



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*Making Great
Pinot Noir is
Extremely
Expensive*

Wayfarer Releases Inaugural Wines from a Remote Ridge on Sonoma Coast

Like so many wine aficionados, Jayson Pahlmeyer's passion for wine was ignited by the wines of Bordeaux, and his eponymous winery in Napa Valley, Pahlmeyer, has been among the top echelon of wineries producing Bordeaux-styled wines as well as Chardonnay. He would admit, "All I could think about was creating my own California Mouton." Over time, with that goal well in hand, he became increasingly captivated by the wines of Burgundy, exclaiming, "Every oenophile eventually gravitates to the wines of Burgundy."

Driven to produce world class Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, Pahlmeyer's inspiration soon hinged on a fortuitous discovery in 1998 by his winemaker, Helen Turley, and her viticulturist spouse, John Wetlaufer. She found a farmstead called Wayfarer not far from her own vineyard that was for sale. Located at 1,100 in elevation, two ridges and five miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, in what is now the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA, this secluded site was deemed "the future La Tâche of California" by Turley. Pahlmeyer had already become entranced by this region after an epiphanic tasting of Turley's Marcassin Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, declaring, "These are the truly finest Pinot Noir and Chardonnay I have ever tasted - better than Richebourg and La Tâche."

Wayfarer had been a small organic fruit and vegetable farming operation owned by Dorothy and David Davis who sold their produce to noted San Francisco Bay area restaurants including Chez Panisse and Zuni Cafe. The 70-acre ranch had proven to ripen melons and tomatoes, thereby suggesting that wine grapes would ripen as well. The Davises founded the Wayfarer School on the property as a boarding school for troubled teens to learn the land and heal the spirit.

I can vouch for the remote location of Wayfarer Farm, because I visited the vineyard in 2007 along with Pahlmeyer's winemaker at the time, Erin Green. It is located a 45-minute drive along twisting and narrow two-lane roads from Jenner where the Russian River Valley empties into the Pacific Ocean.



Planting of Wayfarer Vineyard began in 2000 under the direction of David Abreu and was completed in 2002. Twelve different clones and selections of Pinot Noir were chosen (37, Bacigalupi Old Wente, Dijon 115, 667, 777, and "828," Hyde Old Wente, Pommard 4, Pommard 5, Swan and Wayfarer) and 24 acres were field grafted onto four different types of low-vigor rootstock. Four Chardonnay clones and selections (Berlenbach Old Wente, Dijon 95, Hyde Old Wente, and Mt. Eden) were planted over 6 acres. The vines were closely spaced at 6' x 3', and laid out in roughly one-acre blocks to mesh seamlessly with the topography and matched to the sun aspect, elevation and slope. The soils are homogenous and 100% Goldridge in type.

I took the following aerial photographs of Wayfarer Vineyard in 2007 and the site looks much the same today. The isolated location and rolling ridge top terrain is evident.



The first harvest arrived in 2005 and the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes from Wayfarer were initially blended with fruit from the Russian River Valley to create wines under the Pahlmeyer moniker. By 2012, the

vineyard's extraordinary character became evident and an estate-grown, single-vineyard Wayfarer label was launched.

Jayson's daughter, Cleo, has taken on Wayfarer as her own project and is at the helm (pictured below with her father).



Noted winemaker, Bibiana González Rave, crafted the inaugural 2012 Wayfarer wines. A native of Columbia, she studied and worked in the vineyards and cellars of Burgundy, Côte-Rôtie, Bordeaux, Alsace and Cognac, eventually earning a Diploma of Oenology, with honors, from the University of Bordeaux. She gained 14 years of experience working at California wineries such as Au Bon Climat, Peay, Qupe and Lynmar Estate before joining Pahlmeyer as a consulting winemaker in 2012 explicitly to grow and make Wayfarer Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. She remarks, "Wayfarer is a gem hidden in the wilderness. It is an extremely special site, presenting an opportunity to create something exceptional."



Yields are kept very low in the vineyard, an average of three pounds per vine. The ability to oversee 30 acres affords an intimate relationship with each vineyard block. The cross-referencing of terroir and clone provides a

spectrum of fruit to work with, and particular clones are blended for ideal harmony or kept separate for a unique single clone expression.

Pinot Noir grapes are hand-harvested in the pre dawn hours, the clusters are hand-sorted, and the de-stemmed berries are hand-sorted again before going to small open top tanks. After a 4 to 5-day cold maceration, native yeast fermentation ensues, and after two to three weeks, the Pinot Noir is gently pressed and moved to barrel where it completes both primary and secondary fermentations.

Chardonnay grapes are gently whole-cluster pressed and settled overnight before being racked to barrel where it undergoes 100% native yeast fermentation followed by malolactic fermentation.

Barrel cooperage, toast level and percentage of new oak is based on the individual character of each wine. The wine ages about 15 months in French oak barrels before being bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

The 2012 growing season at Wayfarer was ideal. A mild spring led to a warm, dry summer. Mid to late summer temperatures did not spike, allowing the fruit to ripen slowly and steadily. Harvest started when both ideal aromatic and physiological maturity had been obtained.

These wines are clearly marked by style and sophistication. Beginning with the tall-neck bottles and very long corks which attract attention, the wines unfold slowly in the glass, finding more traction over time, and developing even more nuance and oak integration from opened bottles one and two days later. There is no rush to consume these wines for they will evolve beautifully over many years. Among the Pinot Noirs, the "Wayfarer Vineyard" bottling is the most approachable at this early stage. The deep reddish purple color of the wines is striking. Each of the wines stand on their own for certain aromatic, flavor and textural features that display their individual uniqueness.

The following wines were released in early October to an allocated list: 2012 Wayfarer "Wayfarer Vineyard" Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, 2012 Wayfarer "Golden Mean" Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, and 2012 Wayfarer "Wayfarer Vineyard" Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Chardonnay.

A purchase of the initial release secures an allocation of three additional small-lot Pinot Noirs that will be introduced next year. Visit www.wayfarer.com to join the mailing list. All inaugural 2012 Wayfarer wines are reviewed here.

2012 Wayfarer "Wayfarer Vineyard" Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.60, 780 cases, \$90. A blend of 12 Pinot Noir clones and selections. 8% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 15 months in 78% new French oak. *Moderately deep reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromatically alive with scents of cherry, raspberry, spice box, sous-bois, and rose petal that hold up over time in the glass. The mid weight core of dark red cherry and raspberry, blueberry and pomegranate has noticeable richness and ripeness, and is accented with oak-driven toast and anise. Very soft on the palate with modestly firm tannins and some finishing length to the oak-kissed fruit. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose was very sexy with bright aromas of sweet cherry, rose and violet and the texture was dreamy soft. Approachable now, but there is certainly no hurry. 92.*



2012 Wayfarer "The Traveler" Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.62, 170 cases, \$N/A. A single "suitcase clone" from Burgundy's most revered vineyard. 22% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 15 months in 63% new French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The intriguing nose is embellished by the whole cluster, offering an array of scents including dark berries, rose petal, sous-bois, and oak-driven spice and vanilla. The mid weight boysenberry, raspberry, plum and red currant flavors are satisfying on their own, but added notes of savory herbs and floral nuance bring the wine up a notch. This beauty has a touch more body and intensity than the "Wayfarer Vineyard" bottling, with more finishing length. Tannins are well managed. Still a bit reticent, I was able to discover more subtleties over time in the glass, and the wine was considerably more expressive the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine has not been released and understandably so, but there is much to look forward to. 93-94.*



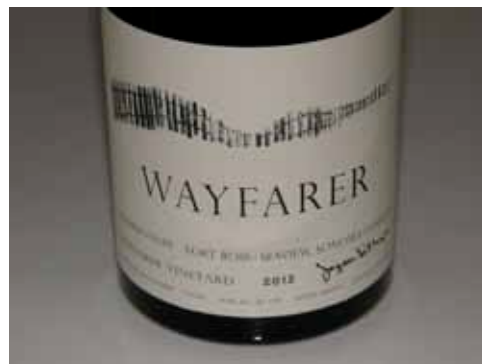
2012 Wayfarer “Golden Mean” Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 250 cases, \$115. Pommard 4 & 5 clone, and Swan selection. 10% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 15 months in 80% new French oak. *Moderate dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is totally seductive, offering a luxurious melding of aromas of fresh cherry, berry, herbs, sous-bois, rose petal and subtle oak. It is easy to find superlatives for this luscious wine. It has a little more sap and structure than “The Wayfarer” bottling, but retains a silky elegance that is charming. The flavors of blackberry, boysenberry, spice and earthy flora are framed by a seamless integration of smooth tannin and spicy oak. The finish is notable for its expansive, intense and lengthy presence.* **93.**



2012 Wayfarer “Mother Rock” Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.59, 400 cases, \$N/A. Clone 37 (Mount Eden) and Dijon 777 co-fermented. 24% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 15 months in 56% new French oak. This wine is named for Wayfarer’s sandstone substrate. *Moderately deep reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is highly expressive, picking up interest and intensity over time in the glass. Aromas of fresh raspberries, cherries and strawberries are glass filling, accented with very subtle spice and vanilla. The mid palate attack is rich and satisfying with mid weight flavors of red berries and plum carrying the charge through a generous finish. This wine has very complimentary integration of oak, the balance is spot on, and the texture is soft and luxurious. I was completely seduced by the mouthfeel which sets this wine apart from all the Wayfarer wines in this tasting. Still delightful the next day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **94.**

2012 Wayfarer “Paige’s Ridge” Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.62, 140 cases, \$N/A. This wine is named for Jayson Pahlmeyer’s spouse Paige. Dijon 667 clone. 20% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 15 months in 17% new French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromatically reserved upon opening, slowly releasing its charms over time in the glass, revealing aromas of red, blue and black berries, cherries, sois-bois, and vanilla. The strawberry, raspberry and cherry fruits are notable but a bit overshadowed by the prominent role of French oak and the wine’s firm tannic backbone. The citrus-imbued and fruit-charged finish is noticeably more robust over time in the glass. This is a young wine that has not been released and currently lacks the nuances that it undoubtedly will display with more time in the bottle, and may warrant a higher score in the future.* **90.**

2012 Wayfarer “Wayfarer Vineyard” Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.41, TA 0.59, 660 cases, \$80. Dijon 95 clone, and Berlenbach Old Wente, Hyde Old Wente and Mount Eden selections. Aged 15 months in 65% new French oak with frequent lees stirring until malolactic fermentation was completed. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate lemon yellow color and clear in the glass. The enticing aromatics featuring lemon, baked apple, pear, buttery brioche and flint fill the glass. On the palate, the experience can be likened to biting into a crisp Golden Delicious apple. Notes of white-fleshed fruits, lemon curd and nutty oak add interest to the captivating flavor profile. The mouth feel is full, polished and slightly viscous, the acidity is sound, and the finish lingers on with saturating goodness. The overall impression is one of harmony and vibrancy.* **93.**



Sips of Recently Tasted Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

Many consider the Russian River Valley to be a homogenous region producing wines that are very similar in style and character. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are numerous varied microclimates much like there is in Burgundy. There is considerable diversity in the wines of the Russian River Valley as shown in the wines reviewed in this issue.

Davis Family Vineyards

The wines from Davis Family Vineyards in Healdsburg are in high demand and frequently sell out quickly to the winery's wine club members. Guy Davis and his son Cole craft consistently outstanding Pinot Noirs as well as many other varietals.

The 2012 Dutton Ranch Pinot Noir received a Double Gold and the 2013 White Rhone Cuvée Luke won a Double Gold and Best of Class at the 2014 Sonoma County Harvest Fair Wine Competition.

The winemaking is the same for all Pinot Noirs reviewed. Following a 5-7 day cold soak, fermentation is initiated with native yeast, gravity flow is employed in the winery, and winemaking is minimalistic. The wines are aged for 10 months in 1/3 new, 1/3 1-year-old, and 1/3 2-year-old French oak barrels. The differences in the wines are attributable to the vineyard location. A map of the vineyard sources is seen here. Campbell Ranch is in the Sonoma Coast AVA and the Pinot Noir from this vineyard is reviewed in the next section of this issue.



Check out the newly designed website at www.davisfamilyvineyards.com. The winery's tasting room and organic garden lounge is located in Healdsburg just steps away from the Russian River. Hours are 11:00 to 5:00 Thursday through Sunday. Box lunches can be pre-ordered to enjoy onsite.

2012 Davis Family Vineyards Starr Ridge Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$55. The warmest of Davis Family Pinot Noir sites. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Plenty to like in this wine that features aromas of dark cherries, sous-bois, spice and new oak. The mid weight charge of spicy black cherry and black raspberry fruits has noticeably intensity and carry-over to the long, cherry-driven finish. Soft and smooth in the mouth, the wine has mouthwatering tension that lifts the experience.* **91.**



2012 Davis Family Vineyards Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$55. This is an expression of the Green Valley and is composed of Pommard and Dijon clones. This is one of the coolest climate sites in the Russian River Valley. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The glorious nose is deep and inspired, with vivid aromas of fresh cherries, spice, Prada leather coat and rose petal. A cherry bombast on the palate that really made me sit up and take notice. Discreetly concentrated with added accents of spice, raspberry and plum with a complimentary note of smoky oak. An absolutely delicious and harmonious wine that floods the mouth with flavor.* **94.**



2012 Davis Family Vineyards Horseshoe Bend Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$55. This vineyard is the coolest and most coastal of the four Russian River Valley vineyard designated Pinot Noirs. It sits on a ridge above the town of Occidental above the fog at an elevation above 1,000 feet. The ocean breezes create slightly thicker skins adding structure and earthiness to the wine. *Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. A riper fruit profile with aromas and flavors of blackberry, black currant, plum, dark chocolate and smoky oak. Very lush on the palate with soft tannins and a fruit-laden finish. An appealing wine that lacks only a little nervy tension.* **90.**

2012 Davis Family Vineyards Soul Patch Estate Grown Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$55. Soul Patch is the winery's estate hillside vineyard that Guy planted in 1996. It is oriented with an eastern facing slope so it receives the gentle morning sun as it burns off the Pacific Ocean fog and dodges the afternoon sun. This bottling is a barrel selection of the favorite barrels in each vintage. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is very shy, revealing delicate aromas of cherry and black raspberry. The fruit core is intense and sappy, offering flavors of black raspberry, boysenberry and spice, framed by firm tannins. Oak is evident in the background. Rather tight but the finish hints at the goodness to come. This bottling typically takes time and I would leave it alone for 3 to 5 years while you drink the other 2012 wines in the Davis lineup.* **91-93.**



2013 Davis Family Vineyards Cuvée Luke Saralee's Vineyard Russian River Valley White Rhone Blend 13.4% alc., \$30. 48% Rousanne, 35% Marsanne, 17% Viognier. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of yellow Babcock peach and various tropical fruits. Highly enjoyable, with bright flavors of peach, quince, mango and slight nutty oak. Viognier definitely has put a stamp on this wine through notes of spice and jasmine. Slightly viscous on the palate with impeccable balance and breeding.* **92.**

Talisman

Winemaker Scott Rich is just now releasing his 2011 vintage wines. He crafts his Pinot Noirs for structure, richness, depth and graceful aging. As a result, they benefit from extra time before release. The wines are held in bottle for a year or longer. The 2011 wines were bottled in July 2013.

Scott sources fruit from a number of exotic vineyard sites that are often on the edge and challenging to farm. The remainder of the 2012 Talisman Pinot Noirs will be reviewed in this issue elsewhere.

Visit the website at www.talismanwines.com. A tasting room is located in Glen Ellen in a historic building that is over 110 years old. Hours are 12:00 to 5:00 Thursday through Monday, but appointments are encouraged.

2011 Talisman Gunsalus Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 172 cases, \$50. Released October 2014. Pamela and Glen Gunsalus carefully farm this Green Valley of Russian River Valley vineyard planted in Goldridge soil. *Moderately light ruby color in the glass. Intensely perfumed with aromas of Bing*

cherry, sandalwood and spice. Charming and elegant in style, with middleweight flavors of cherry and baking spice rounded out with supple tannins. Very juicy on the finish with some persistence. A typical cherry-driven wine from this vineyard, showing a slightly more demure character in this cool vintage. **91.**

Ram's Gate Winery

This is a relatively new winery located at the gateway to the Carneros wine region. The portfolio of wines are from marquee vineyards in Sonoma County and Carneros whose growers share over 278 years of experience. Winemaker Jeff Gaffner has over 30 years of experience and directs the fastidious vinification process. The three wines reviewed here are very luscious, bursting with sappy fruit.

Visit the website at www.ramsgatewinery.com. The winery and tasting room is housed in a modern interpretation of weathered farmsteads of old Carneros just past Sonoma Raceway on the right. Hours are 10:00-6:00 Thursdays through Mondays by appointment.

2012 Ram's Gate Bush Crispo Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.54, 734 cases, \$70. A medium to early ripening site with well-drained, stony loam soil. Aged 11 months in 75% new French oak. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Fragrant with aromas of Bing cherries, cola, pie spice and subtle smoky oak. Soft and smooth on the palate with a tenacious middleweight core of black cherry and purple berry fruit framed by oak-driven notes of toast and spice which adds a layer of flavor. This wine displays the luscious, opulent fruit that the Russian River Valley is known for but still has verve and brightness. The tannins are well integrated and the finish is long and satisfying.* **90.**



2012 Ram's Gate Ulises Valdez Diablo Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.48, 344 cases, \$70. Vineyard planted in 2006 on steep slopes. Soils are gravelly, rocky clay over sandy loam. Aged 11 months in 40% new French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Awesome aromas of Bing cherry pie glaze, blueberry-pomegranate, and rose petal. The aromas carry remarkable intensity over an extended time in the glass. The dark cherry, boysenberry and pomegranate fruit is on the ripe side but is stunning in intensity of flavor, and augmented by a touch of cardamom spice and toast in the background. The oak is much more complimentary in this wine. The sappy core is clothed in a soft, seductive cloak of tannins. This wine still had plenty of swagger the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **91.**

2012 Ram's Gate Ulises Valdez Silver Eagle Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.54, 344 cases, \$70. This vineyard is located in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley and is owned and farmed by noted viticulturist Ulises Valdez. The vines were planted in 2007 on a hillside near the town of Occidental just 6 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Aged 11 months in 66% new French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. This wine really pushes the ripeness envelope. The aromas of purple grape syrup, blackberry, anise and oak tend to be muted over time. The full-bodied core of mixed black and purple berries and the blackest cherries is sweet, syrupy and concentrated. Soft and velvety in the mouth, this wine has a firm, but not imposing tannic backbone. The finish is noticeably long and intense. A bit tiring when tasted over time with a super ripe, cooked fruit quality on display. Succulent rather than complex.* **88.**

Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery

Winemaker Theresa Heredia has honored the Gary Farrell style of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir which typically has a racy energy on the palate due to bright acidity. She has, however, added some subtle nuances of her own choice, including small amounts of whole cluster fermentation and extended post-fermentation maceration when appropriate. The wines are always well-crafted.

Both of the wines reviewed here were 100% de-stemmed. After a 5 to 7-day cold soak, fermentation was initiated with proprietary yeast. Both punch downs and an occasional gentle pump-over were used. After a 10 to 15-day extended maceration, the wine was pressed off the skins and seeds, inoculated for malolactic fermentation, and racked into French oak barrels from several cooperages. The wines were racked off the lees once prior to bottling.

The timeless and classy tasting room on Westside Road is a required stop for all Pinot Noir aficionados. Gary Farrell has retired from winemaking, but his legacy lives on. Visit www.garyfarrellwinery.com.

2012 Gary Farrell Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.53, TA 0.645, 444 cases, \$60. Release date February 2015. Sourced from the vines at the Bacigalupi's Frost Ranch. Wente selection of Pinot Noir. Aged 14 months in 40% new French oak. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry, cranberry and nutty oak lead to an elegant mid weight palate of red fruits with strawberry the most prominent. A layer of complimentary oak in the background adds interest. An enjoyable, understated, forward drinking wine, with supple tannins and a lip-smacking finish driven by a good cut of acidity. 90.*

2012 Gary Farrell Stiling Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.702, 433 cases, \$55. Vineyard owners Don and Barbara Stiling converted a 48-acre apple ranch to vineyards in 1988. The site has well-drained Goldridge soils and is exposed to lingering coastal fog intrusions. Swan selection. Aged 14 months in 40% new French oak. *Moderate ruby color in the glass. The aromas of Bing cherry, raspberry and spice are vibrant upon opening, fading a bit in the glass as the cherry fades and dried herb scents emerge. Relatively light with silky tannins and juicy acidity, featuring oak-kissed cherry and raspberry fruits with a savory herbal undertone. The finish is driven by a burst of racy cherry fruit. 90.*

More Sips of Recently Tasted Pinot Noir



2012 Davis Family Vineyards Campbell Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$65.

Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. This is a stunning wine upon opening with invigorating aromas of fresh cherry tart, raspberry sauce and spice that jump from the glass. Very satisfying, with a silken richness of perfectly ripened wild berry and black cherry fruit accented with vanilla and a savory, dark sous-bois riff. The mid palate attack is vivid and mouth filling, and the generous finish echoes with an exotic goodness. This wine is blessed with perfect harmony between the supportive, sinewy tannins and the pleasing acid tension. It is scary to think this wine will undoubtedly improve over the new few years in bottle. A special occasion wine that reflects the extraordinary terroir of the West Sonoma Coast. 95.

2012 Frank Family Vineyards Carneros Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.57, 8,700 cases, \$35. Aged 10 months in 35% new and 65% once and twice-filled French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. There is a prominent oak overlay on the nose with demure aromas of Bing cherry. Richly fruited with a cherry and boysenberry core accented with notes of cola and earth and a noticeable mantle of nutty oak. The tannins are balanced and there is some fruit richness on the moderately long finish. 88.*

2012 Frank Family Vineyards Lewis Vineyard Reserve Napa Carneros Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.60, 1,481 cases, \$65. Aged 10 months in 50% new and 50% once-filled French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Clearly a step up in quality over the regular Carneros bottling with deep, penetrating aromas of darker berries and cherries with a complimentary hint of spicy, smoky oak. A fruit-driven wine of impressive flavor with layers of blueberry, black raspberry and plum fruit that is classy. An earthy, savory undertone reflects a Carneros identity. The balance is spot on with integrated tannins, a healthy acid spine, and plenty of fruit goodness hanging on through a long finish. 92.*

2012 MacMurray Ranch Central Coast Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., \$11.39. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas and flavors of dark cherry, plum and black raspberry are framed by anise-laced oak. The tannins are modest, the mouthfeel is silky, and the finish is juicy, albeit a bit shallow and a noticeable tug of oak. A satisfactory rather than special wine. 87.*



2012 Ser Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 180 cases, \$33. "Ser" translates to "To be; expressing identity or origin" in Spanish. Ser is a small boutique wine company based in Santa Cruz, California featuring wines vinified by owner and winemaker Nicole Walsh. 40% Lester Family Vineyard, 30% Lilo Vineyard, and 30% Byington Vineyard. Vineyards were fermented separately. 5 to 6-day cold soak, indigenous yeast fermentation, gently pressed into 10% new and 90% neutral French oak barrels. Aged 14 months in barrel. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. This is a savory wine with more interest than just fruit. The nose offers aromas of cherry, sous-bois, iron, tomato, herbs and wood. Light and elegant in style, but with a noticeable mid-palate attack of red cherry, cranberry and red raspberry fruits. Slightly confected with a prominent savory herb undertone. Slightly plush on the palate with suave tannins, juicy acidity, and some finishing length. Very forward and easy to like and a perfect foil for grilled salmon. 89.*

2011 Talisman Red Dog Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$52. Released October 2014. This vineyard is located high above Bennett Valley at 800 feet elevation on the northwestern side of Sonoma Mountain. A very low yield site. *Moderately light reddish-purple color in the glass. The nose is captivating, with hi-tone aromas of red plum, red currant, suis-bois, red hots and peppery spice. Light to mid weight flavors of dark red fruits accented with hints of spice and toast. The balance is impeccable, with soft, supportive tannins and bright acidity. The wine develops more interest over time in the glass and was clearly better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*

2011 Talisman Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 220 cases, \$65. Released October 2014. From a unique site at 850-1,000 feet elevation which has very cold night time temperatures. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is shy but pleasant with aromas of red and black berries with a hint of cola. The tasty core of blueberry, boysenberry, sarsaparilla and spice flavors is framed by firm tannins that add a touch of astringency to the finish. The wine has good brightness and a seductively soft texture, finishing with good length. It definitely becomes more appealing over time in the glass, but seems disjointed at this juncture. Alcohol warmth peaks out and oak lingers on the aftertaste, especially the following day from a previously opened bottle. 89.*

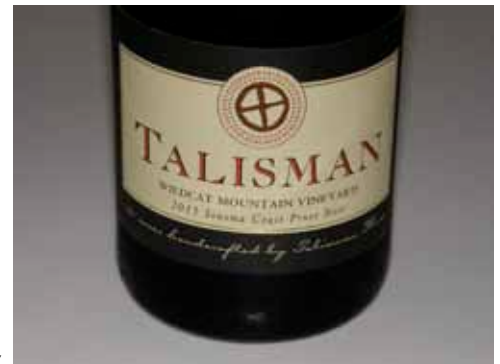
2012 Talisman Huckleberry's Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 73 cases, \$60. Release January 2015. From a 1/2-acre vineyard in West Sonoma County owned and hand-tended by Bill and Lauren Hipp. The vineyard is named after their dog Huckleberry. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas leap out of the glass upon opening and fill the room with scents of black cherry sauce, raspberry jam and nutmeg. The attack of black cherry fruit on the mid palate is stunning, but there is much more to discover in this special wine. Look for Moroccan spices, savory herbs, red licorice, and earthiness. Mid to full-bodied with a suave texture and a finish that makes you shake your head in wonderment. The wine was still pumping the aromatic and flavor goodness the following day from a previous opened and re-corked bottle. As good as this wine is now, it will reward further cellaring because the balance is spot-on.* **93.**

2011 Talisman Adastra Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 189 cases, \$56. Release April 2015. From a certified organic vineyard tended by Chris Thorpe and son-in-law Edwin Richards. Clones are 2A, 113, Pommard and Swan selection. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine is showing a pretty good whack of oak that should integrate by the time it is released in the spring. The aromas and mid weight flavors of ripe, dark cherry and raspberry show promise, and are enhanced by nuances of spice, dark chocolate and anise. The charge of fruit often experienced from this vineyard is more modest in this vintage, but the wine has more charm than usual.* **90.**



2011 Talisman Wildcat Mountain Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 121 cases, \$52. Release April 2015.

This is from the highest elevation vineyard in the Los Carneros AVA. Soils are decomposed volcanic basalt. The site is very cool with exposure to maritime breezes from San Pablo Bay. Clones 115, 667, 777 and Swan selection. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The deep, earthy nose features black raspberry, blackberry and black cherry fruit in abundance. This wine really wows the palate upon entry with layers of luscious dark cherry and raspberry flavors. Very silky in texture, with tame tannins and a persistent, extremely long and intense berry-driven finish. Beautifully balanced for age ability. Still stunning the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Superlatives do little justice to this special wine.* **94.**



Inaugural Knudsen Vineyards Pinot Noir

Established in 1971 by Cal and Julia Lee Knudsen, Knudsen Vineyard is one of the oldest vineyards in the Dundee Hills, and for many years was the largest. The Knudsens developed a 200-acre former walnut orchard, and the Knudsen family has been farming grapes at this location for over 40 years. The oldest producing vines were planted in 1974. Knudsen Vineyards has supplied grapes to some of the most renowned producers of still and sparkling wines in Oregon including Argyle Winery.

In 1975, Cal Knudsen formed Knudsen Erath Winery, a winemaking partnership with Dick Erath, and opened Oregon Bonded Winery No. 52, the first commercial winery in the Dundee Hills on the Knudsen Vineyard site. Dick Erath made Knudsen Erath wines from 1975 until 1987 when Knudsen Vineyards entered into a long term grape purchase agreement with Argyle Winery.

Knudsen Vineyard now spans 228 acres, 130 of which are planted to Pinot Noir (73%), Chardonnay (24%) and Pinot Meunier (3%). The property contains twelve separate blocks across two southeastern facing slopes with elevations ranging from 500 to 1,000 feet, Knudsen Vineyards is Low Input Viticulture and Enology Certified (LIVE) and Salmon Safe certified.

The four offspring of Oregon winegrowing pioneer, Cal Knudsen, released 125 cases of the 2012 Knudsen Vineyards Pinot Noir in September 2014. This is the first proprietary vintage in nearly 40 years. The Knudsen Vineyards Managing Director is Page Knudsen Cowles, who proudly said, "It is an honor for me and my brothers to carry on the vision our parents established for Oregon winegrowing." Knudsen Cowles oversees the property with her three brothers, Colin, David and Cal.

The family works in concert with Allen Holstein, Mark Sheridan and Nate Klostermann of Argyle Winery, to craft their wine. Holstein started his viticulture career as Vineyard Manager at Knudsen in 1980, and today oversees all of Argyle Winery's vineyard properties. Holstein appointed Sheridan as Knudsen Vineyard Manager over 25 years ago. Klostermann joined Argyle Winery in 2005 and was appointed Head Winemaker in 2013.

The family will release a 2013 Knudsen Vineyards Chardonnay in the spring of 2015 and a 2013 Knudsen Vineyards Pinot Noir in the fall of 2015 to mailing list customers. The Knudsen property is not open to the public at this time. Visit www.knudsenvineyards.com to acquire future releases.

Est. 1971

KNUDSEN
VINEYARDS

2012

PINOT NOIR

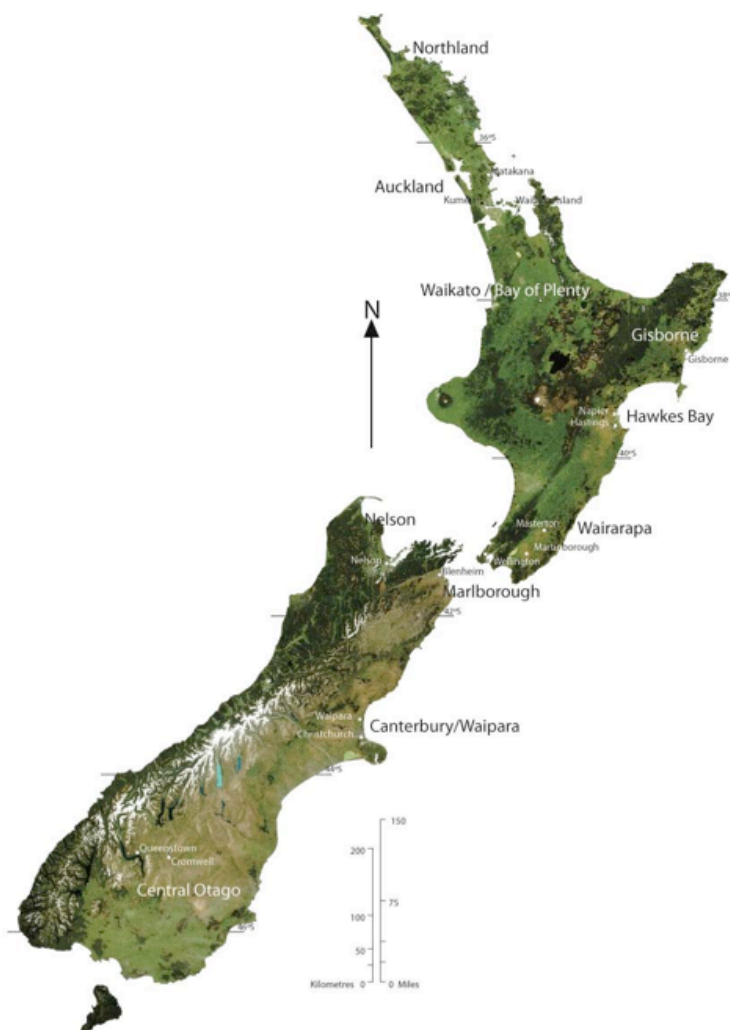
Dundee Hills Willamette Valley

2012 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 100 cases, pH 3.42, TA 0.58, \$55. Harvest Brix 23.7°. Wädenswil 2A and Dijon 777 clones planted in Jory soil in 2000-2004. Aged 16 months in 10% new French oak. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Beautifully perfumed with scents of cherry, sous-bois, spice and sandalwood. Elegant, caressing and comfortable in style, with good depth of cherry, raspberry and strawberry fruit flavors augmented with a riff of savory earthiness. Easy to like, with fine tannins and a satisfying fullness on the finish. The cherry fruit sticks to the finish like glue. Don't be dissuaded by the delicate color of this wine, as it has a pleasing melange of broad flavors. This bottling is reminiscent of The Eyrie Dundee Hills Pinot Noirs in style and character.* 92.

New Zealand Pinot Noirs from Salmanazar

Salmanazar, located in Wanaka, New Zealand is an export collective bringing wine from an elite group of New Zealand producers to Europe and North America. Wines with recognized third party organizations are featured, such as Bio Gro, www.biogro.co.nz, and Demeter, www.biodynamic.org.nz. Wines are also sought out that are vinified without manipulations or additions such as commercial yeast, and are exposed to minimal use of sulphur as a preservative.

I recently reviewed a number of interesting Pinot Noirs from this exporter. The wines were from both the North Island (Martinborough) and South Island (North Canterbury, Waitaki Valley, and Central Otago).



Central Otago

This is the world's most souther wine region. Wine grapes were first planted here in the 1860s with interest renewed in the 1970s. There are 4,717 acres planted to wine grapes, making it New Zealand's fourth largest grape producing region, about 2.4% of total production. Pinot Noir is the focus, but Riesling, Pinot Gris and Gewürztraminer do well here in the cool climate and schist and glacial loam soils. Central Otago is New Zealand's highest winegrowing region and its only continental climate featuring short, hot summers and long, dry autumns.

2010 Archangel Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. An organically farmed estate on elevated schist gravel terraces near Wanaka. Highly mineral-rich soils lead to rich, lush wines. *Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. A bold, opulent, ripe style of fruit-driven wine with aromas and flavors of cassis, black cherry, boysenberry, toast and tobacco. Soft and almost creamy with some tannic support. Not much terroir to be found in this wine, but the flavors are very satisfying and it is well-crafted in this style.* 89.

2011 Pisa Range Estate Run 245 Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. These wines are organically farmed in the Pisa sub region of Central Otago and vinified by acclaimed winemaker Rudi Bauer. Run 245 is the pastoral tenure number given to this land at Pisa in 1866. This vineyard was established in 1995. Aged 12 months in French oak. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Very charming nose immediately with scents of cherry pie, spice, and sandalwood. The cherry and cranberry fruit really sings on the palate but is somewhat sequestered by and exuberant oak overlay. Lively and crisp, with pretty fruit, ending with some finishing intensity and a tug of tobacco oak.* 89.

2012 Pisa Range Estate Black Poplar Block Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. Aged 12 months in French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of chocolate-covered cherries, spice and wine cave lead to deep flavors of cherry, cranberry and strawberry that coat the palate with goodness. A sophisticated offering with integrated tannins and an intensely fruity finish. More concentrated, with less oak sheen, than the 2011 Pisa Range wine reviewed today. Very seductive and user-friendly.* 92.



2010 TOSQ Vineyards Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. Family owned and tended organic vineyard in the Pisa district of Central Otago. Second release. *Moderate ruby color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, boysenberry, forest floor and rose petal lead to a full-flavored attack of black cherry and plum fruits. The finish is very generous and expansive, but it loses appeal over time in the glass, becoming rather linear and tannic.* 87.



2011 Valli Gibbston Vineyard Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., screwcap. Grant Taylor and Tim Valli carry on the tradition of Giuseppe Valli who emigrated from a winemaking background to New Zealand in the 1870s. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of black cherry, dark red berry, sous-bois and complimentary oak.*

Delicious attack of fresh dark fraise de bois, boysenberry and cranberry fruits with perfect oak seasoning. Beautifully balanced, silky and seductive, with a peacock tail finish replete with gorgeous red berry and cherry fruit that really attracts attention. Clearly the star of this New Zealand Pinot Noir tasting and one to search out. 94.

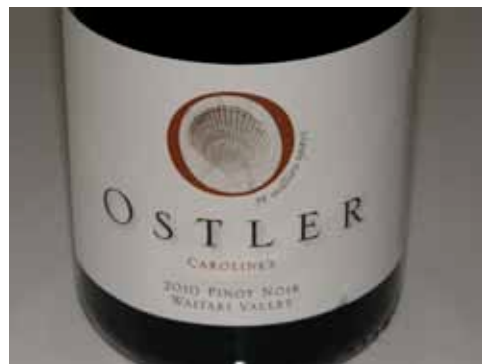


Waitaki Valley

Waitaki Valley is New Zealand's coldest wine region with north facing limestone and alluvial Greywacke and schist hillsides. It is also New Zealand's newest wine region straddling the boundary between North Otago and Canterbury provinces in a valley close to the Pacific Coast in the south of the South Island. The area was first planted in 2001, and most vineyards are small. The climate is maritime at the lower reaches, becoming semi-continental and more arid further inland. With warm summers and long, usually dry, autumn seasons, there is long, slow fruit ripening.

2009 Ostler Caroline's Waitaki Valley New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very ripe fruit aromas on the nose with a heavy dose of smoke and ash. A rustic, savory wine with smoky, herbal oak overshadowing the very ripe core of berry, plum and purple grape fruits. Seems like an atypical bottle. N/R.*

2010 Ostler Carolina's Waitaki Valley New Zealand Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. From the leading estate in Waitaki Valley. Vineyard is planted in limestone-laden, seabed soils. *Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. Enticing array of black fruits on the nose with a mild oak sheen. Highly enjoyable core of freshly ripened purple and black berries clothed in sinewy tannins. Softly textured with a generous, fruit-driven finish of some appealing length. 89.*



2011 Ostler Caroline's Waitaki Valley New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A lighter, more elegant wine that I find appealing, although the phenolics seem to lack a little ripeness and the finish is a bit shallow. Very juicy and thirst quenching, with aromas and flavors of cherry, strawberry, and sandalwood, and very modest tannins. Highly approachable and easy to like, but not special. 87.*

Waipara Valley North Canterbury

This region is known for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling grown on the limestone and clay hillsides of this small region. The climate is favorable for cool climate viticulture. There are about 80 producers in the region, with most focusing on small lot wine production.

2011 Black Estate Waipara Valley North Canterbury New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. A biodynamic, family owned vineyard planted on north facing clay and limestone slopes. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens with some struck match reduction that resolves somewhat over time in the glass to reveal aromas of black cherry, briar and seasoned oak. Light to mid weight flavors of juicy strawberry and cherry with a touch of spice and green savory herbs. Good tension, with firm tannins showing up on the finish. 87.*

2011 Pyramid Valley Vineyards Earth Smoke Canterbury New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Pyramid Valley Vineyards, USA, LLC, Pescadero, CA. This wine comes from the home vineyard of Mike and Claudia Weersing's estate vineyard that is farmed organically and biodynamically. Densely planted vines are established on clay and limestone soils. No commercial yeasts, bacteria, enzymes, fining or filtering. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Intriguing aromas of wild raspberry, sous-bois, cherry pie glaze, fennel, oak and floral bouquet. Very tasty essence of fresh raspberry and strawberry coulis with good attack and finishing presence. Well-crafted, with supple tannins, bright acidity and textural interest. 91.*



2011 Pyramid Valley Vineyards Angel Flower Canterbury New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., screwcap. Imported by Pyramid Valley Vineyards, USA, LLC, Pescadero, CA. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Noticeable steely minerality on the nose complimented the aromas of dark red fruits. Welcoming mid weight flavors of dark red berries, plums and cherries with a loamy, herbal undertone. The modest tannins are quite soft, and the juicy acidity gives the wine a pleasingly refreshing tension. Overall, a notable wine with impressive balance and terroir-based presence. 90.*

Martinborough

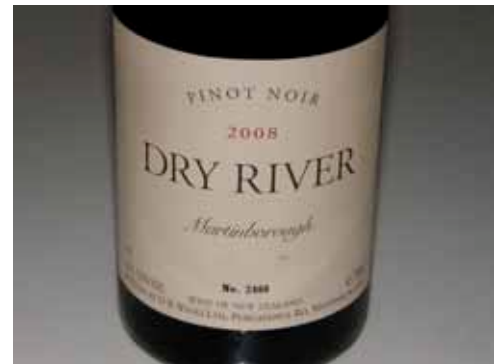
Martinborough is one of three main sub regions (Gladstone and Masterton are the other two) in Wairarapa (easily confused with Waipara). Wine grape plantings are situated on an elevated terrace composed of relatively young river sediments, with varying amounts of sand and silt. Water draining from the surrounding limestone hills is thought to contribute to the Martinborough style. There are many iconic, pioneering producers of Pinot Noir in this small region. Wairarapa's modern wine history dates to the late 1970s plantings of Dry River, Martinborough Vineyard, Ata Rangi and Chifney (now Margrain). Production is relatively small, only 1% of New Zealand's total production.

Alana Estate Lumiere Martinborough New Zealand Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., screwcap. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. An established estate planted in 1993 in the heart of the Martinborough Terrace Appellation. The vineyard is organically farmed. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of cherry, raspberry, baking spice and oak. Juicy and bright, with a middleweight core of oak-kissed black cherry fruit. Undertones of spice, herbs and smoke add complexity. Finishes with plenty of sweet cherry and a tug of oak. Even less appealing the following day from a previously opened bottle. 86.*

2009 Cambridge Road Martinborough New Zealand Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.65, 600 cases. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. A small vineyard on the Martinborough Terrace first planted in 1986 to Pinot Noir and Syrah. The vineyard is farmed biodynamically. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very appealing aromatically with scents of wild cherry, rose petal, baking spice, vanilla and sandalwood. Discreetly concentrated core of flavorful black raspberry and black cherry fruits slightly shadowed by oak. The wine has good verve and brightness. A solid, but not inspirational wine. 89.*

2010 Cambridge Road Martinborough New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.76, 300 cases. Imported by Terrell Wines, San Francisco, CA. *Deep, dark reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose is not typical for Pinot Noir, with aromas of dark, cooked fruits, black licorice and oak. Relatively big and bold, with blackberry, black currant and raisin flavors that push the ripeness to the edge. The higher alcohol produces a softness in the mouth, but overall the wine is a rugged, ribald, roasted fruit bomb. Unchanged the following day when re-tasted from an opened bottle. Could this wine have been harmed by heat in transit? N/R.*

2008 Dry River Martinborough New Zealand Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$95. Imported by R.O. Imports, LLC, Napa, CA. Stylish long neck bottle. Tasted twice previously in November 2020 (score 94) and September 2013 (score 92). This bottle was not as appealing. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Exotic, lovely nose with aromas of very ripe black fruits, raisin, and black currant with notes of maple syrup, spice, vanilla and violet. Intense and opulent on the palate with an array of purple and black fruits including ollaliberry and black cherry. Soft, smooth, even slightly viscous, showing some secondary characters of leather and cigar box. The tannins have melded and there is touch of citrus in the background. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the flavors of sweet, very ripe black cherry and tobacco stood out. An interesting wine that should continue to satisfy for several years. 90.*



Pinot Briefs

More Details on ‘Sideways’ 10th Anniversary Celebration Weekend Blake Brown, who is well connected in the Santa Barbara area wine community, reported to me on further details of the celebratory weekend commemorating the 10th anniversary of the movie ‘Sideways.’ A charity auction for Direct Relief International sponsored by the Santa Barbara County Vintners and Jim and Frank Ostini of the Hitching Post, was highlighted by an auction lot that included a reunion dinner at Jim Clendenen’s picturesque Rancho La Cuna estate with food prepared by world class chefs, fine wines, and some of the cast attending including Paul Giamatti and director Alexander Payne. The night before the big event, a more informal pig roast took place at the same location. The frozen pig was flown in from Alabama in a body bag by the chef, Nick Pihakis, who prepared it. There were tables of white and red wines from many local vintners, most of whom were in attendance. Wines from Au Bon Climat and Hitching Post were in notable abundance in all bottle sizes: 2001 Au Bon Climat Nuits Blanches au Bouge Chardonnay - 1.5L, 1996 Hitching Post Santa Barbara County Chardonnay - 3L, 200 Hitching Post Highliner Pinot Noir - 5L (this wine was featured in the movie), 1999 Au Bon Climat Knox Alexander Pinot Noir - 1.5L, 2003 Au Bon Climat Isabelle Pinot Noir - 1.5L, 2004 Au Bon Climat Knox Alexander Pinot Noir - 3L, 2000 Longoria Bien Nacido Vineyard Pinot Noir - 1.5L, and 2000 Jadot Clos St. Denis - 3L (Clendenen brought this out toward the end of the evening and reportedly was absolutely fabulous.

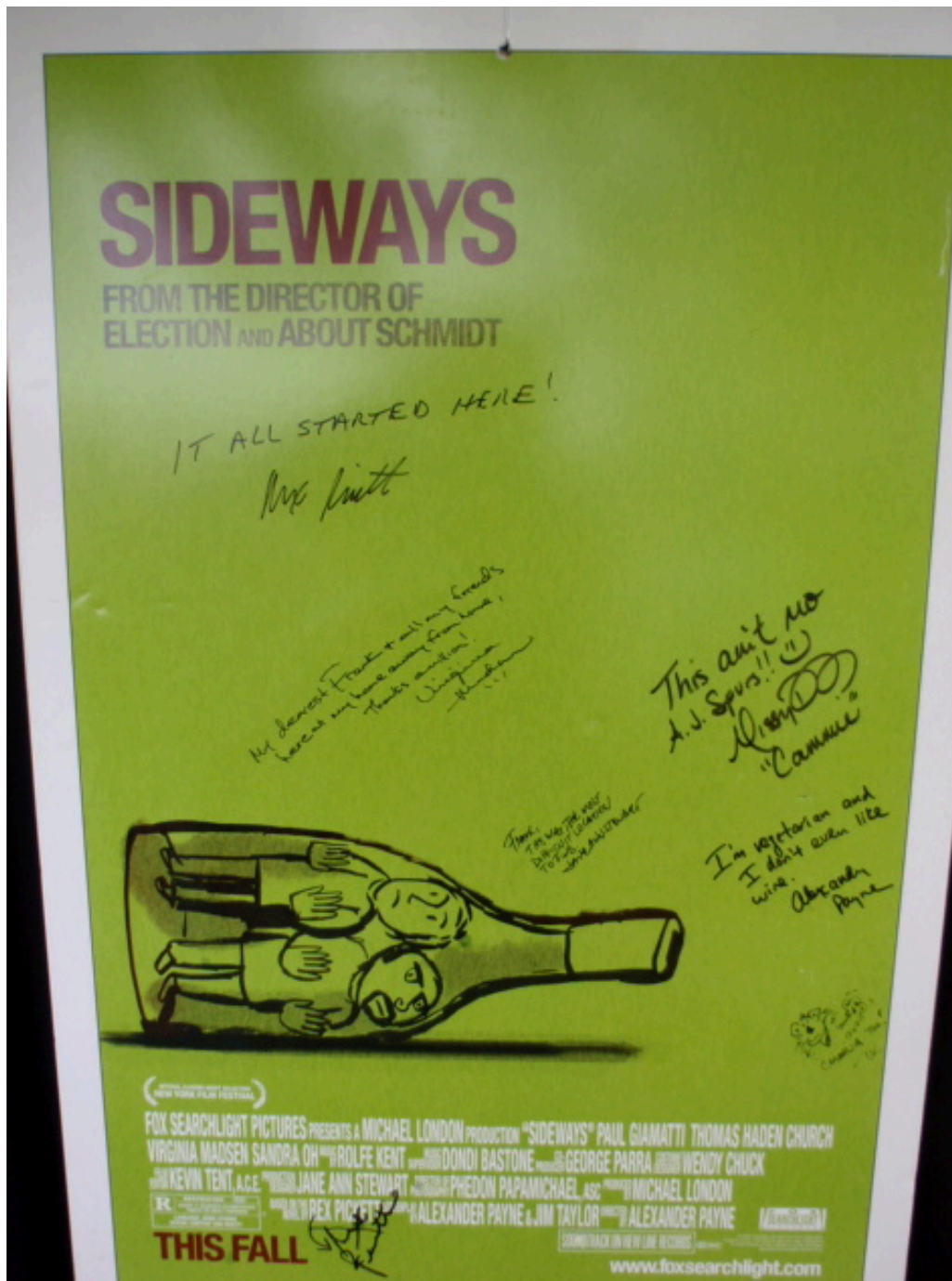
Brown related an interesting conversation with Giamatti at the reunion dinner which came around to how Merlot was picked to be the villain in the movie. Payne was struggling to come up with an antithesis to Pinot NOir and after much consideration, decided Merlot sounded better than any other varietal. His choice had nothing to do with the varietal itself.

One of the highlights of the reunion dinner evening was a Skype call to Virginia Madsen who was in Budapest working on a movie. It was projected onto a large screen on stage above which the movie ‘Sideways’ had been playing throughout the evening.

The wines poured at the reunion dinner included: NV Bollinger Special Cuvee Brut, 2009 Clendenen Family Vineyards Stallion Vineyard Sauvignon blanc, 2013 Hitching Post Rosé “Pinks”, 2001 Au Bon Climat Nuits Blanches au Bouge Harmony Chardonnay, 2001 Hitching Post Bien Nacido Pinot Noir, 2003 Au Bon Climat Knox Alexander Pinot Noir, 2003 Hitching Post Highliner Pinot Noir, 2008 Au Bon Climat 20 Years in the Shed with Bob Pinot Noir, 2001 Vita Nova “Acronicus” Blended Red Wine, 2001 Hitching Post Purisma Mountain Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, 2008 Clendenen Family Vineyards Late Harvest Riesling, and 2009 Hitching Post Late Harvest Gewürztraminer.

Brown commented, “What a night! The entire evening was so well thought out and organized. The service was superb and the wines and food were over the top.” Photos follow (Blake left, Giamatti right, signed poster).





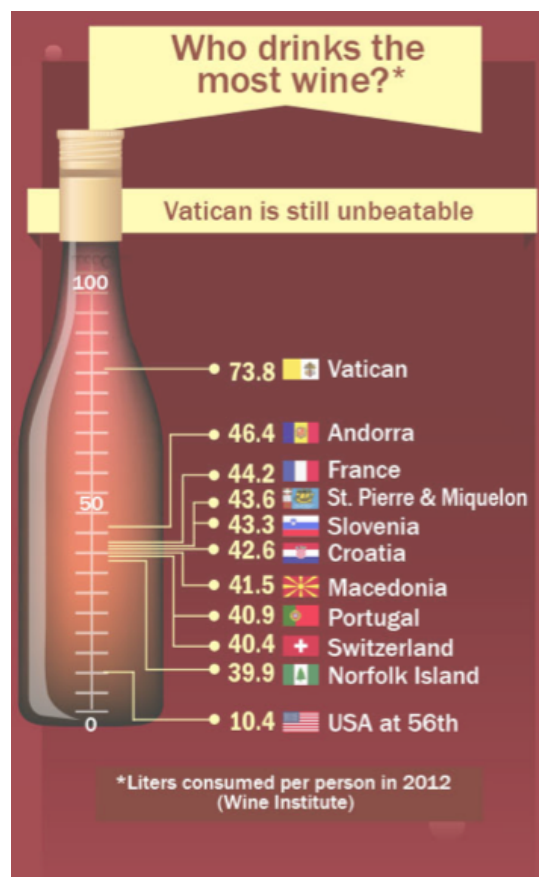
Laetitia Vineyard & Winery Has Gone to Birds Ripening grapes are highly attractive to native and migrating birds like finches and European starlings, and falconry-based bird abatement is proving to be an effective deterrent compared to troublesome bird netting and noisemakers. Lateitia’s falconer directs his trained birds of prey to patrol Laetitia’s vast estate vineyards. One raptor flown at a time can patrol roughly 400 acres with each flight. While falconry is expensive, it is quiet and environmentally sound.

San Luis Obispo’s First ‘Urban Wine Collective’ Modeled after the urban, industrial-style wineries that have existed in America for more than 150 years, downtown San Luis Obispo’s new urban wine collective called The Workshop, offers food and wine tasting for the general public as well as wine production and sales support for artisan winemakers, custom crush clients, and wine hobbyists. The on site lounge pours the winemakers’ offerings as well as The Workshop’s own wine label, “Vijelante,” which is sold through the facility’s growler table wine program. Patrons are invited to pick up; a flask to enjoy at home and then return for refills. Visit www.theworkshopslo.com.

The Drinks Business The Global Masters Pinot Noir Competition *The Drinks Business* is an international drinks magazine. In the past year, the magazine has launched a series of wine competitions focusing on individual grape varieties, and now Pinot Noir has its turn. This judging of Pinot Noir is open to wines from any country and are judged on the quality of the wine rather than its origin. The Global Pinot Noir Masters 2015 will be the second year of the Global Pinot Noir Masters. The results are published in magazine and online format and viewed by over 16,000 trade subscribers and nearly two million yearly website visitors. In addition, the competition receives interest from international importers and distributors. For more information, visit www.thedrinksbusiness.com/the-global-masters-presentation/. The awards categories are: Oaked, Un-Oaked and Sparkling. Judges are only Masters of Wine, Master Sommeliers and Senior Wine Buyers and all judging is blind. For a list of judges, visit www.thedrinksbusiness.com/db-judges/. The competition is seeking participation of Pinot Noirs from the United States. For inquiries regarding wine submissions, contact Chloé Beral at chloe@thedrinksbusiness.com. Deadline for entry is Friday, December 5, 2014.



Interesting Infographic on Beer and Wine. From CompareCamp.com comes these interesting facts on wine consumption. I have omitted the comparisons with beer but you can view them at www.comparecamp.com/beer-wine-comparison-of-popular-brands/.





Biddle Ranch Vineyards Opens New Tasting Room A new tasting room has opened at the historic Avila Valley Schoolhouse just off Highway 101. Built in 1907, the two-room schoolhouse sports its original hardwood floors and high windows. Under the direction of head winemaker Ryan Deovlet, Biddle Ranch specializes in Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The winery is also building a new premier tasting room on its estate vineyard property in the Edna Valley which will open sometime in 2015.

‘American Wine Story’ Film Now Available Worldwide This film has received many accolades and is required viewing for wine aficionados. It is now available to audiences everywhere on iTunes, Amazon and On Demand in English-speaking territories, and available worldwide at www.americanwinestory.vhx.tv.

Clos Saron Celebrates 15th Anniversary. Clos Saron, a tiny winery in the Sierra Foothills, was established originally because of Pinot Noir and has been the key to the winery’s success ever since. On Saturday, November 1, 2014, Clos Saron will host a day of festivities to mark the winery’s 15th anniversary. A lunch time picnic lunch in the vineyard will be followed by an extensive afternoon tasting featuring multiple vintages of Home Vineyard, Texas Hill Road Vineyard and Tickled Noir. The tasting will include a mini-vertical of every wine made at Clos Saron, including all new and current releases and multiple library sections. Over 20 wines spanning 15 harvests of relatively rare Home Vineyard Pinot Noir, the very rare Texas Hill Road Vineyard Pinot Noir, and even the super rare Tickled Noir. The day will culminate with a special All Pinot Noir candlelight dinner in the cellar. Guests are invited to bring along a favorite Pinot Noir to share. An all-day pass is only \$110. For more information, email the winery at info@clossaron.com or phone 530-692-1080. A link to the winery’s ‘Yearly Cycle in the Vineyards’ photo album as at www.picasaweb.google.com/105209452895396519732/ClosSaronVineyardWinery?authkey=Gv1sRgCP2HiAujz4qmEw&feat=email. © 2014