15 different varietals of grapes in 1984 to decide which performed best in this cool site close to the ocean. It wasn't long before he decided on Pinot Noir and now supplies grapes to several producers. Phillips Hill Estates wines are available on the website at www.phillipshillestates.com. 25690 Philo Greenwood Road, Philo. 707-877-1151. 2005 Phillips Hill Estates Oppenlander Vineyard Mendocino Pinot Noir (200 cases, \$42), 2005 Phillips Hill Estates Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (100 cases, \$40).



Philo Ridge Vineyards Fred Buonanno and Heather McKelvey searched for four years before finding their dream property high on a ridge in the Anderson Valley. They answered an ad in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and fell in love with the site immediately. They bought the 40+ acres in 1999. Far up in the hills on a 5.33 mile dirt road, the vineyard had been planted in 1976 to Cabernet and Merlot by the original owner Vernon Rose of Christine Woods Winery. Since the couple had no farming experience, they hired vineyardist Norman Koble to supervise the planting of Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris on the property. Their first vintage was 2001. Hovering around 1,000 cases of multiple varietals, they eventually plan to feature primarily Pinot Noir. Fred's business card says he is both the "tractor butt and owner." The mailing address is PO Box 525, Philo 95466. Appointments are available on weekends by calling 707-489-2303. The website is www.philoridge.com. I sampled both the 2001 and 2004 vintages at the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival and was suitably impressed. 2004 Philo Ridge Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (? High \$20s).



Raye's Hill Vineyard & Winery. Raye and Dan Sokolow are Chicago refugees who moved to the Anderson Valley and planted their estate vineyard in 1997. They currently make 1,000 cases of wine (primarily Pinot Noir) from their estate Pinot Noir vineyard and several other notable vineyards in the valley. The wines are available on the website at www.rayeshill.com. 3400 Chardonnay Lane, Philo. 707-895-3439. 2003 Raye's Hill Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$32), 2004 Raye's Hill Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$30), 2004 Raye's Hill Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$24), 2004 Raye's Hill Raye's Reserve Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$30), 2004 Raye's Hill Wightman House Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, and 2004 Raye's Hill Cerise Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir.



Roederer Estate. Since 1981, Roederer Estate has been developing its own vineyards and crafting fine sparkling wines. Jean-Claude Rouzaud, chairman of Champagne Louis Roederer and grandson of Madame Camille Olry Roederer, chose the 58-acre Anderson Valley vineyard and winery site. Roederer Estate now farms 580 acres of Pinot Noir (clones 32, 33, Pommard, Dijon 667 and 777) and Chardonnay and all wines are made from estate grapes. The winery's Anderson Valley Estate Brut debuted in 1988, and in 1993 was joined by the first vintage sparkler, L'Ermitage 1989. An Estate Brut Rosé and vintage dated L'Ermitage Rosé are also produced. The sparkling wines are in the upper echelon of those made in California. The winemaking team is all French headed by Arnaud Weyrich. Roederer (Maisons Marques & Domaines) also owns nearby Schraffenberger Cellars (formerly Pacific Echo and originally Schraffenberger) which also had its beginnings in 1981. Roederer Estate has quietly been making a still Pinot Noir since 1992, which is only sold through the tasting room. The tasting room is open daily from 11-5 at 4501 Hwy. 128, Philo. 2005 Roederer Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (13.4% alc., \$23). This was tasted at the Festival and I can recommend. It is a low-alcohol, finesse-filled Pinot Noir that is smooth and soft in texture and leaves a lingering impression of Asian spices and Pinot black fruits. The website is www.roedererestate.net. 707-895-2288. The sparkling wines are widely distributed. NV Roederer Estate Anderson Valley Brut (65,000 cases, \$23), NV Roederer Estate Brut Rosé (3,000 cases, \$27), 2000 Roederer Estate L'Ermitage (5,548 cases), and 1999 Roederer Estate L'Ermitage Rosé (650 cases, \$72).



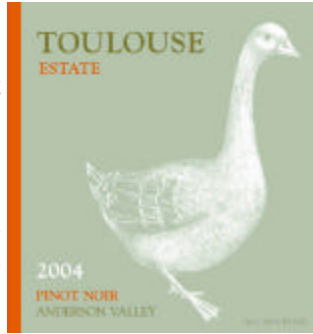
Scharffenberger Cellars. Originally founded in 1981 by John Scharffenberger (who also started the Scharffenberger chocolate company now sold to Hershey), the winery was sold in 1998 and renamed Pacific Echo. As noted above, it was acquired in 2004 by Maisons Marques & Domaines and the original name restored. Tex Sawyer has been winemaker here since 1989. The tasting room at 8501 Hwy 128, Philo is open daily from 11-5 and features work from local artists. The website is www.scharffenbergercellars.com. 707-895-2957. NV Scharffenberger Brut (25,000 cases, \$19).



Standish Wine Company. This is a new winery located in Philo at 5101 Hwy. 128. The principals have some distant familial relationship to Miles Standish who came to America with the pilgrims on the Mayflower. The tasting room is open daily except Tuesday. 707-895-9213. 2005 Standish Wine Company Day Ranch Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$32).



Toulouse Vineyards & Winery. Vern and Maxine Boltz are urban refugees from the Bay Area where Vern was an Oakland Fire Department Captain and home builder, and Maxine was a flight attendant and real estate professional. They purchased 160 acres near Philo in 1997 and planted a 17-acre vineyard to Pinot Noir (Wädenswil, 115, 667, and 77). The vineyard was named Toulouse after a huge goose that weighs up to 35 pounds or more. Despite the large size, the goose is a placid bird and thrives in the tranquility of the vineyard. A toulouse is prominently displayed on the label. The vineyard has supplied grapes for other producers such as Pacific Echo, MacPhail, Baxter and Phillips Hill Estates. In 2002 the Boltzs started their own label. The wines are sold through the website at www.toulousevineyards.com. Tasting is by appointment. 8001 Hwy. 128, Philo. 707-895-2828. 2003 Toulouse Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$33), 2003 Toulouse Estate Reserve Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$42), 2004 Toulouse Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$36), and 2005 Toulouse Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$39).



Zina Hyde Cunningham Winery. This property is owned by Steve Ledson, a fifth generation farmer and owner of Ledson Winery & Vineyards in Kenwood. A tasting room is open daily 10-5 at 14077 Hwy. 128 in Boonville. 707-895-9462. 2005 Zina Hyde Cunningham Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$40). This wine won a Gold Medal at the 2007 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.



Tasting of Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs

I did a rather extensive tasting of Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs over the past two weeks. I purchased all of the wines or pulled them from my cellar. The 40 Pinot Noirs were all tasted blind. I did invite Eric Anderson (Grape-Nutz) to join me in tasting some of the wines (I thought it appropriate to have an Anderson involved) and our notes were closely in agreement.

Heaven Sent

2005 Drew Fog-Eater Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 225 cases, \$35. *Outrageous aromatics with bright cherries, cranberries and sandalwood notes. Luscious green tea and cherry jam on toast flavors with suede-like tannins on the persistent finish. A regal wine that is nicely balanced and complete.*

2005 La Crema Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$25. *This has to be one of the best Pinot Noirs crafted at this price level. The nose is pure fruit - crushed cherries, raspberries, strawberries. The red fruit flavors linger an eternity on the finish. This is a wine that feels like velvet and revels in its finesse.* Website: www.lacrema.com.



2004 Littorai Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 360 cases, \$55. *A beautiful wine filled with pinotitisy. Spicy red fruits (cherry and raspberry) compose the aromatics, bright and clean red fruits dance on the palate, and a nice acid lift completes the finish. Perfectly balanced. I liken this one to a fine tapestry where everything is beautifully organized and composed. I re-corked and finished-off the wine the next day.* Website: www.littorai.com.

Littorai

2003 Littorai Les Larmes Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 191 cases, \$38. *Sweet red cherries dominate the nose and flavors showing a laser-like clarity and purity of fruit enhanced by citrus notes. A substantial acid spine makes this Pinot a perfect dinner companion. There is impeccable balance, the hallmark of a Littorai Pinot Noir.*

2004 Londer Vineyards Estate Grown Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 15.5% alc., 432 cases \$46. *This one surprised me as I was skeptical when I looked at the octane level. Given adequate air time, the aromatics open beautifully showing dark fruits, mocha and a hint of earth. This is a rich wine with a prodigious fruit core, fine tannins, a mouth-coating finish and great legs. Teeth staining.*

2004 Roessler Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc, 325 cases, \$38. *A rich cherry nose with sweet oak in the background leads to spiced cherry and berry flavors. The texture is as smooth as a baby's bottom and the tangy finish is clean and refreshing. Maybe the best wine in the entire tasting. Can you say ethereal?* Website: www.roesslercellars.com.



2004 Woodenhead Vintners Wiley Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 15% alc., \$45. *The subdued dark red fruits and subtle oak overtones in the nose are overshadowed by cinnamon-infused cherry, cola and baking spices on the palate. Despite the high alcohol, the fruit holds its own, and the whole package is nicely balanced. This one grows in your mouth until you are smiling from ear to ear. This winery has been profiled in the PinotFile. Website: www.woodenheadwine.com.*

Knocking on Heaven's Door

2005 Breggo Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$35. *A lovely floral- and cherry-driven nose with a rich, long and pure spicy palate. The tannins are dusty on the finish that ends with vitamin and herbal overtones. The balance is right on.*

2005 Brogan My Father's Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 150 cases, \$60. *This is a dark wine brimming with sweet ripe red fruits probably from whole cluster influence. It is juicy, vivid and alive with great richness of flavor. The finish is clean and sports an interesting hint of pink grapefruit.* Website: www.brogancellars.com.

2004 Claudia Springs Klindt Vineyard Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 300 cases, \$24. *Appealing aromas of cherries and strawberries with plump midpalate fruit. The wine's rich Pinot extract is clothed in moderate tannins on the clean finish.*

2004 Handley Anderson Valley Reserve Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$52. *This wine is the epitome of softness, grace and elegance, what Mille refers to as "authentic Pinot." It is red fruit driven with flavors of cherries and cranberries along with herbal notes, a touch of oak, and a little funk.*

2004 Husch The Knoll Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 265 cases, \$38. *This is a spirited Pinot that wows you with soft, dark fruits, a caressing texture, and sleek tannins. Plenty of style and grace.*

2004 Lazy Creek Vineyards Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 640 cases. *Strawberry-driven in both the nose and in the flavors, this is a fresh tasting Pinot that has some drying tannins on the finish it needs to shed. I like this wine for its purity of fruit.*

2003 Harmonique 'The Noble One' Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., \$42. *There are intoxicating and elegant aromatics of rich, ripe cherries kissed with spice and orange peel. The wine offers the essence of full-flavored red and black fruits touched with subtle oak nuances.*

2004 Harmonique 'The Noble One' Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., \$42 *This wine has a heady nose of dark raspberries and spice. The vanilla-infused cherry flavors are moderated with healthy tannins which need some time to soften.*

2003 Littorai Cerise Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 160 cases, \$60. *This wine needs some air time to blossom. The aromatics are rich with cassis and sweet oak. Spicy cherry flavors are sleek and the finish echoes with lively acidity. As usual with Littorai wines, the balance is spot on.*

2004 Navarro Deep End Blend Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$45. *This is a deeply colored Pinot Noir with plenty of vigor. The nose and flavors are very pinotypical and the winemaking here is seamless. The dark, plummy fruit is saucy and lush.*

2005 Roessler Blue Jay Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5%, 600 cases, \$27. *The area west of Philo has a large population of blue jays and the locals refer to the area as Blue Jay in Boontling. This wine is simple and satisfying and easy to like. The attractive aromas of dark cherry, spice and toast make you want to take another sip. There is a solid dark berry core with a rich and smooth mouth feel. Great with barbecue sausage and a terrific summer go-to Pinot for daily drinking.*

Wordly (Decent)

2005 Adrian Fog Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$75. *The wine has an orange tinge to the rim. The pungent nose features wet leaf and earth. The core of Pinot fruits is just fine and the texture is velvety. The finish is brisk and clean with lively acidity.* Website; www.adrianfog.com.



2004 Baxter Oppenlander Vineyard Mendocino Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$40. *The nose features super ripe dark cherries and herbs. The straight-forward dark cherry flavors are kissed by citrus. The finish sports fine tannins, lively acidity, a touch of astringency, and a little warmth.*

2005 Black Kite Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 289 cases, \$35. *The darkest Pinot in the tasting. The nose is rich with crushed blackberries, a little game and sweet oak. This is an "in-your-face" wine which is BIG. Generous and fruity rather than classy or complex.*

2004 Gryphon Larklinn Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., \$44. *The nose is stunning with a bright berry onslaught. The wine is fruit-driven with dense and chewy stone fruits, but could use more acid. The finish is marked by massive tannins.*

2005 Handley Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$28. *Mocha, cherry, and cinnamon aromas and flavors in a well-composed package. The finish is crisp with herbal and oak overtones.*

2005 Lazy Creek Vineyards Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 780 cases, \$42. *Some nice floral perfume at the start with tasty dark stone fruits and a velvety texture. Oak is evident from start to finish and moderate tannins on the finish need time to integrate.*

2004 Londer Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1949 cases, \$30. *A touch warm and herbal (eucalyptus) on the nose. The subtle red fruits are pleasing, the texture is soft and light, and the tannins are supple.*

2001 Londer Parabol Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 15.5% alc., \$42. *A very earthy Pinot featuring wet leaf, mushroom and stem on the nose. Darker fruit flavors are highlighted with barnyard and citrus notes. A Burgundian's cup of tea.*

2004 Navarro Methode l'Ancienne Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$25. *The first pour offers striking floral and redwood notes in the aromas, but with air the wine moves toward an equally appealing rich dark cherry and toast profile. Cherry, strawberry and rhubarb pie make up the core flavors which have good intensity. The tannins are supple.*

2005 MacPhail Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 396 cases, \$40. *A ripe style with dry red cherries, a hint of oak, and a touch of warmth. A slight bitterness mars an otherwise satisfying finish.*

2003 Toulouse Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 1625 cases, \$30. *A light-bodied wine with an interesting nose of buttered cinnamon toast. The fruit is accompanied by bread dough flavors. The finish is notable for lingering vanillin oak flavors, mild drying tannins and a little heat.*

Other wines sampled

2003 Arista Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$45.

2004 Baxter Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$40.

2003 Bink Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir 16.2% alc., 200 cases, \$40.

2003 Claudia Springs Klindt Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 471 cases, \$24.

2002 Demuth Vineyard Estate Pinot Noir (corked - the wine had some interesting root beer, dark beer and cassis flavors. but the nose was unpleasant)

2004 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (? flawed bottle) 14.5% alc., \$55.

2005 Husch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (corked) 13.9% alc., \$17.

2004 Jeriko Mendocino Organic Grapes Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$20.

2005 MacPhail Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 321 cases, \$48.

2003 MacPhail Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 312 cases, \$35.

2005 Migration Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$30.


PrinceofPinot.com

Can you say Pinot without a smile on
your face?

Anderson Valley Part II

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Some Mendocino Favs

If you want to stay in the Anderson Valley: **Apple Farm:** Dan and Sally Schmitt, former owners of the French Laundry Restaurant operate a 32-acre organic farm and apple orchard with cooking school and lodging in cottages (707-895-2465). **Boonville Hotel:** The Schmitts' son Johnny is the chef in the hotel's restaurant (707-895-2210). **Holly Hill Farm B&B:** very nice guesthouse (707-895-2269). **Indian Creek Inn:** modern inn adjacent to Goldeneye Winery on Hwy 128 in Philo (707-895-3261). **Highland Ranch:** a guest ranch with cabins and horseback riding (707-895-3600).

If you want to stay in Mendocino Coast area: **Albion River Inn:** Deluxe accommodations overlooking the Pacific Ocean with high-class restaurant in Albion (800-479-7944). **Heritage House Inn:** Deluxe inn with superb restaurant on the ocean in Little River (707-937-5885). **The Rendezvous Inn & Restaurant:** stay in a lovingly restored old home and eat in the North Coast's highest rated restaurant. Located in Fort Bragg (707-964-8142). **Elk Cove Inn:** perched on a bluff overlooking a wind-swept cove, the quirky lodging is unlike anywhere else. Located in Elk. (800-275-2967).

If you are hungry in Anderson Valley: **Moya Taco Truck:** downtown Boonville. **Mosswood Market Café & Bakery:** Boonville, open Tues-Sat. **Libby's:** great Mexican food that all of the locals love. **Boonville Hotel:** lunch and dinner, contemporary American cuisine. **Redwood Drive-In Café:** every small town has a drive-in like this where you can get a good burger. Don't forget the many fine picnic spots at Anderson Valley wineries - pick up supplies at the market in Philo or in Boonville or the Mosswood Market Café & Bakery.

If you are hungry on the Mendocino Coast in addition to the above: **Café Beaujolais, Ledford House, MacCallum House Restaurant, Stevenswood Restaurant, The Ravens at the Stanford Inn by the Sea.**