

Forget  
love...I'd  
rather fall in  
Pinot

# PinotFile

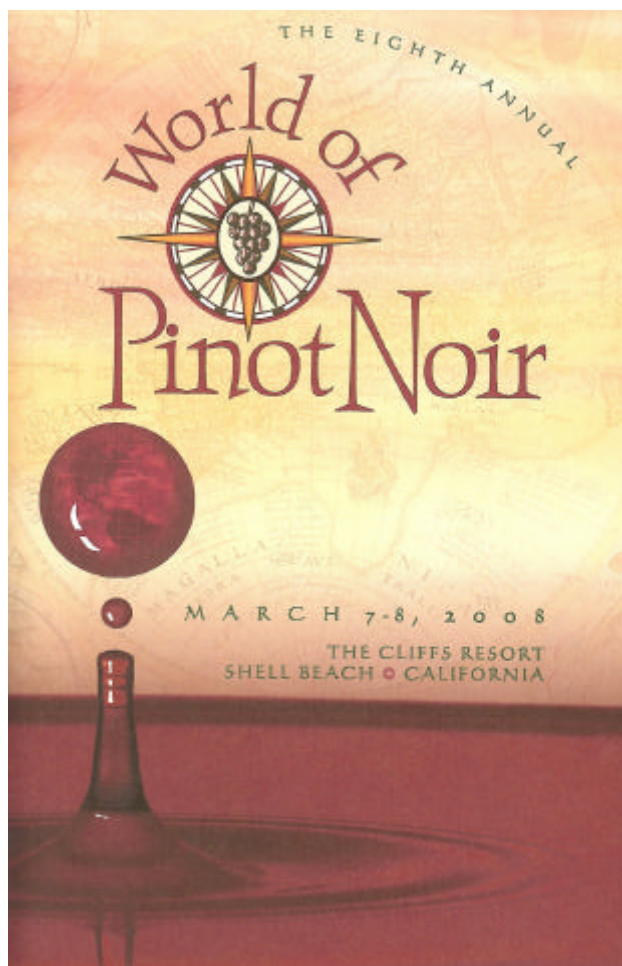
The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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March 23, 2008

## Prince's Excellent Adventure at WOPN

Every March, several hundred pinot geeks converge on the small seaside community of Shell Beach, California and revel in their beloved passion. Over 190 producers of Pinot Noir and several importers provided samples to the seemingly insatiable throng. This was the Eight Annual World of Pinot Noir (WOPN), and the event truly lived up to its worldly theme. There were Pinot Noir producers from every corner of the earth including British Columbia, Chile, France (Burgundy), Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Switzerland, and Tasmania. Although California dominated the winery participants' roster, Oregon was well represented as well.



As I attended the informative seminars, walked the tents and sampled the wines at the Pinot Noir by the Sea Tastings, and interviewed several wine personalities, I made several general observations. This is a terrific event and all of the suggestions to follow are meant to be constructive.

- (1) Many producers at the walk-around tastings are pouring their latest vintage (2006) and in some cases, even barrel samples, but the wines that really show the best, are the ones from recent vintages which have some bottle age such as those from the 2005 vintage. Producers should hold back some of their wine for these events so the consumer can see what the wines are capable of with a little bottle age. In defense of some wineries, a few offered small verticals.
- (2) Walk-around tastings are not a format that lends itself to seriously tasting wine. There are simply far too many distractions (smells, noise, and laughter). It is a whoop-up meant for enjoying Pinot Noir and not critiquing it. For me, these events are more about renewing friendships, making new ones, and becoming better acquainted with the people behind the wines. As Master of Wine Tim Atkin has said, "The character, ambition and talent of the person who made it is highly relevant to how the wine tastes. I want to know about these things, just as I want to know about vintage conditions, personal eccentricities, and a winemaker's take on the world. All of these things make wine different; all of these things make wine special."
- (3) The program listed the producers and most relevant information, but there was no inclusion of the specific wines they poured, including case production, alcohol %, price and winemaker. Trying to write this information down while holding a stem, a spit cup, a program, a pen, and a notepad requires at least another arm.
- (4) At the end of the walk-around tasting, it would be nice to be able to check off from a complete list of wineries those that you wish to receive mailings and offerings from. This would avoid repeatedly writing your name and address at each winery's pouring station.
- (5) Serving the wines at the proper temperature is a real challenge, especially since the days were rather sunny and warm. Warmish Pinot is never enjoyable. Anyone want to donate 200 coolers?
- (6) The crowds descended on the Kosta Browne, Sea Smoke and Pisoni/Lucia/Roar wine booths and they were out of wine before the sessions ended.
- (7) There are few millenials attending the seminars other than winemakers. Perhaps we need to put more fun and conviviality into some seminars, attracting younger people and encouraging them to fawn over Pinot Noir so its surge in popularity will continue. Young people are refreshing for they are more adventurous and tend to underestimate their wine knowledge, unlike many older pinot geeks who often stick with the tried and true and overestimate what they know.
- (8) When will wine events enter the this century and adapt the use of modern presentation tools such as Power Point presentations and video to complement their seminars?
- (9) At the end of an extended walk-around tasting, it is always surprising to look down and see your purple-stained fingers used to hold your wineglass throughout the afternoon. It is almost a badge of recognition and honor.
- (10) The buzz from many winegrowers was that the 2007 vintage in California was one of the best in recent memory. Everyone seems to think the wines are great, with considerable depth of fruit and structure that will hold up well for many years.

## New Faces at WOPN

**Anglim Winery** A small family-owned winery in Paso Robles which was launched in 2005. Winemaker Steve Anglim produces several varietals including a Pinot Noir from the Fiddlestix Vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills (2005 sold is out at the winery, 2006 will be released in the Spring). The website is [www.anglimwinery.com](http://www.anglimwinery.com).



**Anthony Dell Cellars** Joy Dell Means and Douglas Anthony Drawbond started their winery in 1996 and released their first Pinot Noir in 2002. Located in McMinnville, OR. The website [www.anthonydellcellars.com](http://www.anthonydellcellars.com).

**Asuncion Ridge Vineyards** Winegrower Philip Krumal has a small estate Pinot Noir vineyard at 2000 ft in the hills above Atascadero and released his first Pinot Noir from the 2005 vintage. I sampled the inaugural release last year and was quite impressed. The website is [www.asuncionridge.com](http://www.asuncionridge.com).



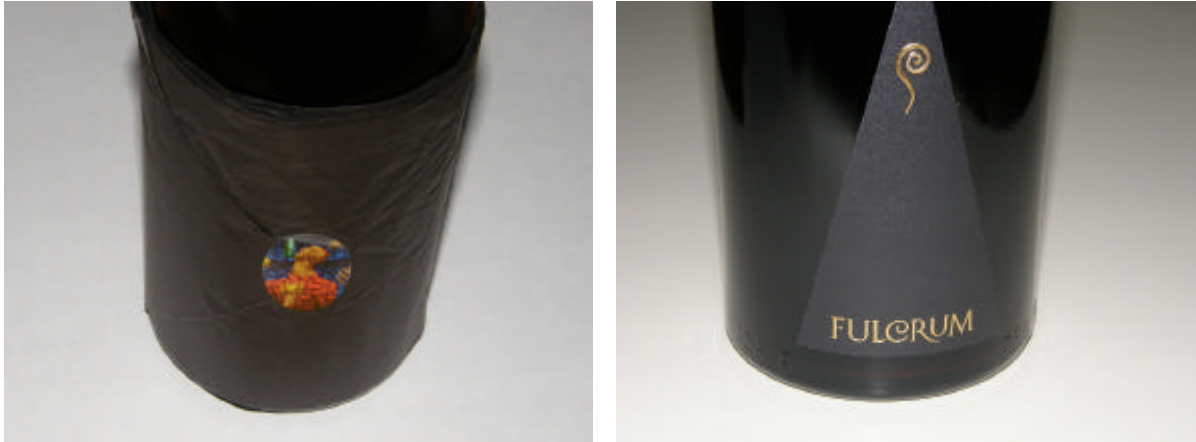
**Derby Wine Estates** This new producer was pouring their inaugural 2006 Pinot Noir from the Derbyshire Vineyard in San Simeon. The vineyard is just 1¼ miles inland from the Pacific Ocean (photo below). 62 acres are planted to clones 115, 667 and 777 of Pinot Noir (2002) and 11 acres to Pinot Gris. Yields here are extremely low. The website is [www.laurasvineyard.com](http://www.laurasvineyard.com).



**Fulcrum Wines** Owner David Rossi's background was in food marketing. He began his wine-making career at home over ten years ago and his success in amateur winemaking competitions led him to launch Fulcrum wines. Christinna Rossi assists David with the sales and marketing. David has a admirable philosophy: produce wines that are balanced with respect to acid, tannin, alcohol, fruit, oak, and age-worthiness. A fulcrum is a point of balance for a lever and his goal is to leverage the best wine out of the best grapes while maintaining balance. That is what Fulcrum is all about. He crafts his wines at Crushpad in San Francisco. His years of marketing experience are reflected in the impressive presentation of his wines. Each bottle is carefully wrapped in tissue and encased in a paper collar that has a seal depicting an acrobat juggling. This image embodies David's guiding theme of balance (see photos next page). Six bottles are presented in a handsome engraved wood box - very classy.

**2006 Fulcrum Wines Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 100 cases, \$52. From three vineyards, Akina, Hein Family, and Wentzel. Clones are Pommard, 115, 667 and 777. Aged 10 months in 41% new French oak (Francois Frere and Seguin Moreau). *The wine leads off with aromas of cherries, raspberries, herbs and new mown hay. Darker fruits dominate the flavor profile, with hints of raisin, spice and wood. Plenty of acid, even a little tart on the finish, which also displays a fruity raspberry flavor. A very respectable effort first time out.*

In 2007, Fulcrum Wines will also release Pinot Noirs from the Sonoma Coast, Santa Rita Hills, as well as Anderson Valley. The very informative website is [www.fulcrumwines.com](http://www.fulcrumwines.com).

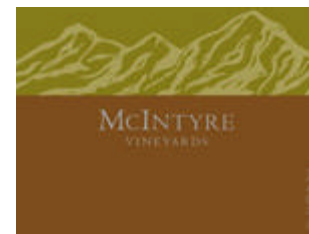


**Johan Vineyards** Talk about Pinot Noir now being international. Dag Johan Sundby discovered Pinot Noir (Burgundy) while living in Norway. Subsequently, he visited the United States and was struck by Oregon Pinot Noir. He purchased a unique 65-acre vineyard in the Van Duzer corridor west of Salem, Oregon. The initial vintage was 2005 and production is 1,000 cases. The website is [www.johanvineyards.com](http://www.johanvineyards.com).



**Lucienne Vineyards** This new winery produces estate bottled Pinot Noir sourced from Hahn Estates vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands. Lucienne takes its name from two sources: Nicky Hahn's middle name, Lucien, but in the feminine form to honor Santa Lucia, the patron saint of light who is known for bringing light to the darkness. The 2005 vintage is the inaugural offering of a Santa Lucia Highlands appellation Pinot Noir and a Lone Oak single vineyard designated Pinot Noir crafted by winemaker Paul Clifton. The website is [www.luciennevineyards.com](http://www.luciennevineyards.com).

**McIntyre Vineyards** Steve and Kim McIntyre have been involved in the wine industry for 28 years including growing grapes for many well-known wineries through their vineyard management company, Monterey Pacific. Together, they decided to start their own label, sourcing Pinot Noir from Arroyo Seco and the Santa Lucia Highlands. They also craft a sparkling wine labeled "L'homme qui ris" (the man who laughs). The website is [www.mcintyrevineyards.com](http://www.mcintyrevineyards.com).



**Olson Ogden Wines** Located in Sebastopol, Sonoma County, this newer winery is a partnership between Tim Olson and John Ogden and crafts Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley. A small feature on this winery and tasting notes were featured in a recent *PinotFile* (Volume 6, Issue 51).

**Prodigal Wines** A new face in the Santa Rita Hills that released a Santa Rita Hills appellation Pinot Noir and Estate Quinta Santa Rosa Vineyard Pinot Noir in 2005. Stephen Russell, along with wife Mary, are the smiling faces behind their new venture. I re-tasted both wines at the WOPN and enjoyed both for their elegance and demure fruit flavors. The winery has been prominently featured in past issues of the *PinotFile*. The website is [www.ProdigalWines.com](http://www.ProdigalWines.com).



**Rhys Vineyards** Rhys vineyards consists of seven different small Pinot Noir plantings in the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation. Planting and farming these vineyards has been a challenge, and only recently (2007) have estate wines been barreled from each separate vineyard. A second label, Alexia, offers Pinot Noirs from purchased grapes in the Sonoma Coast, Chileno Valley, and Russian River Valley. This was the first estate Rhys Pinot Noir I had sampled and it created quite a buzz at the event.



**2006 Rhys Vineyards Alpine Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** Most of the wine's "clones" are heritage selections such as Calera, Hyde, Swan, Wente (a total of 16 different clones). *Still a baby with plenty of tannins to shed, but the fruit core is strikingly pure and satisfying. Richly layered, sturdy on the palate, and possessing a suave texture.*

Rhys Vineyards wines are sold through a mailing list. The website is [www.rhysvineyards.com](http://www.rhysvineyards.com).

**Surh Luchtel Cellars** Owners and winemakers Don Surh and Gary Luchtel have been producing wine under this label since 1999, but their first Pinot Noir was released in 2003. Most of their production has been Bordeaux varietals. Don was pouring a 2005 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir which was a bit subdued (Don said it drank much better in barrel and hadn't recovered), and an excellent 2005 Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir.

**2005 Surh Luchtel Cellars Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., 560 cases, \$50. Aged 11 months in 75% new French oak. *Easy to understand why this wine is sold out at the winery. It is an impressive offering with plenty of dark aromatic Pinot fruits, appealingly spiced, and nicely balanced with pleasing acidity and gossamer tannins.*

Surh Luchtel Cellars is located in Napa. The website is [www.surhluchtel.com](http://www.surhluchtel.com).

**Thorne Wine Group** The Thorne family has owned the Rio Vista Vineyard property in the Santa Rita Hills for over 50 years. Bobbie and Gramer Thorne planted 26 acres of Pinot Noir in 2001 and another 38 acres in 2006. There are seven winemakers sourcing Rio Vista Vineyard fruit including Thorne Wine which debuted their initial 2005 offering at this year's WOPN. [www.thornewine.com](http://www.thornewine.com).

*Thorne*  
Rio Vista Vineyard  
STA. RITA HILLS



## Cream of the Crop

With so many Pinot Noirs to taste, I could only sample a small number of them. The following wines really impressed me and are worth searching out for your own cellar.

**2005 Calera Wine Company Ryan Vineyard Mt Harlan Pinot Noir** *Still a Lolita with a massive structure and healthy tannins, cellar this one for several years and you will be smiling from ear to ear.*

**2005 Etude Wines Tremblor Carneros Pinot Noir** This is Etude's second vineyard designate Pinot Noir. *A complete wine that displays Tony Soter's genius. Beautiful spiced cherry and strawberry aromas and flavors perfectly weighted with demure tannins and perky acidity.*



**2005 Frogmore Creek Tasmania Pinot Noir** *Bright and pure nose of cherries, strawberries and roses. Cola and cherry flavors with a nice woody tone and edgy acidity. A flat-out stunning wine that reminds me of Chambolle Musigny in style and character.*

**2005 J.Wilkes Bien Nacido Vineyard Block Q Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** *Jeff shoots for an understated style of Pinot Noir that shows exemplary finesse and balance. Plenty of nice red fruits, spice and herbs here in a graceful wine of great charm.*

**2006 Kenneth Volk Vineyards Garey Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** Barrel sample. This vineyard appears to be a gem. I recently enjoyed the Bianchi Pinot Noir from this same vineyard. *Showing quite nicely at this early stage with intense blackberry and black cherry fruit augmented with deft use of oak.*

**2005 Ketcham Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** From a vineyard on Eastside Road near J Winery in the Russian River Valley. Crafted by Michael Browne (Kosta Browne). Sold only through a mailing list. *This is a marvelous wine which shows a softer and more reserved Michael Browne style. Typical Russian River Valley pedigree with Bing cherry, cola and spice. Very showy and fruity and a delight to drink.*

**2006 Lynmar Terra De Promisso Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** This is one of the newer vineyard designate Pinot Noirs from Lynmar (unreleased). *Winemaker Hugh Chapelle poured me a good slug of this and I drank it all. Displaying that coastal minerality and tenacity, this Pinot Noir will knock your socks off. Plenty of Pinot fruits, baking spice and juicy tang, with a silky texture to boot, this will be a superstar wine.*

**2005 Mayro-Murdick Wines Carneros Pinot Noir** A top scoring Pinot Noir in a *San Francisco Chronicle* tasting. I featured this small producer in the *PinotFile* in the past, and all of the Pinot Noirs under this label are recommended. The winemaker, Michael Cox, is also the winemaker at Schug in Carneros. *Plenty of elegant pino-tosity here with plum, wild berry and earthy flavors and admirable balance.*



**2006 Penner-Ash Wine Cellars Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** Lynn and Ron Penner-Ash craft their Pinot Noirs in a newly-constructed gravity flow winery located on 80 acres in Newberg, OR. Lynn, whose career began at Rex Hill Winery, has a touch with Pinot Noir and her wines have received well-deserved praise from the wine press. *This is one of those wines that can best be described as a beautiful woman in fine red lingerie. Full of charm and attraction, this was one of the best Pinot Noirs I tasted all weekend.*

**2006 Pey-Marin Trois Filles Marin County Pinot Noir** *Only recently bottled and still a bit shocked, it was showing considerable potential.* **2006 Pey-Lucia Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** *More showy with plenty of up-front dark fruit, a velvety mouth feel, and a refreshing finish.*

**2006 Pleasant Valley Vineyards Dylan David Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** *This wine was spectacular even at this early stage. Terrific smoky fruit core with a great peacock tail finish. The 2005 vintage of this wine is continuing to improve in the bottle and currently showing very nicely also.*

**2004 and 2005 Quails' Gate Estate Vineyard Okanagan Valley British Columbia Pinot Noir** When I spoke with winemaker Ted Lemon of Littorai some time back, he mentioned that British Columbia might be the next great region for Pinot Noir. Since Canadian wines are rarely exported to the United States, we have had little experience with the Pinot Noirs from this winegrowing region. I first tasted Quails' Gate Pinot Noir at the International Pinot Noir Celebration two years ago and was very, very impressed. Both of these wines confirmed my first indoctrination. Quails' Gate has been producing Pinot Noir since 1989 from their 125-acre estate vineyard on the shores of Lake Okanagan. Mostly Spätburgunder clone from Germany. *These are world-class Pinot Noirs of great distinction and sophistication. There are beautifully composed with delicate cherry fruits, subtle spices, admirable oak highlights, and silky textures. The balance is so perfect the wines are almost ephemeral. Too bad we can't get our hands on some of this juice.* For more on Quails' Gate, see page 22.

**2006 Red Car Zio Tony Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** Barrel sample. Red Car is expanding its offerings to three vineyard designates from the Sonoma Coast and Russian River Valley. *Where once they were known for a California Neuvo style (that is, heavily extracted and endowed), the wines have taken on more elegance and complexity. Barrel samples are always tricky, but the Zio Tony was very showy with luscious black cherry fruit.*

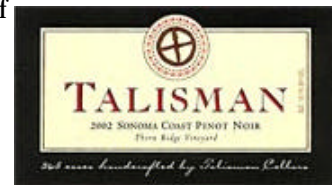


**2005 Rippon Vineyard Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir** This wine comes from the most photographed vineyard in the world, Rippon Vineyard on the western shores of Lake Wanaka. The property has been in the Mills family for four generations and current winemaker Nick Mills is crafting superb Pinot Noir reflective of his extensive training in Burgundy. *More restrained and reserved than many heavily-oaked and strongly-fruited Central Otago Pinot Noirs, this is a classy wine that will have a wide fan base. Pure red Pinot fruits, nicely spiced and set off by brisk acidity, this is a food wine that has a long life ahead of it.* (Imported by Station Imports in Colorado Springs, CO, 719-633-2184).



**2005 and 2006 Saintsbury Brown Ranch Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir** Winemaker Jerome Chery has acquired a sensibility about Pinot Noir from his years with Ted Lemon, and this wine from the winery's flagship vineyard, is a vin de garde for the Carneros appellation. *Both Brown Ranch wines (the 2006 was a barrel sample) show marvelous purity of fruit with all kinds of layered interest such as spice, earth, forest floor and animale.*

**2003 Talisman Wines Thorn Ridge Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** I am a fan of Scott Rich's wines as they are quite distinctive and built for beautiful aging. *This wine is just hitting its stride with pure ruby color, dried cherry and berry flavors, complimentary earthiness and sauvage, and lively acidity.* Scott was pouring several other very good Pinots including the 2005 Hawks Hill Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.



**2005 Windy Oaks Estate Reserve Corralitos Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** *Very sexy aromatics of strawberries and wild raspberries all dolled up with oak spice. Light on the palate, yet providing plenty of fruit pleasure and ending with refreshing acidity.*

## Seminars at Domaine Alfred Winery

### Old Clones/Old Vines vs New Clones/New Vines

Moderated by Patrick Comiskey, Senior Editor of *Wine & Spirits Magazine*

#### Panelists & Tasting Order

#### Amity Vineyards, Willamette Valley, Oregon, Myron Redford - Winemaker

**1999 Amity Upright Clone Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** From older clones with upright growth pattern - Gamay Beaujolais planted in 1970, Ponzi clone (?Martini) planted in 1974. *Old wine patina. Cigar box and wet leaves on the nose. A rustic wine with dwindling fruit and plenty of acidity.*

**1999 Amity Dijon 115 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** *More generous fruit and structure with a little port aroma showing up. Again, dry and rustic.*

#### Ancien, Carneros, California, Ken Bernards - Winemaker

**2007 Ancien Haynes Vineyard Martini Clone (1966)** *Fragrant, confectioned cherry nose. Very attractive pure cherry fruit with a Jolly Rancher quality. Quite vibrant.*

**2007 Ancien Haynes Vineyard Dijon 115 (1999)** *Similar aromas but more restrained. Darker in color, darker fruit profile, more linear, more tannic.*

#### Laetitia Vineyards & Winery, Arroyo Grande Valley, California, Eric Hickey - Winemaker

**2006 La Colline Old Vine Martini Clone 12 Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir** *Lovely aromatics of wild berries and cherries. Black cherry flavor core with earthy highlights. Lively acidity.*

**2006 La Coupelle Young Vine Clones 459, 667 Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir** *More leafy and more oaky on nose. Charming dark Pinot fruits with smoke accents. More tannin evident.*

#### Thomas Fogerty Winery & Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mountains, CA, Nathan Kandler - Winemaker

**2004 Rapley Trail Estate Martini Clone Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** *Leads off smoky, woody, earthy. Very nice cherry and berry aromatic finish. Fine-grained tannins.*

**2005 Santa Cruz Mountains Clones 667, 777 Pinot Noir** *Shy, unrevealing aromatics. Redder fruits with cocoa and spice. More fruit-driven.*

#### Handley Cellars, Anderson Valley, California, Milla Handley - Winemaker

**2004 Handley Cellars Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** (Martini, Champagne clone 32). *Very appealing cherry notes on the entry. Delicate spiced berry flavors with fine tannins.*

**2005 Handley Cellars Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** (115, 667, Pommard). *Spearmint is prominent in the perfume. Showy red fruit, plenty of energy, and healthy tannin.*



**Dutton-Goldfield, Russian River Valley, California, Dan Goldfield - Winemaker** (on page 10)

**2005 Dutton-Goldfield Sanchiotti Vineyard Old Clone Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**  
 Martini clones. *The aromatics are flat and non-expressive. Memorable black raspberry finish that goes on and on. Brooding and needs time or decanting.*

**2005 Dutton-Goldfield Freestone Hill Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 115, 667, Wädenswil. *Earth and forest floor in the nose that is echoed in the flavors. Big, chewy dark fruit. Plenty of tannin.*



Each of the panelists spoke at length about Pinot Noirs made with old clones versus new clones and old vines versus new vines. Here is a summary of the comments and conclusions. Definitive statements are difficult because there are so many variables such as site, rootstocks, and farming practices.

- \* There is no clear definition of an old vine. It seems to vary with the site. Freddie Mugnier says he notices changes after his vines are 30 years old. Myron Redford said one definition is “when you walk through a vineyard and look at each other and your hair is turning gray, the vines are getting old.”
- \* It is difficult to taste vine age in Pinot Noir as the effect of site often predominates.
- \* Old clones are actually field selections and heterogeneous.
- \* Old clone Pinot Noirs are more layered and interesting. The wines have more depth, more subtleties and nuances, and are not as upfront. Tannins are more balanced. New clone wines are more vibrant, expressive and exuberant with more grip and tannins.
- \* Old vine Pinot Noirs seem to age better.
- \* Old vines become infected with viruses causing the resulting wines to have less color.
- \* Old vines have better balance and produce grapes with physiological ripeness at lower Brix.
- \* New vine grapes ripen quicker. accumulate sugars faster, and generally have less acidity.
- \* New clone/vine fruit is more consistent.



## Latitudes & Longitudes - A Global Perspective

Moderator Fred Dame, MS

### Panelists & Tasting Order

#### Andrew Hood - Tasmania

Tasmania is a small island, about 190 by 150 miles in size. Wine production is less than 10,000 tons per year, about ½ % of Australia's total output. Tasmania is located at about 40° longitude, about the same as New Zealand. It is probably known more for its sparkling wine output, but Tasmania is an outstanding source of still Pinot Noir.

**2002 Wellington "Hoodster" Tasmania Pinot Noir** About 150 cases, \$50. *Older wine flavors including raisin, nuts, and port.*

**2005 Frogmore Creek Reserve Tasmania Pinot Noir** 150 cases. The winery is owned by Andrew Hood who also makes wine for several other Tasmania wineries. *See notes page 6. Very nice wine with plenty of red cherry and spice, light on its feet and elegant with a good acid backbone. This is delicious.*

#### Ernst Loosen - Germany

Pinot Noir has a long tradition in Germany. It was brought to Germany in about 1885. There are 75,000 acres planted in Germany, second only to Riesling, and Germany has the second largest planting of Pinot Noir in Europe behind France. In 1996, Ernst Loosen took over the J.L. Wolf estate so that he could make powerful, traditionally crafted Pfalz wines to complement the light and elegant Dr. Loosen Rieslings from the Mosel. The Pfalz region lies between the Haardt Mountains and the Rhine River, directly north of France's Alsace region. As in Alsace, the mountains protect the area from harsh Atlantic weather, making it one of the warmer and drier area of Germany. All of the Burgundy grape varieties have a long tradition in the Pfalz region, which is known for its full-bodied and fruit-driven Pinot Noirs.



*J.L. Wolf wines are made in the 19th-century winery building at the historic estate in the village of Warthenheim.*

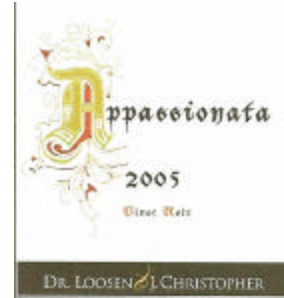
**2004 J.L. Wolf Alte Reben, Pfalz Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder)** This wine comes from a parcel of old vines ("Alte Reben") that was planted in 1968 with a mix of German clones. This parcel is in a vineyard called Forster Musenhang, which was rated as a "second growth" in the 1828 vineyard classification done by the Bavarian government. The fruit was harvested at 13.0% potential alcohol. Cold maceration was followed by traditional fermentation in 400-liter bins. The wine was aged in 40% new French oak barriques for 16 months. Total production was 116 cases. *Mahogeny-tinged color. Leafy, asparagus aromas. Light red fruit, with tangy acidity.*



**2005 Dr. Loosen & J. Christopher “Appassionata” Willamette Valley Pinot Noir**

This wine is a collaboration between Ernst Loosen and Jay Somers, owner of J. Christopher Wines in Oregon. The two met some years ago at the International Pinot Noir Celebration. This wine is a barrel selection of several different clones including Wädenswil, Pommard, and Dijon 114, 115. The wine spent 20 months in 30% new French oak barriques. Production was 99 cases. The wine has not been released because it has not reached its peak maturity. The long term plan for “Appassionata” is to secure vineyard contracts or leaseholds so that Jay and Ernst can have better control of viticulture. With the 2007 harvest, the first such dedicated parcel, in the Bella Vida vineyard, was contracted and more will follow in 2008.

*Very New World with a dark purple color. Rich, deep black cherry scents leading to substantial dark fruit intensity, extended tannins and a long, dry finish.*



**Nick S. Mills - Central Otago, New Zealand**

The story of Rippon Vineyard in Central Otago has been told before in the *PinotFile* (see also page 7). Rippon's vines are some of the oldest in the region. The estate Pinot Noir is from 15-25 year-old vines planted over 40 acres. Farming is organic and biodynamic. The wines spend two winters (16-18 months) in barrel and are cellared for one year in bottle before release. \$45.

**2004 Rippon Vineyard Central Otago Pinot Noir** *Aromas of red cherries and brown sugar. flavors of red cherry, cranberry, pomegranate with a bit of herbs. Refreshingly brisk acidity.*

**2005 Rippon Vineyard Central Otago Pinot Noir** *Killer nose of black cherry, blackberry and spearmint. Dark in color, but elegant in presentation. Precise and focused fruit with a lovely silky texture and perfect balance. Beautifully crafted for the dinner table.*



Nick Mills



Sergio Muttura

### Sergio Muttura - Italy

The Mottura family is originally from the Piemonte region of Italy, where there is a village bearing the Mottura name close to Turin. Here, traces of the family can be found dating back to the early 1500s. Sergio's uncle, Alessandro, bought Civitella d'Agliano in 1933, the large estate the family now owns. At the age of 20, Sergio took on the management of the family farm and moved from Turin to Civitella, where he has remained ever since. The Maottura estate grows vines, olives and various grains and has an 'agriturismo' hotel (La Tana dell'Istrice or The Porcupine's Lair) where guests can enjoy the farm produce and the farm's celebrated wines. Sergio is committed to organic farming and crafting small-scale, hand-crafted wines using traditional local grape varieties. The Magone Vineyard is a hi-density planting begun in 1962. In 1980 it was regrafted to Pinot Noir and the first Pinot Noir was released in 1990. The wines are 100% Pinot Noir. Alcohols are 13.5%, \$25.

**2004 Magone Lazio Rosso I.G.T.** *Dark purple color. Ripe, dark fruited aromas with hints of tar and chocolate. Chewy dark fruits with healthy tannins and a dry finish. Reminds one of Sangiovese.*

**2005 Magone Lazio Rosso I.G.T.** *Similar to above wine but more elegant with more pinotypicity. Still a big and hearty fruit-driven California Nuevo styled wine.*



### Matthias Gubler - Switzerland

Pinot Noir is the most planted red wine grape in Switzerland. The country has a thirsty appetite for Pinot Noir - 35% of Grand Cru Burgundy is consumed in Switzerland. Clos Martha is very small, producing 200 cases per year, and sold directly to locals only. Winemaker and owner Gubler is Swiss-born, but California-based. The estate vineyard is located in the Basil AVA which consists of 250 acres of vines. Steeply situated at 1,200 feet, Clos Martha is surrounded by a wall to keep the soil and rocks contained.

**2000 Clos Martha Pinot Noir** *Leafy, vegetative aromas. Leafy, Tobacco and woody flavors.*

**2006 Clos Martha Pinot Noir** *Smoke and toast lead off. Attractive wild berry fruit attack with plenty of finishing acidity. These wines are quite unusual and will appeal to the adventurous.*





## Are We Losing Our Regionality?

Moderator - Peter Neptune MS

NOTE: The following two seminars were held at Tolosa Winery concurrent with the two seminars I attended at Domaine Alfred Winery. Obviously I could not attend both. A reader, Russell McCandless, was at Tolosa Winery, and he offered me his notes on the two seminars. I have reproduced them here with some editorial modification and addition with his permission.

### Panelists & Tasting Order

The seminar included producers extending from the Western Hemisphere's Okanagan Valley in British Columbia to the Southern Hemisphere's Casablanca Valley in Chile. Most wine grapes on this planet are grown between the 33rd and 48th parallels, with stretches to between the 31st and 50th parallels. A majority of the panelists in this seminar were from California which is between 39 and 33 degrees north latitude. British Columbia's Okanagan Valley is at 49 degrees north, while Chile's Casablanca Valley is at 33 degrees south. The most southerly Pinot Noir winegrowing region is New Zealand's Central Otago located at 45 degrees south latitude. (For reference, Oregon Pinot Noir is within a few miles of the 45th parallel, Burgundy's Cote d'Or is between 47 degrees 20 minutes and 46 degrees 55 minutes)

#### Grant Stanley - Winemaker

**2007 Quail's Gate Boucherie Mountain Estate Vnyd Clone 115 Okanagan Valley Pinot Noir** (barrel sample) *Forward, pretty red cherry nose. Lots of cherry fruit, bright acidity, excellent length. Plenty of quality components not yet well integrated.*

**2006 Quail's Gate Boucherie Mountain Estate Vnyd Stewart Family Reserve Okanagan Valley Pinot Noir** *Far more complete than the above wine but with a less forward nose. Silky mouth entry, structured, lengthy finish. Still needs time to integrate oak. The 2005 bottling (see my note on page 7) tasted at dinner was one of the best two out of a couple dozen young Pinot Noirs tasted.*

#### Steven Rogstad - Winemaker

**2007 Cuvaision Carneros Clone 115 Pinot Noir** (barrel sample) *Inky, candied oak on the nose, plenty of grip, flashes of alcohol, lots of fruit and an expanding finish. Promising, but not ready for prime time.*

**2006 Cuvaision Carneros Block F5 Pinot Noir** *Very Carneros, pretty in the best sense of the word. Red cherry and dirt, sappy, substantial and delicious although quite tannic. Peacock tail finish.*

#### Adam Lee - Owner & Winemaker

**2007 Siduri Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Clone 115 Pinot Noir** (barrel sample) *Both of Siduri wines were distinctly browner in color, although by no means oxidized, compared to the rest of the wines on the table. Bright sour cherry and cinnamon nose. Very fruit-forward flavors, big wine, finishing grip and seems almost ready to drink.*

**2006 Siduri Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** *Highly forthcoming Xmas spice nose. Delicious glycerol-laden fruit, dark fruit spectrum, very aromatic finish. Superb. Although Siduri single vineyard Pinot Noirs are too big, too alcoholic, too sweet for me (Russell) more often than not, the ones that don't cross that line, including this example, are wonderful. (I agree with that statement).*

**Christian Roguenant - Winemaker**

**2007 Baileyana Firepeak Vineyard Edna Valley Clone 115 Pinot Noir** (barrel sample)  
*Purple in color. Tastes like grape juice and alcohol, grippy, fine primary fruit and length, oak on the finish. Decidedly not ready for prime time.*

**2006 Baileyana Estate Cuvee 1909 Firepeak Vineyard Edna Valley Pinot Noir** *Reticent young nose. Lacks fruit at this stage and probably unevolved. Nice flavor late in the finish.*

**Norm Yost - Owner & Winemaker**

**2007 Flying Goat Rio Vista Vineyard Santa Rita Hills Clone 115 Pinot Noir** (barrel sample)  
*Sappy young fruit on the nose, probably not finished MLF. LEGS in the glass. Rich, round, laser pure, dark fruits. Fine length and integrated acid and tannin. Very promising.*

**2005 Flying Goat Rio Vista Vineyard Santa Rita Hills Dijon Clones Pinot Noir** *Dark color, dark fruits and herbs, prominent oak. Huge and glycerol-sweet. Finish more open with time in glass.*

**Evelyn Vidal - Winemaker**

**2007 Kingston Family Vineyards Casablanca Valley Concha y Toro Clone Pinot Noir** (barrel sample)  
*Spicy, mineral nose, silky mouth entry, rich and grippy with notable spices and dirt and trace of blue cheese flavor. Fine balance. Definitely not a fruit bomb in comparison to this lineup.*

**2006 Kingston Family Vineyards Alazan Casablanca Valley Pinot Noir** *Lovely nose, silky mouth entry, balanced fruit, sound acid structure, tasty. Aromatic finish and good length. A lovely wine that needs a little time. Note: I tasted both the 2002 and 2005 Alazan Pinot Noirs in the walk-around tasting. I felt the wines were a bit rustic, veering toward "Burgundian" austerity. The 2002 wine, however, had taken on secondary flavors of earth, tobacco and game and was quite enjoyable. Because of their prominent acidity, they do not easily catch a taster's fancy in a walk-around tasting stocked with many fruit-forward wines, but they would do just fine on the dinner table. The wines are exported to the United States*



The point of the whole seminar was to see if Pinot Noir is losing its regionality. It is clear from the tasting notes that the answer is no, especially if you compare Pinot Noirs from different countries as in this and other seminars. There are many similarities for sure, especially when the same clones are used, but the experienced taster can recognize the subtle reflections of site differences that Pinot Noir offers. It's the dirt that matters, and the dirt varies significantly from region to region.

## Exploring Oregon's New World Burgundy

Moderator - Harry Peterson-Nedry, Chehalem

The Willamette Valley was Oregon's first formal American Viticultural Area (AVA), created in 1984. Unofficially, it is divided into north and south halves along the 45th parallel. There are now 15 AVAs in Oregon and 6 sub-AVAs in the Willamette Valley (McMinnville Foothill, Dundee Hills, Ribbon Ridge, Yamhill-Carlton District, Eola-Amity Hills District, and Chehalem Mountains). The sub-AVA designations started appearing on wine labels (replacing "Willamette Valley") with the 2004 and 2005 vintages.

The AVAs are largely characterized by their soils and generalizations regarding flavors and styles of Pinot Noir can be made for the appellations based on the differences in soil type. The AVAs with Jory soils (red volcanic basalt soil), including the Dundee Hills, Eola-Amity Hills, and parts of Chehalem Mountains and McMinnville, tend to produce Pinot Noirs with bright red fruits including cherry and raspberry, and are softly textured. The Pinot Noirs from AVAs with Willakenzie soils (brown marine sedimentary soils) including Yamhill-Carlton, Ribbon Ridge, and parts of Chehalem Mountains and McMinnville, typically offer more dark fruit, spice (cola, anise), and wet leaf flavors and tend to be more tannic and structured.

The wineries participating in this seminar were from Yamhill-Carlton and Ribbon Ridge (Willakenzie - Soter Vineyards, Penner-Ash Wine Cellars, Elk Cove Vineyards, Chehalem and Beaux Freres) and Eola-Amity Hills (Jory - Bethel Heights Vineyards, Cristom Vineyards). The challenge was to discover those characteristics that are expressed or not expressed differently by each AVA. Despite the panelists best efforts, Russell reported that he was not able to come away with any appellation-specific characteristics that he could clearly discern. I attended a similar seminar a few years ago at an event and I was left with the same feeling afterwards. I think Oregon winemakers can make distinctions through years of comparative tasting, but the general consumer may find such differences frustratingly beyond their grasp.



# The Wines of Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier

Moderator - Allen Meadows, Burghound.com

Each year, one of the highlights of the World of Pinot Noir is the Saturday morning tasting of Burgundy from a well-known domaine. Allen Meadows, one of the world's acknowledged authorities on Burgundy, offers colorful commentary and background information making the event highly popular and eagerly attended by lovers of fine Burgundy. I have divided this report into two parts. Part one includes the comments of Allen Meadows about Frédéric Mugnier and his wines and the remarks of Frédéric (his friends affectionately call him "Freddy") Mugnier about his domaine and wines. Part two offers a discussion of the three featured bottlings sampled with tasting notes of the wines. Meadows (vest) and Mugnier are pictured below during an interview by the Grape Radio crew.



In Burgundy, the stars are the vineyards, not the winemakers. Many centuries of careful study by the Cisterian monks led to a definitive demarcation of the terroirs of the Cote d'Or. As a group, these monks were very attuned to their environment and they did not have to make wine for a living - two very important facts that explain the evolution of the Cote d'Or viticultural milieu. With the French Revolution, rich owners replaced the church owners and the vineyards were subdivided many times over, but the "groundwork" for the Burgundian terroir-based viticultural system was firmly established.

Frederic Mugnier's philosophy is summarized very simply: let the message in the vineyard come through. Mugnier's background is engineering and he was a commercial pilot who came to wine as a second career. He started crafting wine while still a pilot and released his first vintage in 1985 from 4 hectares of Chambolle Musigny vineyards (including .53 hectare of Les Amoureuses, .36 hectare of Bonne Mares, and a little over 1 hectare of Musigny - second only to Comte de Vogue) that had been in his family for generations and mostly leased to others. By his own admission, he didn't know anything about winemaking initially. He attended viticulture school in Beaune and experimented a lot. Over time his experience has served him better than formal winemaking education. He continued to work as a pilot until 2000. In 2004 his Domaine changed dramatically when Faiveley's lease of the Mugnier family's 9.55-hectare Nuits St. George 1er Cru Clos de la Maréchale expired. This more than tripled the size of Mugnier's vineyard holdings to 13.5 hectares. With the assumption of the largest monopole in Burgundy, his Domaine became quite large, and he was forced to build a winery and hire several workers to assist him.

Mugnier's wines are among the purest in Burgundy and Meadows can think of only one other domaine that is in the same class and that is D'Angerville. The wines are unadorned and unadulterated. They do not overwhelm - the drinker must listen. Most people want volume turned up in wine, but Mugnier's wines are more subtle and the drinker must make an effort to really appreciate them. The wines require plenty of bottle age. Meadows quoted Matt Kramer, who said the distinguishing signature of Mugnier's wines was "the absence of a signature." As noted in the first sentence on this page, it's not about the winemaker, it's about the vineyards and "it is what it is." Meadows emphasized his admiration for Mugnier's ability to keep his hands off and let the vineyard and vintage speak.

Mugnier is a charming but painfully shy gentleman who said that his wines were an expression of "someone who likes beauty," more than wines "seen through the eyes of an engineer." Interestingly, he remarked that his vineyards do not have the ideal clones and rootstocks that he would choose today, but the vine age (many over 50 years old) obscures the quality of the plant material. Mugnier has farmed nearly organically since 1990, using only non-organic sprays for odium control, avoiding the use of copper sulfate (an organic treatment) which he feels accumulates in the soil and leads to undesirable adverse effects on the vines.

Meadows made a number of pertinent comments about recent vintages in Burgundy. He pointed out that the much-misaligned 2001 vintage is just now beginning to blossom and the wines are very terroir-driven (transparent) with good acidity and outstanding in quality. There has been considerable hype about 1999, 2002 and 2005, but the 2001 Burgundian wines will truly reward those who had the foresight to buy and cellar them. This was evident in the tasting of the Chambolle Musigny and Musigny wines of Mugnier where the 2001 vintages were clearly the stars. The 2003 vintage was the hottest since 1893 (the modern parallel was 1947). The wines from this vintage are "power Burgundies," but are becoming more interesting with age. The 2004 vintage was a difficult one with hail and mildew pressures. There are a number of good wines with respectable fruit. Meadows is still touting the 2005 vintage as possibly the best since 1978, ripe and structured, classic old style and built for the long haul. However, the wines are now closing down and those who taste them currently may be disappointed. Meadows advised buying as much 2005 Burgundy as you can afford with good faith from producers you trust and lay the wines down for several years. Drink the 2004 and 2006 vintages in the meantime. 2006 is a "pure, pretty vintage," much like 2001 in that the terroirs show through, but showy early on.



### Tasting Order

For the complete story of Domaine Jacques-Frédéric Mugnier and a vertical tasting of Mugnier Musigny, refer to *Burghound.com* ([www.burghound.com](http://www.burghound.com)), 3rd Quarter, Issue 19, 2005 (subscription only).

### Chambolle Musigny

Chambolle Musigny is a villages-level wine of great quality from Mugnier because of the little known fact that 45% of the grapes come from declassified 1er Cru vineyards. The recent vintages have sold for a little more than \$50 in the United States, an incredible value considering the pedigree. These wines have great purity of fruit and are extremely good with food. I chose to take the 2001 vintage to lunch after the tasting and was very pleased. Meadows said these wines have “tension, minerality, and edges.”



**2004 Mugnier Chambolle Musigny** *Delicate reddish-purple in color. Smoky, dusty and spicy with chewy black cherry fruit. Plenty of acid grip.*

**2003 Mugnier Chambolle Musigny** *A bit deeper in color. Showy fruit, but retains some elegance. Soft in texture, clean and pure, easy to drink.*

**2001 Mugnier Chambolle Musigny** *Color matches the 2004. Not especially rich, but very appealing red Pinot fruits with spice and plenty of vim. Still some tannin to shed. Outstanding with duck at lunch.*

### Clos de la Maréchale

Clos de la Maréchale is located in the more southerly portion of Nuits St George where there is more sand in the soil. The result is additional elegance and sophistication compared to more northerly wines from Nuits St George such as Le St George Vineyard. The Clos de la Maréchale is a walled vineyard that has been in the Mugnier family for over 100 years and is the largest single-family owned vineyard in the Cote d'Or. The wine from this vineyard is vinified in the same fashion as the Chambolle Musigny. New oak is usually limited to 20% A small portion of this vineyard has been grafted over to Chardonnay.



**2006 NSG Clos de la Maréchale 1er Cru** (barrel sample) *The three wines from this vineyard are inky purple in color. Rich, deep and sappy black cherry aromas and flavors. Plenty of forbidding and drying tannins are obscuring the prodigious fruit core.*

**2005 NSG Clos de la Maréchale 1er Cru** *Powerful dark fruits, almost syrupy in texture. Mouth-coating tannins. Richly layered with blackberries, black cherries and black raspberries. Lingering aromatic finish.*

**2004 NSG Clos de la Maréchale 1er Cru** *A green note to the aromatics (grassy, new-mown hay). Fruit tends a little more toward red spectrum with cherry and cranberry evident. Slippery, but evident tannins. The green character in this wine brought on a lengthy discussion at the tasting. Mugnier noted that green notes do not detract from a wine in general if the greenness is in the flavors and does not extend to the tannins. Just how detracting this green character is will vary with the individual with some savoring the green accents and others finding it displeasing. Greenness or herbal characters can come and go in Burgundy and Mugnier has observed them to be most noticeable in the Spring. Stems are primarily responsible, but as the wine ages, the green characters dissipate and, according to Mugnier, disappear completely in wines over ten years of age.*

### Musigny

Musigny is one of the three greatest terroirs in the Cote d'Or, the others being Romanee-Conti and La Tache. In Musigny, the soils are shallow with rocks near the surface. The soil drains well and the vineyard in general is less dependent on the weather. The wines from Musigny personify the expression, "power without weight," or as others have expressed, "an iron fist in a velvet glove." Musigny needs at least ten years of aging in the bottle. Mugnier says that Musigny is an "integrated" wine, meaning you can't point out specific elements and it defies description. When it is young you can sense the intensity, but it is impenetrable. You can perceive the richness early on, but it takes more than ten years before it shows the explosion of fruit.



**2004 Musigny** *Plenty of appealing smoke and toast on the nose. Lovely raspberry core and a finish that lasts and lasts. Still some tannin to lose, but the balance here is impeccable.*

**2003 Musigny** *Very showy ripe dark fruits front and center with unbelievable persistence. Layers and layers of fruit and spice. Powerfully structured, but still showing restraint and not flabby in any way. Absolutely delicious now and should astonish with more bottle age.*

**2001 Musigny** *Just starting to open. Very sexy aromatic profile which changes constantly in the glass from red to black fruit expression. Still reticent and somewhat austere on the palate with plenty of lift and lively acid on the finish. Velvety texture with well-integrated, but evident tannins. The sweet Pinot elements persist on the finish for an eternity.*

I did a quick search on the internet for Mugnier wines and all of the above wines (except 2006) were available. Chambolle Musigny \$54-\$60, Clos de la Maréchale \$60-\$70, Bonne Mares \$175-250, Les Amoureuses \$300-400, and Musigny \$450-550. You know the old saying, “Burgundy is a fine drink, especially if you can get someone else to buy it.”



## More on Quails' Gate

According to John Schreiner's magnificent book titled *British Columbia Wine Country* (2004), in 1981 there were 14 wineries in British Columbia, most of which were trying to produce off-dry wines from hybrid grapes. By 2002, British Columbia had 71 licensed wineries, with many others pending. Extensive plantings of vinifera grapes followed the Free Trade Agreement of 1988 (which eliminated price discrimination that had favored cheap hybrid-based British Columbia wines) and the wine industry in British Columbia reinvented itself. In 1991, the Vintners Quality Alliance program was begun which further strengthened the quality of wines from the region. The annual Okanagan Wine Festival began to draw large crowds and by 2001 there were twice the number of vinifera vineyards planted as existed in 1981. By 2006, there were 132 wineries and 5,462 acres planted to vineyards. One of the biggest factors in holding back international recognition of British Columbia wines has been the inability of producers to export their wines due to customs and duty regulations. For example, you cannot purchase Quail's Gate wines in the United States.

British Columbia does not have an appellation system but there are roughly thirteen regions. Quails' Gate is located among the vineyards of Mount Boucherie in the Okanagan Valley (map, page 23). The 125 acre lakefront estate is located on the historic home site of Okanagan pioneers, the Allison Family, who settled in Kelowna in the 1870s. The vineyards are planted in a mixture of volcanic rock and clay situated on south-facing slopes above Lake Okanagan and below the extinct volcano Mount Boucherie.

The pioneer of the current proprietors, Ben and Tony Stewart, was Richard John, who emigrated from Ireland to Canada in 1908. With his brother Bill, they formed Stewart Brothers Nurseries Ltd. in 1911 in the Kelowna area of British Columbia, growing fruit trees, shade trees, and potatoes. One of John's sons, Dick, along with three friends, purchased 65 acres where Quails' Gate Winery is now situated and planted a vineyard. Additional land purchases brought the total land holdings to 125 acres. The grapes were consigned to St. Michelle Wines in Victoria. In 1970, Dick bought out his three partners in the vineyard and renamed the company Boucherie Mountain Vineyards. The main varietal grown on the property was Chasselas. Pinot Noir was first planted in 1975, with additional plantings throughout the years as part of an extensive planting program to supply St. Michelle with a wider range of grape varietals. With the passage of the Free Trade Agreement in 1988, Dick's son, Ben, co-founded and incorporated Quails' Gate Estate Winery in 1989, and together the family has brought it to where it is today. Quails' Gate now employs more than sixty people and the winery produces 40,000 cases of wine a year. A new hospitality center was completed in June of 2007 which includes a modern tasting bar in the Wineshop, and a first-class, highly-awarded restaurant, the Old Vines Restaurant headed by Chef Roger Sleiman.

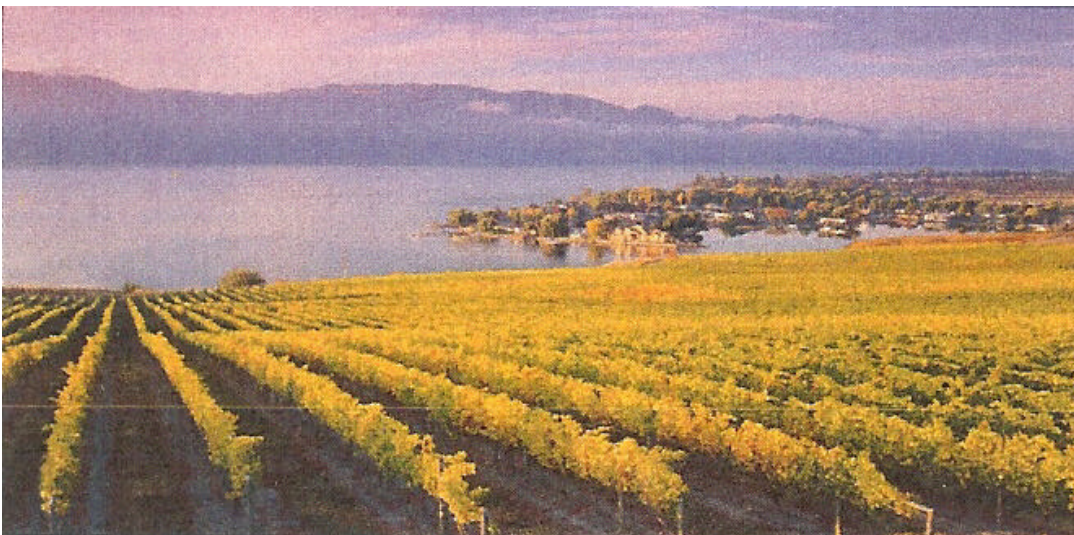
Today the vineyards consist of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Old Vine Marechalk Foch, Riesling, Chasselas, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Merlot, Optima, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Gamay plantings. Of all of its wines, Quails' Gate is best known for its Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The 2004 Family Reserve Pinot Noir won Gold Medals at both the 2007 San Francisco International Wine Competition and the 2007 Grand Harvest Awards in California. The Quails' Gate Pinot Noir has recently been the top rated Pinot Noir in Canada and maybe Canada's top overall table wine.

Quails' Gate has had a long line of Australian winemakers including Jeff Martin, Peter Draper, Ashley Hooper, and since 2003, Grant Stanley. Stanley is breaking new ground and focusing the wine practices at Quails' Gate in pursuit of terroir-specific wines. I interviewed him at World of Pinot Noir and that videocast should be posted soon at [www.graperadio.com](http://www.graperadio.com).

The Quails' Gate website, [www.gailsgate.com](http://www.gailsgate.com), offers further information and breathtaking photographs of the estate. This winery is a must visit for anyone venturing to the Okanagan Valley.



There are a number of other wineries in the Okanagan Valley pursuing Pinot dreams as well and the potential shown by Quails' Gate Pinot Noirs bodes well for success with this varietal in the Okanagan. Quails' Gate is located at 3303 Boucherie Road, Kelowna, BC, Canada V1Z 2H3. The phone is 250-769-4451, toll-free 800-420-9463.





## Pinot Events

### Hospices of Sonoma

Hospices of Sonoma weekend is patterned after the famous Hospices de Beaune. Last year's event raised more than \$450,000 for various Sonoma charities. This year's event will be held May 2-4 and will include winery dinners at various locations on Friday evening, May 2, a Barrel Tasting and Big Board Auction of 2007 vintage Sonoma Pinot Noirs and Gala Dinners at five host wineries in the evening on Saturday, May 3, and a La Paulee at Lynmar Winery in Sebastopol on Sunday, May 4. Nearly forty wineries will introduce Pinot Noirs crafted exclusively for the Hospices of Sonoma WCC Charitable Foundation, which disperses funds to a select group of charities dedicated to helping children at risk and disabled American military personnel and their families. Wineries participating include Capiaux, Davis Family vineyards, DeLoach, Donum Estate, Dutton Estate, Emeritus, Failla, Foppiano, Freeman, Freestone, Gary Farrell, Halleck Vineyards, Hartford Family, Iron Horse, J, Keller Estate, Kosta Browne, Kutch, Landmark, Lynmar, MacMurray, MacPhail, Martinelli, Marimar Torres, Mueller, Papapietro Perry, Olivet Lane, Patz & Hall, Paul Hobbs, Roessler Cellars, Rutz, Schug, Siduri Wines, Elliott Family Cellars, and Wild Hog. For tickets and information, visit the website at [www.hospicesofsonoma.org](http://www.hospicesofsonoma.org). You can also bid in absentia by contacting Jane Hodges Young, Executive Director of the Hospices of Sonoma through the website. I attended last year and enjoyed the event immensely.



### Santa Lucia Highlands' Winegrowers Annual Gala

The Wine Artisans of the Santa Lucia Highlands, an alliance of the appellation's winegrowers and the wineries that rely on the district's fruit, is sponsoring the 2nd Annual Gala Tasting, "Highlands' Fling," Saturday, May 17 at Paraiso Vineyards from 2:00 to 5:00 PM. The event will feature a strolling wine tasting hosted by the Santa Lucia Highlands' artisan winemakers paired with foods prepared by Master Chef Kurt Grasing. Participating wineries include Pelerin, Roar, Morgan, Testarossa, Pisoni, Pessagno, Tondre, Siduri, Paraiso, Manzoni, Hahn, Robert Talbott, La Rochelle, Novy, Joullian, Bernardus, McIntyre, Tudor, Tamayo, Six Strings, Belle Glos, Mer Soleil, and more. Tickets are \$85 per person and can be purchased online at [www.santaluciahighlands.com](http://www.santaluciahighlands.com).

Paraiso Vineyards, the oldest estate in Monterey's Santa Lucia Highlands appellation, is staging an airshow over the vineyards. The 6th Annual Paraiso Airshow will be on Mother's Day, May 11, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Besides many of the country's best stunt pilots performing their precision aerobatics, there will be plenty of wine, a gourmet luncheon by Moveable Feast, and live music and dancing. Tickets are \$100 per person and are available online at [www.ParaisoVineyards.com](http://www.ParaisoVineyards.com).

## Rosé Avengers & Producers Annual PINK OUT!

Rosé Avengers & Producers (RAP) will present their signature tasting event, PINK OUT! in San Francisco on Tuesday, May 13th at Butterfly Restaurant on the Embarcadero at Pier 33. This is the 4th annual fine rosé tasting and will feature 45 still and sparkling rosés from around the world. Many winemakers will be present and appetizers will be served by Butterfly's Chef, Robert Lam.

Since the inaugural event in 2005, PINK OUT! has drawn full house crowds. The trade and media portion takes place from 4:00 to 6:00 PM and the consumer tasting is from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Consumer tickets are \$35 in advance and available online only at [www.rapwine.com](http://www.rapwine.com). Media and trade credentials can be obtained by emailing [RAP@paigepoulos.com](mailto:RAP@paigepoulos.com).

According to The Nielsen Company, rosés priced \$8.00 and up grew 53.2% on dollars and 49.1% on volume over the past 52 weeks ending February 9, 2008 (Total United States Food, Drug, and Major Liquor Markets). Rosé sales grew nearly 8 times faster on dollars and 17 times faster on volume than total table wine sales. Miami led the way with 89.4% growth, followed by Seattle (86.6%), New York (75.2%), and San Francisco (39.4%). In domestic versus imports, domestic rosés saw the greatest surge with 62.6% growth in dollars and 51.0% in volume. Imports continue to dominate the category, owning a 76.7% share on dollars.

Rosé Avengers and Producers was founded in 2005 by Jeff Morgan, Daniel Moore, Jim Kopp, Carol Shelton, and Paige Poulos. The organization consists of an international group of winemakers and wine drinkers dedicated to advancing the knowledge and appreciation of fine rosé. RAP is currently offering free memberships to keep everyone up to date on the latest events and developments in the world of fine rosé. To learn more about RAP and sign-up for free membership, visit [www.rapwine.com](http://www.rapwine.com).

An article from Australia published at [www.decanter.com](http://www.decanter.com) (March 18, 2008), reports a rising popularity of rosés in that country. The surge has been led by the drier style of both still and sparkling rosé as opposed to the sweeter wines that had been popular. The Aussies often use Shiraz, Grenache, Cabernet and Pinot Noir grapes in making their rosés. A comment posted about the article indicated that this "rosé revolution" has been going on for 3-4 years in Australia, especially in the warmer regions where barbecues are so popular.

Many California Pinot Noir producers are now releasing rosés to compliment their lineup of Pinot Noirs. These have become serious wines, not an afterthought made with left over juice or press wine as in the past. The producers of Radio-Coteau just announced the release of the 2007 County Line Anderson Valley Rosé. This wine was whole cluster pressed from a suitcase Champagne clone of Pinot Noir grown in the cool Anderson Valley. The wine is not a saignée. Its fruit was harvested specifically for this bottling, pressed immediately, and fermented in tank and neutral oak barrels. The winemaker notes that "You may find this wine more akin to the Brut Rosés of Champagne than to most of its counterparts in California, as it manages to balance a clean aristocratic structure with a fresh aromatic lift. 400 cases were produced, \$18 per bottle. Contact County Line Vineyards at 707-823-2578.



## **2008 Dundee Hills Appellation Passport Tour**

### **The Heart & Soil of Oregon Wine**

Travel the Dundee Hills wine growing region armed with a passport good for visits to 20 wineries and vineyards in the Dundee Hills Appellation of the Willamette Valley. The dates are Saturday and Sunday, April 19 and 20, 2008 and times are generally 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. At each stop, participants can enjoy the wines from this region as well as learn from experts about the unique climate, red volcanic soil (Jory soil), geology, and earth-friendly farming practices that make this appellation special. Prominent wineries include Archery Summit, Argyle Winery, Daedalus Cellars, DE Ponte Cellars, Dobbles Family Estate, Domaine Drouhin Oregon, Domaine Serene, Dusky Goose, Erath Winery, Ponzi, Sokol Blosser Winery, Stoller Winery, Torii Mor Winery, White Rose Wines and Winter's Hill Vineyard. Download your Dundee Hills Passport and map online. Full details as well as vineyard seminar sites and times are available at [www.dundeehills.org](http://www.dundeehills.org).

### **Santa Barbara County Wine Futures Tastings**

This year marks the 19th offering of Santa Barbara County Wine Futures started by Doug Margerum, the past owner of the Wine Cask Restaurant and retail wine store in Santa Barbara. The new owner, Bernie Rosenson, and the Wine Cask wine director, Cheryl Stanley, carry on the tradition (with Margerum's help as well who remains as a wine consultant for the Wine Cask). The goal is to bring to the wine enthusiast 100 or so top wines produced in Santa Barbara County that will be released in the next twelve months. Because they are offered on a futures basis, prices are reduced by about 20%. Two tastings of the wines are held on Saturday March 29 and Saturday April 12 at the Wine Cask Restaurant and El Paseo Restaurant, 813 Anacapa Street, Santa Barbara. These tastings are free to the public. An order form with a listing of the wines and a downloadable catalog are available at [www.winecask.com](http://www.winecask.com).

As I perused the catalog, there were several Pinot Noirs that caught my eye and deserve your attention. The wines have to be purchased in 3 or 6 bottle lots in most cases. It is a good idea to find a couple of wine buddies and purchase several lots and share the bounty.

#### **2006 Arcadian Dierberg Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir**

#### **2006 Arcadian Fiddlestix Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir**

Joe Davis has relocated his winemaking from Central Coast Wine Services in Santa Maria to a new shared winery on Santa Rosa Road in Lompoc. His Chardonnay is the house wine for all of Alain Ducasse's restaurants in Paris!!

#### **2006 Au Bon Climat Nielson Historic Vineyard Collection Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir**

Jim Adelman now directs the winemaking at ABC, but Jim Clendenen remains the inspiration. The Nielson vineyard is the oldest commercial vineyard in Santa Barbara County planted in 1964.

#### **2006 Costa De Oro Gold Coast Vineyard Reserva Oro Rojo Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir**

75% old Martini clone, 25% Dijon clones 115, 777. Paul Lato is the consulting winemaker.

#### **2006 Gypsy Canyon Santa Rita Creek Vineyard - Lot 2 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir**

Only 216 cases, 50% new oak, 100% free run, magnificent presentation.

**2006 Hitching Post Highliner Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir** Frank and Gray have eased back on ripeness. 70% new Francois Freres barrels, 25% Hungarian oak.

#### **2006 Native9 Rancho Ontiveros Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir**

**2006 Noble Storm Le Bon Climat Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** A new label founded by Ernst and Lisa Noble Storm. 75 cases from clone 113.

**2005 The Ojai Vineyard Fe Ciega Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 250 cases. Wine Cask crew compares this wine to Bouchard Pere et Fils Beaune 1er Cru "L'Enfant Jesus," like a baby sliding down your throat in velvet pants while eating Ben and Jerry's Cherry Garcia ice cream.

**2007 P2 Wines Cargassacchi-Jalama Vineyard Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir** Second release from Mike Padrick's label who was mentored by Brian Loring. Mike is the Assistant Winemaker for Loring Wine Company.

**2006 Paul Lato Solomon Hills Suerte Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** Paul crafts very little wine (this release is 103 cases) as he is fanatical about quality and declassifies many of his barrels. Those who have tasted with him know him as a winemaker with PASSION. Suerte means "cheers to you." You won't find a better producer of elegant Pinot Noir in California.

**2006 Rusack Rancho Santa Rosa Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 50 cases. John and Helen Falcone share the winemaking duties here and they have taken Rusack wines to the top 1 level over the past six years. Pommard, 2A, and 667 clones. This wine is composed of selected stellar barrels.

**2006 Tyler Winery Dierberg Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** Justin Tyler Willett was the assistant winemaker under Joe Davis at Arcadian Winery. 2005 was his first vintage under his own label. He donates a percentage of his profits to environmental causes. Justin is a Burgundy lover and his wines reflect this. This Pinot Noir is from primarily clone 31, a Champagne clone lesser amounts of the Martini clone - an interesting mix.

## 5th Annual Malibu Wine Classic

Over 60 wineries from Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles and Ventura Counties will showcase their wines on Saturday, April 5, from 12:00 to 5:00 PM. More than 20 hot Malibu and Los Angeles Restaurants will participate as well. Being in Malibu, it is not surprising that there will be several celebrity guests as well. Some of the wineries known for Pinot Noir that are participating include: Consilience, Demetria, Domaine Alfred, Fess Parker, Fiddlehead, Ken Brown, Laetitia, Lucas & Lewellen, Stephen's Cellar, Summerland, Talley Vineyards and York Mountain. A portion of the ticket sales benefit Child-help, one of the oldest and largest national non-profits, dedicated to the treatment and prevention of child abuse. Public advance purchase tickets are \$79 per person at [www.malibuwineclassic.com](http://www.malibuwineclassic.com).





## Pinot Briefs

### Grape Radio Receives James Beard

**Nomination** The video, "Stewards of the Land," has been nominated in the Broadcast Media-Webcasting category for a 2008 James Beard Foundation Award. The James Beard Foundation Media Awards honor all facets of media including broadcast, webcasting and print media. A complete list of nominees is available on the website [www.jbfawards.com](http://www.jbfawards.com). You can view the video at [www.graperadio.com](http://www.graperadio.com). "Mr Grape Radio," Jay Selman is pictured right (the shaggy beard dude) with Mark Ryan (the young cinematographer for the video) and Eric Anderson of Grape Radio and Grape Nutz at the recent World of Pinot Noir.



**New Winemaker at Sea Smoke** Winemaker Kris Curran has left Sea Smoke Cellars to become the winemaker at both Foley Estates Vineyard & Winery and Lincourt Vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills. The new winemaker at Sea Smoke is Don Work, the former assistant at Sea Smoke and previous winemaker at Ampelos Cellars.

**Pisoni Chardonnay** Say what? Jeff Pisoni has teamed up with wine business associate Sara Floyd to produce a limited bottling of 100% Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay. Sara Floyd has the prestigious MS certification and was formerly Sommelier at San Francisco's Postrio Restaurant. Jeff is the son of Gary Pisoni and is the winemaker at Pisoni/Lucia Vineyards and Winery. The Chardonnay is released under the Bacchant label and called "Luli." The tab is a measly \$20. According to Paul Root who is featuring this wine on his website ([www.rootscellar.com](http://www.rootscellar.com)), "this blows all other nineteen bucks n'change Chardonnays clean out of the water and onto the dock."

**Amazon.com to sell wine?** According to Slate ([www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com)), the *Financial Times* reported recently that Amazon.com was gearing up to sell wine and *Decanter* reported (erroneously) that Amazon.com would be teaming with Wine.com. Amazon.com still has an ad posted for a senior wine buyer, but they have not confirmed that they are entering the wine business.

**Antica Terra is new Oregon star** Maggie Harrison was the assistant winemaker at Sine Qua Non winery in California under Manfred Krankl. Maggie left Sine Qua Non and joined three partners in purchasing Antica Terra Winery in the Willamette Valley of Oregon just before the 2005 vintage. Antica Terra had been in business since 1989 making small amounts of premium Pinot Noir. No 2005 Antica Terra was released. For 2006 there is the **2006 Antica Terra Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (\$46), and **2006 Antica Terra Botanica Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (\$62). Available from [www.storytellerwine.com](http://www.storytellerwine.com)

**Insider Oregon Pinot Noir** Familiar with Jim Arterberry Maresh, Cubanissimo, Natalie's Estate, Cancilla Cellars, J Daan or Quercus Winery? Doubt it. Even I cannot keep up with all of the newest Pinot Noir producers in Oregon. Avalon Wine has a Insider Pinot Noir Club which sends you the new hot Oregon Pinot Noirs of the future. Four Pinots a quarter for \$99.95 with 15% discount on reorders. Check it out at [www.avalonwine.com](http://www.avalonwine.com).



  
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• **Eric Asimov, wine writer for the *New York Times*, recently wrote about the practice of introducing wine to youngsters to attempt to discourage their tendency to binge drink. as teenagers and college students. Some parents believe in teaching their offspring that wine is food, a natural partner at the dinner table, and highly enjoyable in moderation. But as pointed out by Victoria Brett, writing in the *Ashland Daily Tidings*, many parents and health officials are appalled by the practice and the American Academy of Pediatrics warns that giving children any alcohol is a poor parenting choice, pointing out that the substance is a neurological toxin. On the other hand, many parents consider exposure to wine educational, and in fact, Stanton Peele, psychologist and author of *Addiction Proof Your Child*,” sees no problem with serving young children small amounts of wine with a meal citing it is a positive experience. My youngest son, who is in his early 20s, asked me the other day if I ever get drunk tasting wine. He seemed surprised by my self-control. I think his regular exposure to wine at the dinner table since childhood, and my example, have led him to think that wine is supposed to be savored and enjoyed in moderation and I believe this important lesson will stay with him forever.**

## **The Long and Winding Pinot Road, Part VIII**

It was 1993 and I was hosting Super Bowl of Pinot Noir II. It was a time when the wine cognoscenti were become awakened to American Pinot Noir. American producers were beginning to wave the flag proudly, sticking their chests out, proclaiming how good home-grown Pinot Noir from California had become. The event that turned Pinot Noir's future happened in the early 1990s and involved a ten-letter word. Several of California's most notable Pinot Noir winemakers became *winegrowers*. This one word led to a revolution in philosophy and practice and the results led to quantum leaps in quality over previous coarse, dark, overripe efforts of a few years prior. The most talented workers in American wine now wanted to craft it and the most enlightened drinkers wanted to consume it.

Super Bowl II of Pinot Noir, “Second Encounter of the Pinot Kind,” was held at the now shuttered Gustav Anders Restaurant in Orange County, California. I had searched far and wide to find the best from the 1991 vintage and the lineup was memorable: **1991 Domaine Drouhin Oregon Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (first vintage), **1991 Ponzi Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir**, **1992 Beaux Freres Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** (first vintage), **1991 Saintsbury Reserve Carneros Pinot Noir**, **1991 Schug Heritage Reserve Carneros Pinot Noir**, **1991 El Molino Napa Valley Pinot Noir**, **1991 Rochioli Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**, **1991 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**, and **1991 Sanford Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir**.

My wine drinking buddies, most of whom had been raised on California Cabernet Sauvignon were a little surprised by the full, deep, rich scents and flavors in Pinot Noirs that seemed lacking in extract, body and color. They found Pinot Noir very hard to say no to, seduced by its sensually indulgent nature that melded delicacy and intensity like no other grape varietal they had experienced. ... .. . To be continued.