



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

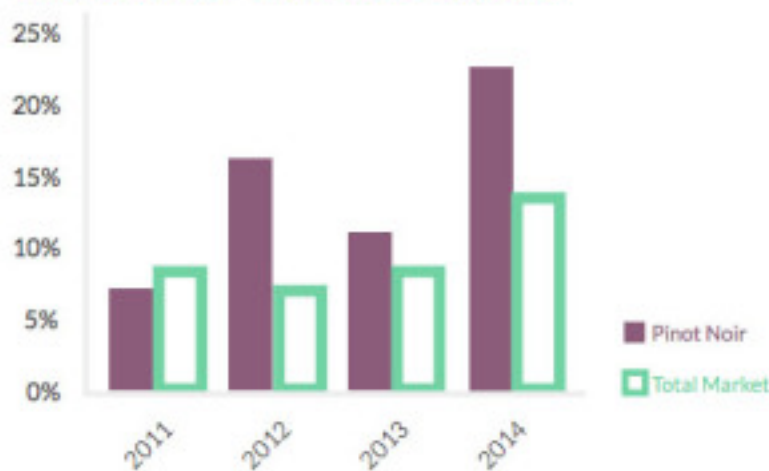
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*Pinot Noir is a capricious child that rewards humility*

## Oregon Wine Is Killing It!

It seemed only natural to kick off this May issue with a tasting of Oregon wines since May is Oregon Wine Month. The Oregonians have plenty to celebrate, as the wine business is killing it, leading the nation in wine sales in 2014. According to the 2015 Wine Sales Report by Ship Compliant, Oregon had the fastest growth in direct to consumer (DtC) sales to customers in 2014, over double the next leading region. The figures reflect an increasing demand for Pinot Noir, and Oregon Pinot Noir in particular, across the country.

### % GROWTH IN VOLUME OF PINOT NOIR VS TOTAL MARKET



The volume of DtC shipments of cases of Oregon wine increased 46% in 2014, compared to regions in California and the rest of the U.S. that were below 16% increases in volume. DtC shipments from Oregon wineries increased 53% in value. The average cost of a bottle of Oregon wine was \$39.72, a 4.2% increase over 2013. Since most Oregon wineries are small (5,000 cases or less production annually), they lack distribution and must concentrate on DtC sales through wine clubs and other marketing ventures.

Full Glass Research study found that the Oregon wine industry had an economic impact of \$3.3 billion in 2013. Planted acreage increased by 18 percent since 2011, the number of wineries increased by 45 percent and there was a 39 percent increase in sales. Part of the success has been a focus on the higher-quality, higher-priced segment of the wine market. Oregon growers have the highest average price per ton of grapes, and Oregon wineries have the highest average revenues per case.

The strong growth of the Oregon wine industry has attracted new investment from the U.S. (California's Jackson Family Wines, Foley Family Wines, and Wagner Family of Wines, and Washington's Ste. Michelle Wine Estates and Precept Wines), and global interests such as Louis Jadot.

Oregon now has more than 24,000 acres among 951 vineyards and several hundred acres currently awaiting development. 72 varieties of grapes are grown. The state is the third largest wine producer at 3.5 million cases in 2014 according to Wines Vines Analytics, behind California and Washington if only wine from *vinifera* grapes are considered.

Oregon Wines Fly Free program has been so successful that it has been extended through 2017. Visitors traveling from Oregon on Alaska Airlines who are members of Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan can check a case of Oregon wine for free. The Oregon Wine Board, Travel Oregon and Alaska Airlines collaborated to make Oregon the first state to launch a statewide wines fly free program in September 2013. Today, more than 300 Oregon wineries participate, and almost 5,000 cases of Oregon wines have been checked for free since the program started. As a bonus, inbound visitors can receive complimentary tastings at any participating winery by showing their Alaska Airlines boarding passes within a week of arrival.

A live art mural by a graffiti artist depicting the magic of winemaking will be created in front of Chapter 24 Vineyards new tasting room in Dundee, Oregon during Oregon Wine Month. Ashley Montague, who paints Eardrums for Eyelids, is a renowned Portland street artist who has created awe-inspiring murals throughout the city and beyond. Chapter 24 Vineyards has commissioned a mural, "INFUSION: Chaos, Change and Emergence" in front of their tasting room. This is the first known time that urban street art has taken place in the Willamette Valley. Internationally renowned artist Cathy Bleck will draw an internal mural in the tasting room. Visitors to the tasting room can witness the spectacle of live mural art created before their eyes on May 16-17 and May 23-24 from 11:00 to 5:00 each day, along with a tasting flight of Chapter 24 Pinot Noir. The winery's website is [www.chapter24vineyards.com](http://www.chapter24vineyards.com).

Oregon Wine Month, a statewide promotion launched by the Oregon Wine Board, was first proclaimed by former governor John Kitzhaber, and is now in its fourth year. A new website, [www.oregonwine.org](http://www.oregonwine.org), details the month-long promotions. Follow [#oregonwinemonth](https://twitter.com/oregonwinemonth).



# Sips of Recently Tasted Oregon Wine

## Antica Terra, Dundee

Most Antica Terra wines are blends but the Antikythera is from a single estate vineyard located in the northernmost part of the Eola-Amity Hills. The current owners have been farming this vineyard for almost a decade. There were not immediate rewards in the early years but persistence paid off. Winemaker Maggie Harrison says, "The 2012 Antikythera is the wine I've been hoping to make since the day I first saw the vineyard." The 2012 vintage gave qualities that are only seen once every twenty years or so. Private, seated tastings are available at the winery from Wednesday through Sunday, November through August by appointment. Visit [www.anticaterra.com](http://www.anticaterra.com).



**2012 Antica Terra Antikythera Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 516 cases, \$100. Released March 1, 2015. *Amazing depth of color. Interesting aromatic drama, with scents of black cherry, blackberry, spice, Bailey's Irish Creme, pine needle and a hint of oak. Full-bodied and rich, yet angelic in texture with velvety softness, offering delicious flavors of black raspberry, cassis, iron and spice. A whisper of oak chimes in.*

*Well-ripened in this vintage and a noticeable departure from the previous two vintages with more fruit and more structure. A delightful wine that can serve as a poster child for the voluptuous 2012 vintage in Oregon.*

94.



## Big Table Farm, Gaston

This winery is a remarkable success story. Brian Marcy and Clare Carver left Napa for Oregon 9 years ago to find some backyard space and make some wine. They used all their resources to buy the property that is now Big Table Farm, so they began modestly with just 150 cases. Slowly they revived the 1890 farmhouse that was painted pink inside and out, added a barn to house their horses, and built a winery that was completed in time to make the 2014 vintage wines. Today, production is 3000+ cases of wine that receives many critical accolades. Visit [www.bigtablefarm.com](http://www.bigtablefarm.com). Big Table Farm is one of the featured wineries at this year's International Pinot Noir Celebration, July 24-26.





The 2013 vintage was characterized by a modestly warm summer followed by a very cool and rainy September. The result was that grapes reached maturity with very low sugar and the resultant wines have under 12 percent alcohol in some cases.

**2013 Big Table Farm Willamette Valley Chardonnay** 476 cases, \$45. Grapes sourced from Bieze, Durant, Wirtz and Yates Conwill vineyards. Unfined and unfiltered. *Light golden yellow and slightly hazy in the glass. Welcoming aromas of citrus oil, spice, and honeysuckle. Soft and smooth on the palate, with bright flavors of yellow peach, apple, lemon zest and spice. A somewhat demure style that is beautifully balanced, finishing with zippy lemony acidity.* **90.**

**2013 Big Table Farm Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 1,534 cases, \$42. 3 new sites were added to the six sourced in previous vintages. Native yeast, whole cluster fermentation. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate light cherry red color in the glass. Very floral nose reminds me of Chanel #5 with added notes of cherry and Asian 5-spice. Light to mid weight flavors of strawberry, cherry and raspberry with a hint of smoky oak in the background. Elegant and charming, with supple fine-grain tannins and a pleasingly dry finish.* **89.**

**2013 Big Table Farm Pelos-Sandberg Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 303 cases, \$48. One acre each of Pommard and 777. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Upbeat aromas of black cherries, rose petal, spice, herbs and oak all interacting in harmony. Discreetly concentrated core of black cherry fruit complimented by smoky oak and an earthy presence. The tannins are well balanced and the juicy acidity adds tension. The wine finishes very suave with a cherry-fueled wave of goodness.* **92.**



## **Elouan, St. Helena, California**

A new value-priced Oregon Pinot Noir label from Joe Wagner's (of Caymus Wagner Family) Copper Cane Wines & Provisions, which includes the Meiomi label. Copper Cane Wines & Provisions was founded in 2014 by Joe and Amber Wagner. Grapes are sourced from the Valleys of Willamette, Umpqua and Rogue. Large production, widely distributed. The website is [www.coppercane.com](http://www.coppercane.com).

**2013 Elouan Oregon Pinot Noir** \$24.99. Released July 2014. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Vanilla-soaked cherries lead the way in this mid weight wine which offers additional notes of strawberry and cola. Straightforward, with supple tannins, and some grip on the short finish.* **85.**

## **Evening Land Vineyards, Carlton**

Since its founding in 2005, this winery has undergone a number of changes. In 2014, winemaker Sashi Moorman, sommelier Rajat Parr and Charles Banks of Terroir Selections became minority partners in Evening Land Vineyards and took over operations. Winemaker Ian Burch replaced founding winemaker Isabelle Meunier at the winery in Salem, Oregon. Dominique Lafon continues to play a consulting role. Mark Tarlov, the founder of Evening Land Vineyards, signed a 45-year lease in 2007 of the 100-acre Seven Springs Vineyard and Evening Land Vineyards is the exclusive producer of wine from this vineyard. A new label, Seven Springs Vineyard will appear with the 2014 vintage. The website is [www.elvwines.com](http://www.elvwines.com).

**2012 Evening Land Vineyards Seven Springs Vineyard La Source Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay** 14.0% alc., \$70 (sold out). Sourced from old vine Dijon clone planted in 1995. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous fermentation, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new, and further aged in tank for another 5 months on lees. *Light golden straw color in the glass. Aromas of lemon, mango and nut oil leap from the glass. Refined and restrained flavors of citrus, Asian pear and caramel with a thirst-quenching finish. Very juicy and polished with subtle oak seasoning. I could drink this all night.* **92.**



**2012 Evening Land Vineyards Seven Springs Vineyard Summum Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay** 13.1% alc., \$90 (sold out). Only produced in vintages that bring out the best characteristics of the highest elevation of the vineyard. Sourced from old vine Dijon 76 clone planted in 1995 that sits slightly higher on the hill than the fruit for the La Source Chardonnay. Long, gentle pressing of whole clusters, spontaneous indigenous fermentation, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new with gentle lees stirring, and an additional aging in tank for another 5 months. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Inviting aromas of pear, citrus, melon, flinty reduction and a hint of oak. Slightly creamy on the palate, and very fruity and flirty, with flavors of lemon cake and white stone fruits with a touch of caramelized oak. Impeccable balance and a dry, lengthy finish that vanishes like fine Champagne. One of Oregon's greatest Chardonnays. 94.*

**2012 Evening Land Vineyards Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., \$40. Primarily from Eola Springs Vineyard and new plantings from Seven Springs Vineyard. 100% de-stemmed, 4 to 5-day cold soak in open top oak and concrete fermenters. Aged in once-filled and neutral French oak barrels for 14 months. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Initial aromas of briar, wood shed and pine tar give way to more appealing scents of cherry and sandalwood over time in the glass. Mid weight plus sweet and sappy flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and boysenberry carry over to a slightly astringent finish with some length. An oak thread (anise and cola) runs through the background. I liked this wine more over time in the glass. 89.*

**2012 Evening Land Vineyards Seven Springs Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., \$55. A representation of the entire vineyard including old vine, own-rooted Pommard clone. 100% de-stemmed, natural fermentation after a 4 to 5-day cold soak in open top oak and concrete fermenters. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is propelled by wood-charged purple fruits and a note of spice and pencil lead. Rich and sappy, with a full-bodied attack of ripe blackberry and boysenberry fruits framed by modest, sleek tannins. Oak plays a complimentary role in the background. Most impressive is the follow through on the generous finish. Seems to need for time to come together, like an awkward teenager with great potential reaching for adulthood. 91-92.*



**2012 Evening Land Vineyards Seven Springs Vineyard La Source Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., \$75 (sold out). An expression of both rocky and shallow soils, containing old Pommard vines that are farmed organically and biodynamically. 100% de-stemmed, natural fermentation after a 4 to 5-day cold soak in open top oak and concrete fermenters. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is dark fruited, with hints of oak-driven toast and vanilla. Stunning entry and finish with layers of well-spiced black cherry and blackberry fruits in a full-bodied style. The tannic backbone is well proportioned and the texture is one of refinement. Despite its richness, the wine has good vibrancy. A classy offering that makes a statement and should benefit from another year or two in bottle. 93-94.*



## J. Wrigley Vineyard, McMinnville

J. Wrigley Vineyard is owned and farmed by the Wrigley family who planted their vineyard in 2008. Pinot Noir clones are Pommard, 115 and 777, primarily rooted in volcanic soil. The J. Wrigley label was launched with the 2010 vintage and the first estate Pinot Noir arrived the following year. Production is about 500 cases including Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris and Riesling. I visited last year and was impressed by the wines. Visit [www.wrigleywines.com](http://www.wrigleywines.com).

Thankfully, a decision was made to pick the grapes early, before the impending tropical typhoon that was headed to Oregon in September 2013. This year a "feral yeast" program was begun. The vineyards and winery were inoculated with a yeast cultured from a strain of yeast from Burgundy.

**2013 J. Wrigley Vineyards "MAC" Cuvée McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.57, \$28. Clones 777, 667 and Pommard planted in both sedimentary and volcanic soil. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of fresh cherry tart and raspberry coulis. Good*

depth and length on the palate, featuring red cherry, blueberry and raspberry fruits. More elegant, with less tannin than the Proposal Block bottling, offering juicy acidity and good length on the finish. Ready to rock. **90.**

**2013 J. Wrigley Vineyards Proposal Block McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.57, \$45. Clones 777, 115, “828,” and Pommard. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very floral on the nose with added scents of black cherry and underbrush. Inviting body and polish, with mid weight flavors of juicy cherries and raspberries, framed by dry, slightly grippy tannins typical of the appellation. Bright acidity, and a silken finish that really grabs your attention. This wine is very forward drinking and aims to please.* **92.**



## Mouton Noir Wines, McMinnville

Winemaker André Hueston Mack is a sommelier of some renown. He was awarded the prestigious title of Best Young Sommelier in America, and worked as Head Sommelier at The French Laundry and Per Se. His vineyard sources include Roserock, Zena Crown, Hyland, Elvenglade, Guadalupe and Thistle. His wines have humorous names and the label of the premium Oregon Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$45) is a take off of a French Burgundy label. The O.P.P. Pinot Noir is a value-priced, accessible wine. Visit [www.moutonnoirwines.com](http://www.moutonnoirwines.com) to join the mailing list or buy wines. Check out the cool schwag.

**2013 O.P.P. Other People's Pinot Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.1% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.59, RS 0.63, \$19.99. Released October 20, 2014. 7-day cold soak, additional 18 days of skin contact. Fermented in stainless steel and aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of cherry, raspberry and underbrush, with a touch of honeysuckle showing up over time. Red berry and cherry flavors are featured in a lighter weight wine with subtle notes of oak and dried herbs in the background. The fruit is wrapped in mellow tannins and spirited by tight acidity. A solid daily drinker.* **88.**

## Seufert Winery, Dayton

This is a boutique winery specializing in vineyard-designated Pinot Noir. Owner and winemaker Jim Seufert produces about 2,000 cases annually at a small downtown winery that also serves as a tasting room. The wines are modestly priced considering the quality. Visit [www.seufertwinery.com](http://www.seufertwinery.com).

2011 was deemed “the miracle vintage,” because of low heat units and high rainfall. The resultant wines have delicate complexity and bright acidity. It seems unfair to review these 2011 vintage wines in an issue in which all the wines are from the more ideal 2012 and 2013 vintages.

**2011 Seufert Winery Zenith Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., 245 cases, \$35. Pommard and 777 clones. Vineyard planted in 1999. Multiple soil types. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of red cherry, cranberry and dried herbs are replicated in the flavors of this lighter weight wine that is a bit tart and tannic. A little oak is trying to add interest, but the tannic sinew and sharp acidity overwhelm the delicate fruit. If I was drinking this wine, I would chill it or add ice to temper the tannins.* **86.**

**2011 Seufert Winery Vine Idyl Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 241 cases, \$30. 100% Pommard clone from vines planted in volcanic Jory soil. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Appealing aromas of black cherry and wilted rose with oak in the background. Mid weight core of black cherry and raspberry fruits framed by modest tannins and bracing acidity. Bright and vibrant, with a satisfying fruit load and a citrus-driven finish.* **89.**

**2011 Seufert Winery Horseleap Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 245 cases, \$30. Pommard and 777 clones planted in Willakenzie marine sedimentary soil. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Quite a bit of oak dominates the nose that features aromas of cherry and savory herbs. A pleasing wine on the palate with welcome fullness and roundness, offering a mid weight core of cherry goodness wrapped in modest*



tannins. Less oak is evident in the mouth, and the cherry-driven finish finishes with some length. The acidity is more harmonious in this wine. **89.**

## Stoller Family Estate, Dundee

Founded in 2001, this was Oregon's first LEED Gold certified, solar-powered, gravity-flow winery dedicated to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay production. A second winemaking facility is currently under construction to meet the demand for Stoller Family Estate wines. Bill Stoller bought his family's 373-acre property in Dayton in 1993 and planted the first 10 acres each of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay two years later. Today, Stoller Family Estate is the largest contiguous vineyard in Oregon's Dundee Hills AVA. Winemaker Melissa Burr has been on board since 2003, now producing about 20,000 cases annually. Visit [www.stollerfamilyestate.com](http://www.stollerfamilyestate.com).

**2013 Stoller Family Estate Dundee Hills Pinot Noir** 12.9%, 7,475 cases, \$30, screwcap. A blend of 20 sections of the estate vineyard. Aged in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Darker red and purple fruits along with tastes of herbs and nutty oak are featured in this middleweight, approachable wine that is acid-driven. The modest tannins make for easy drinking, and the finish features tart black cherry and citrus-imbued cranberry fruit flavors.* **88.**

## Van Duzer Vineyards, Dallas

Since winemaker Florent-Pierre "Flo" Merlier came on board as winemaker, the wines have reached the upper echelon in the Willamette Valley. Merlier is a native of Burgundy and a graduate of the University of Dijon. He met his spouse, Krista, an Oregonian, while interning at the same winery in Burgundy and relocated to Oregon in 2009. He has 82 acres of Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris at his disposal and the winery also now sources grapes for singular bottlings and the Alchemy blend. Visit [www.vanduzer.com](http://www.vanduzer.com).



**2014 Van Duzer Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Gris** 13.2% alc., pH 3.15, TA 0.76, 2,001 cases, \$18. Early pick produced a crisp backbone, and later pick created aromatic complexity. Whole cluster pressed, fermentation driven by four different yeast strains. Very slow and cold fermentation in stainless steel tanks followed by aging on the lees. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of yellow peach, lemon and vanilla creme. Flat-out delicious on the palate with terrific balance, this wine offers flavors of lemon-lime, banana and peach, and a rich and juicy finish with uncommon length for this varietal. This is a wine you want on the dinner table.* **93.**



**2014 Van Duzer Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Rosé** 13.1% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.69, 1,960 cases, \$18. Rigorous block selection using vines that were encouraged to produce a higher yield to retain acidity. Early pick of 115 and later pick of Wädenswil clone. After a short skin contact, the berries were gently pressed and inoculated with four different yeasts. Slow and cold fermentation in stainless steel tanks followed by aging on lees. *Gorgeous pinkish orange color in the glass. Highly aromatic, with inviting scents of strawberry, cherry and watermelon. Crisp and sleek on the palate, with vibrant flavors of strawberry and peach, and an energetic, dry finish. One of Oregon's best rosés.* **92.**



**2012 Van Duzer Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.55, 6,376 cases, \$32. 91% Van Duzer Vineyards with small contributions from four other vineyards. Multiple clones including Pommard, 777, 2A, 115, "828," 667, 113 and 114. Each block fermented separately. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very fragrant aromas of black cherry, cardamom spice, smoke and wet earth. Tasty, mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, plum, and Asian 5-spice with a hint of oak in the background. This wine delivers a generous amount of fruit flavor and has the structural bones to last several years.* **90.**

**2012 Van Duzer Dijon Blocks Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.44, 195 cases, \$55. 25% 777, 25% 115, 25% 113, 12.5% 114, and 12.5% 667. Each clone and block fermented separately. 7-10

days of extended maceration. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. A blend of the best of the Estate Dijon clone barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very primary nose upon opening, offering considerable more fruit-driven appeal the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Similarly, the wine is subdued on the palate, but the following day was much more interesting with plenty of sappy purple fruits and an earthy touch. Impressive harmony and finishing length. This wine needs more time in bottle to develop more personality and nuance. 90-92.*

**2012 Van Duzer Homestead Block Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.07% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.52, 142 cases, \$60. Extended skin maceration of 8 days to enhance texture of the mid palate. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of black cherry, dried herbs, spice and balsam. The darker cherry and cranberry fruits wake up the palate on entry with impressive flavor intensity. A pleasing compliment of spice and oak add interest. Gracious harmony, with balanced tannins and a delicious cherry-driven finish. 92.*



**2012 Van Duzer Alchemy Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1%, \$65. The best blocks, lots and barrels blended like alchemy. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is like cherry pie day at baking school, with hi-tone aromas of black cherries, spice and vanilla. The cherry core is succulent on the palate and there is good structural bones, but the wine is soft and comforting and offers good tension. The balance is spot-on, and the wine finishes with an explosion of luscious black cherry fruit. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with more flamboyant aromatic and fruit expression. This wine will quickly give you a Pinot high. 95.*



**2012 Van Duzer Bieze Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.52, 119 cases, \$60. This vineyard is adjacent Seven Springs Vineyard at 600 feet elevation. Jory soils. 100% clone 777. 5 days of extended skin maceration. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 44% new. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Deep Bing cherry aroma with accents of sous-bois and floral bouquet. A very charming wine on the palate with vivid fruit flavors of black raspberry, cherry and plum with a compliment of spice, cola and nutty oak. The wine is very giving, with seamless tannins and a seductive texture that is like touching purple velvet. The entire experience is one of grace and polish. Still great the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94.*



## More

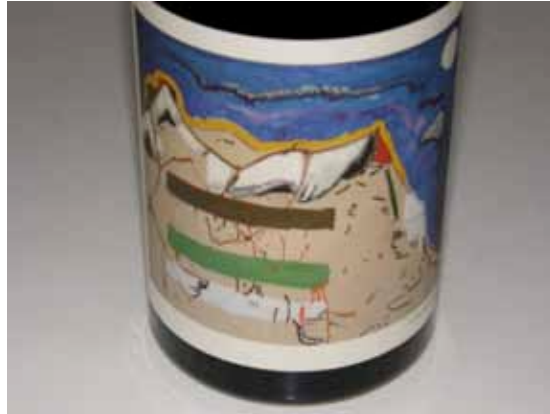
**2013 Underwood Oregon Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., \$10. Produced by Union Wine Co, in Newberg, Oregon. Also available in a 12 oz can. *Light cherry color in the glass. Aromas of red cherries and potpourri hold up nicely over time in the glass. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry, black raspberry and red licorice are framed by notes of oak and black tea, with the oak more prominent than I prefer. The tannins are mellow making the wine light on its feet. No need to contemplate this wine: just serve and chill out. A very good value. 86.*



# LUTUM Wines: Exceptional (Young) Winemaking Talent at Work

LUTUM is a partnership between winemaker Gavin Chanin and entrepreneur Bill Price focusing on single-vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Sonoma and Santa Barbara County. I bring your attention to this young winery because the wines are very, very good.

Gavin Chanin skipped each fall semester while studying at UCLA to train under winemakers Jim Clendenen and Bob Lindquist. He quickly became acquainted with the top vineyards in the Central Coast and launched his own brand, Chanin Wine Company, in 2007, at the age of 23. An art major at UCLA, his paintings grace the labels of Chanin Wine Company wines.



Chanin and Price met at an “In Pursuit of Balance” tasting in San Francisco in 2011, and Price was so impressed with Chanin’s winemaking talent and philosophical focus at such a young age (29), that he asked him to make some Pinot Noir from the Durell Vineyard with the 2011 vintage. Price was so pleased with the results in barrel, in 2012 the two decided to launch a wine brand to highlight Chanin’s restrained touch with Burgundian varieties. The 2,500 case winery is located in Lompoc and released its first wines from the 2012 vintage. The name LUTUM was chosen as it is Latin for “soil, earth.”



Chanin was recently featured in an article at [www.grapecollective.com](http://www.grapecollective.com) titled "Brilliant Chardonnays And Pinots - And the Winemaker Is 29." Read this for more in depth coverage.

Bill Price is proprietor of Classic Wines, LLC, which consists of Price Family Vineyards that includes ownership and management of Durrell Vineyard, Gap's Crown Vineyard and other premium vineyard properties throughout Sonoma County. In addition, Price has invested in numerous California wineries, including Three Sticks, Buccella, Gary Farrell, Head High and Kistler.

The following 2013 releases are very impressive for their focused, balanced winemaking with an emphasis on nuance, subtlety and vineyard expression. Chanin said, "The 2013 vintage was ideal and we were blessed with some of the most physiologically ripe grapes we have ever seen." I urge you to check them out. The wines are available online at [www.lutumwines.com](http://www.lutumwines.com).



**2013 LUTUM Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast**

**Chardonnay** 14.17% alc., 200 cases, \$50. Harvest Brix 23.9°.

Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. The wine was racked, lightly fined and put back into barrel before being bottled unfiltered. *Light golden yellow hue in the glass.*

*This is an exceptional wine that checks all the squares. Uplifting aromas of lemon cake, peach, sea breeze, and chalk dust lead*

*to a flat-out delicious core of lemon, yellow grilled peach and yuzu zest.*

*Impeccable balance with seamless integration of oak and a bright, juicy*

*demeanor. The finish is remarkable for its length, expansive lemon*

*flavor, and cleansing acidity. Goes down like mother's milk. 95.*



**2013 LUTUM Durrell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 13.82% alc., 150 cases, \$50. Harvest Brix 23.9°.

Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. Racked, lightly fined and put back into barrel and

bottled unfiltered. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Complex nose offering scents of lemon*

*bar, melon, apple, fig spread and a hint of oak. Very charming on the palate with flavors of lemon and yellow*

*apple, and a slightly lush and creamy mouth feel. The wine's bracing acidity offers a mouthwatering sensation.*

**91.**

**2013 LUTUM Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 13.42% alc., 650 cases, \$50. From

blocks N and Q. Harvest Brix 23.6°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 15 months in 100% French oak

barrels, 25% new. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. On the nose, dark cherries and*

*spice mix with dried herbs and dried mushrooms. The entry is earthy, with fruit flavors of raspberry and black*

*cherry, and a touch of spice. A charming wine with silky tannins and impeccable balance. 93.*

**2013 LUTUM Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., 300 cases, \$60. Harvest Brix

23.9°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new.

Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish-purple color in the glass. This wine is primarily driven by red fruits with*

*aromas of crushed cherry and strawberry, and flavors of cherry, cranberry and raspberry. There is good*

*vibrancy, balanced tannins and substantial finishing power. Nicely crafted with seamless balance. 92.*

**2013 LUTUM Durrell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.13% alc., 250 cases, \$60. Harvest Brix 24.3°.

100% 667 clone. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new.

Unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is quite shy and primary initially with subtle*

*aromas of cherry and raspberry. Over time in the glass, a pleasing deep cherry aromas emerges. Bright and*

*juicy with flavors of earth-kissed red cherry and cranberry, offering good mid palate richness and a modest*

*explosion of red fruits on the finish. The tannins are modest and oak plays a supportive role in the background.*

**92.**

**2013 LUTUM La Rinconada Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc., 225 cases, \$50.

Harvest Brix 24.6°. 100% de-stemmed, 4-day cold soak, aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels,

33% new. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Alluring aromas of fresh black*

*cherry pie, spice and sweet oak. Gorgeous mid weight plus fruit core featuring lightly spiced black*

*cherry and boysenberry with an earthy tone and a taste of iron. Substantial tannins are folded in with*

*seamless awareness. Very classy juice that is infused with vibrancy, finishing with a juicy cut of acidity.*

*The best wine I have had from this vineyard in recent memory. 94.*



# Recent Sips of California Pinot Noir

## Couloir Wines, Santa Rosa

Owner and winemaker Jon Grant, crafts single-vineyard Pinot Noirs from various California appellations under the Couloir Wines label and value-priced varietal wines highlighting varietal character under the Straight Line Wine label. Couloir refers to a steep mountainside gorge, reflecting Grant's love for ski mountaineering. While managing a wine store at Snowbird Ski Resort in Utah, he began overseeing the wine programs for the resort's six fine-dining rooms. Before starting his own label, he worked at several Napa Valley wineries including Turley Wine Cellars, PlumpJack Winery, Corison Wines and Robert Mondavi Winery. The winery's tasting room is located in historic downtown Tiburon. Check the website at [www.couloirwines.com](http://www.couloirwines.com) for hours.

**2013 Straight Line Marin County Pinot Noir** 13.7% alc., 332 cases, \$32. 40% whole cluster. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A simple but accommodating wine with aromas and flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, spice, savory herbs and toasty oak. Modest in weight and attack with balanced tannins and a short finish. 87.*



**2013 Couloir Chileno Valley Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir** 12.9% alc., 194 cases, \$44. 35% whole cluster. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately deep red color in the glass. The nose really perks up the senses with flamboyant aromas of red cherry and boysenberry. Expansive and layered on the palate, with impressive attack and finish featuring flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and spice. Amazing fruit intensity for Marin County and spectacular phenolic ripeness at a relatively low ABV. A very pleasing wine with balanced tannins and acidity, a silky texture, and an intense finish featuring sweet black cherry and berry flavors with real length. 94.*



**2013 Couloir John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 193 cases, \$52. 35% whole cluster. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Subdued, but pleasant aromas of crushed berries, pomegranate and a whisper of toasty oak. Intense, concentrated, yet vibrant, with flavors of sweet boysenberry, blueberry and pomegranate in a mid weight plus style. The oak is nicely integrated, the modest tannins are supportive, and the juicy finish is fueled by vibrant acidity typical of the Sta. Rita Hills. This vineyard impresses me of late in wines made by several producers. 93.*

**2013 Couloir Monument Tree Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., 166 cases, \$48. 50% whole cluster. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light red color in the glass. Affable aromas of cherry, forest floor and spicy oak. Discreetly concentrated core of black cherry and black raspberry fruits offering very good entry richness leads to a persistent finish featuring plenty of sweet cherry goodness. The tannins are nicely tucked in creating an easy drinking experience. 90.*

**2013 Couloir Campbell Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 240 cases, \$58. 50% whole cluster. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose mixes aromas of fresh cherries with red currants and candied apple. On entry, the wine saturates the palate with flavorful cherry and berry fruits and persists with a vengeance through a glorious finish replete with highly aromatic fruit. Beautifully crafted, with balanced tannins and sheer beauty of flavor. 92.*

## Dutton Estate, Sebastopol

This winery specializes in vineyard-designated Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc from the 1150 acres of the Dutton family's estate vineyards in the Green Valley, Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast appellations. Dutton Ranch, which now farms over eighty unique vineyards, was founded in 1964 by noted Sonoma County viticulturist Warren Dutton. The winery was established in 1995 by Joe and Tracy Dutton



as Sebastopol Vineyards. Sebastopol Vineyards became a label offering a broader representation of appellations. Veteran Mat Gustafson is the winemaker for both Dutton Estate and Sebastopol Vineyards labels. Visit [www.duttonestate.com](http://www.duttonestate.com).

**2013 Dutton Estate Manzana Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.61, 133 cases, \$54. This vineyard is located in the heart of Green Valley and was planted in Goldridge soil to "828" and 115 in 2001. 100% de-stemmed, cold soak, aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed, very ripe fruit liquor including aromas of black raspberries, black plum and cassis. A mix of dark red and black fruits are modestly concentrated but flavorful, and complimented by suave tannins. A finishing burst of fruit is the wine's best attribute.* **90.**

**2013 Dutton Estate Thomas Road Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.59, 124 cases, \$54. Thomas Road Vineyard was planted to clone 115 in 1997 in rocky Sebastopol Goldridge-type soil. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Hi-tone aromas of cherry pie glaze, red berry jam and spicy oak lead to a middleweight array of red fruit flavors enhanced by a hint of baking spices. The wine offers impressive harmony, supple tannins, and an enchanting finish replete with dried cranberry flavor.* **92.**



## E16, Sebastopol

E16 takes its name from 3rd generation winegrower Robert Jones' estate vineyard that is located off El Dorado County Highway E16 in the Sierra Foothills appellation of Fairplay. Today, Robert searches beyond El Dorado County lines to secure select blocks of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for his E16 label. Veteran (30 vintages) winemaker Daniel Moore produces the wines in Sebastopol in a facility geared toward ultra premium Pinot Noir production.

**2013 E16 E16 Selection Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.58, 546 cases, \$38. Primarily a blend of two Russian River Valley vineyards (Trenton Road and Hawks Roost) with 13% from Anderson Valley, Bennett Valley and the Santa Lucia Highlands. Barrels are chosen that impress in youth. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a fragrant mix of cherry, sous-bois mushroom and oak aromas. Quite savory and earthy on the palate, with flavors of black cherry, tea, and cola, and admirable length and intensity on the juicy, cherry-driven finish.* **89.**

**2013 E16 Trenton 1880 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., TA 0.57, 372 cases, \$48. Sourced from Relgnis Family Vineyard owned by Mary and Joseph Relgnis. An homage to the first grapevines planted in old town Trenton. Clone 667. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Highly inviting nose with aromas of cherry-soaked oak and violets. Very tasty black cherry core with accents of crystallized berry, cola and mocha, framed by modest tannins. Soft in the mouth with a good cut of acidity on the finish which packs a little heat.* **91.**



**2013 E16 Upper Bench Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.58, 370 cases, \$38. Sourced from Escolle Vineyard, Pommard clone. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. Unfiltered. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Lovely scent of mashed red cherries, strawberries and sandalwood. Light to mid weight flavors of strawberries, cherries and spice. Very elegant and refined, with fine-grain tannins tucked in and juicy acidity providing vibrancy. Not as brawny as many Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noirs, with more personality. This wine reminds me of wines from Rosella's Vineyard.* **93.**

**2013 E16 Bowland Ranch Bennett Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.58, 295 cases, \$42. Sourced from 3 blocks of Pommard clone picked at different Brix and co-fermented. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels. Unfiltered. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers aromas of wooded forest and oak without any fruit even over a long time in the glass. Mid weight plus flavors of black cherry, black plum and spice with oak in the background. Pleasant but not exceptional with modest length and intensity on the finish. The mouth is soft and appealing. A fair amount of tannin and quite a bit of oak shows up on the finish.* **88.**


**2013 E16 The West End Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.57, 369 cases, \$55. Sourced from a single vineyard at the extreme north end of the Anderson Valley. Clones 667 and Pommard 4. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels. Unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose resonates with aromas of black cherry, darker berries, pine and pencil shavings. The mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry merge into a magical blend. A hint of spice and herbs add interest. The mouth feel is like touching purple velvet. Nicely composed with good balanced t'n'a and a fruity finish.* **91.**

## Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery, Healdsburg

Winemaker Theresa Heredia joined Gary Farrell in early 2012 so the 2013 wines represent the first complete vintage under her watch. Gary Farrell and his successor Susan Reed, who preceded Theresa, maintained a very high standard for this winery, but based on my tasting of these early 2013 releases, I believe Theresa has taken the standard to an even higher level. I admired her winemaking skills at Freestone Vineyards where she worked previously, and these wines reinforced my high regard. Having top notch vineyards at her disposal is a big plus. The 2013 harvest was unusual in that Chardonnay ripeness advanced more quickly than Pinot Noir when the order is usually the opposite. Gary Farrell is open weekdays for tasting. Visit [www.garyfarrellwines.com](http://www.garyfarrellwines.com).

**2013 Gary Farrell Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.72, 357 cases, \$50. The historic block of head-trained and cordon-trained vines planted in 1967 is one of the main components of this wine. Released May 2015. Harvest Brix 22.0°-23.0°. Whole cluster pressed, chilled, settled, inoculated with Montrachet yeast. Aged sur lies 8 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. The scents of citrus oil, apple, blonde caramel, spice, toffee and smoky oak are intriguing. Slightly viscous on the palate, with bright flavors of lemon-lime, pineapple, apple and nutty oak. Easy to cozy up to with thirst-quenching acidity.* **90.**

**2013 Gary Farrell Rochioli Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.65, 568 cases, \$55. Released May 2015. The majority of the grapes come from River Block clone 5 planted in 1989 with the balance from the Mid-40s Block, a field selection planted in 1993, and Allen Block 1, clone 15, planted in 1995. The partnership between Gary Farrell Winery and Rochioli Vineyard began more than 30 years ago. Harvest Brix 22.0°-23.0°. Whole cluster pressed, chilled, settled, inoculated with Montrachet yeast and transferred to 100% French oak barrels, 35% new, where the wine was aged for 8 months. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromatically alive with scents of lemon, honey, and dried mango. Powerful fruit flavors of lemon curd, nectarine and apricot tempered by citrus-fueled acidity that brings the fruit alive. The wine picks up fruit intensity over time in the glass and really imposes its will, demanding respect.* **93.**

 **2013 Gary Farrell Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., pH 3.41, TA 0.65, 507 cases, \$65. Released May 2015. Gary Farrell Winery has sourced fruit from this historic vineyard for more than 20 years and is one of the fortunate few to source some of the Pommard selection from the legendary Q Block, considered the most prestigious Pinot Noir block on this famous site. De-stemmed with a small percentage of whole clusters, 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15 days of extended maceration. Pressed gently off the skins and seeds, inoculated for malolactic fermentation, and racked into French oak barrels, 40% of which were new. Aged 14 months on primary lees, racked once just before bottling. *Light garnet color in the glass. The nose blossoms over time in the glass, offering aromas of cherry, strawberry, herbs, spice and sandalwood. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry and raspberry are accented with hints of oak vanillin. Soft and supple in the mouth with juicy acidity and modest fine-grain tannins. Very easy to like with a generous finish that lasts and lasts. This is a delicate wine that really delivers flavor and persistence. The finish seals the deal for me.* **94.**



### **2013 Gary Farrell Toboni Vineyard Russian River Valley**

**Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.63, 694 cases, \$55. Released May 2015. Toboni Oakwild Ranch is located in the Santa Rosa Plain. Planted in 2001 to 115, 667, 777 and Pommard. Partially de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15-days extended maceration post fermentation, aged 9 months sur lies in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. Racked off

primary lees once just before bottling. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of dark red cherries and berries with many subtle nuances including spice, citrus zest, and wine cave. The nose becomes more generous over time in the glass and it is hard to take your nose away from the glass. The lively fruit flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate are very seductive. The tannins are silky and the remarkably intense and lip-smacking finish resonates for at least a minute. Wines from this vineyard can be meaty and gamey, but this version is more fruity and vibrant. I guarantee you will love this wine which is the best I have ever tasted from this vineyard. 96.*



## **Morgan Winery, Salinas**

Daniel Morgan Lee has played a major role in Santa Lucia Highlands' modern wine history. A University of California at Davis graduate, he and his wife, Donna, launched Morgan Winery in their spare time in 1982 while Lee was making wine at Durney. In 1984, they moved into their own winery in Salinas, and released their first Pinot Noir in 1988. The core of the wine program is the estate Double L Vineyard, a 48.5-acre mix of different clonal selections of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Riesling. Neighbors include Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, Rosella's Vineyard and Garys' Vineyard. A variety of Pinot Noirs are offered including the entry-level Twelve Clones Santa Lucia Highlands appellation blend, and multiple single vineyard wines, all from Santa Lucia Highlands vineyards. The wines are consistently superb, and what one would expect from a veteran winemaker who has worked in the region for over 35 years. Dan told me that the 2013 vintage was slightly early, with focused, low yields, and very "clean" fruit. A tasting room is located in Carmel. The excellent wines are available online at [www.morganwinery.com](http://www.morganwinery.com).

**2013 Morgan Twelve Clones Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.59, 12,713 cases, \$34. Primarily from the estate Double L Vineyard with the balance from some of the best neighboring Santa Lucia Highlands properties. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 44% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting aromas of earth-dusted black cherry and spice. Very soft in the mouth, with vivid flavors of black raspberry, black cherry, black tea, anise and spice. Nicely composed with suave tannins and some length and grip on the satisfying finish. 90.*

**2013 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc.m pH 3.51, TA 0.59, 1,211 cases, \$58. 100% from estate certified organic grapes. A selection of best barrels go into this limited release. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely scent of black cherry with a compliment of oak. Delicious mid weight core of dark red fruits framed by firm but balanced tannins. Very comforting, with a smooth, caressing mouthfeel, and a finish that is uncommonly long and intense and fueled by a refreshing cut of acidity. 93.*



**2013 Morgan Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.62, 118 cases, \$58. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. A smaller release in this vintage as replanting of the vineyard is ongoing. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose draws you into the glass with the scent of a darker fruit basket. Soft and polished on the palate, with impressive length and intensity. Black cherry is the featured fruit with a slight note of spice, oak and citrus in the background. A noticeable acid underbelly provides vibrancy and lift to the intense finish. More acid-driven than usual for Garys' Vineyard. 92.*



## Paul Lato, Santa Maria Valley

Paul Lato crafts small lots of vineyard-designated Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah, and Sauvignon Blanc from premium vineyards in the Central Coast of California. Working out of an unadorned winery in a large warehouse at Central Coast Wine Services in Santa Maria Valley, he started out modestly, shunning investors, and achieved considerable success on his own merits. Paul has a knack for finding the “sweet spot” in vineyards, seeking out the most treasured blocks and rows. He is a passionate winemaker who consistently offers wines of exceptional quality, and not surprisingly, has a large dedicated following that quickly snap up his wines each vintage. You won’t see his wines reviewed in major wine publications.

The 2013 vintage is Paul’s twelfth release and the number of wines produced has increased. Some offerings were as small as two barrels. Increasing production is a challenge for Paul as he continues to uphold his high standards of authenticity. As he says, “It’s a challenge, but the kind I feel honored to have.” Paul said that 2013 was a year of “supreme balance,” with low yields bringing out a real focus to the fruit. He said, “I believe these 2013 wines are the best wines I’ve ever made.” 2013 Pinot Noirs I did not taste include “The Prospect” Sierra Madre Vineyard Pinot Noir, “Seabiscuit” Zotovich Vineyard Pinot Noir, “Belle de jour” Hilliard Bruce Vineyard Chardonnay “Le Souvenir” Sierra Madre Vineyard Chardonnay, “East of Eden” Pisoni Vineyard Chardonnay, and “Kokoro” Santa Barbara County Chardonnay.

There are now three 3-star Michelin restaurants in Tokyo serving Paul Lato wines to complement the three in the US, and restaurants in Germany and Switzerland are also now featuring the wines. Tasting is available by appointment. Visit [www.paullatowines.com](http://www.paullatowines.com).

**2013 Paul Lato “Kokoro” Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., \$90. This wine was originally produced solely for the high-end Japanese market, but is now being offered to the mailing list as a sign of appreciation. The wine is sourced from a number of vineyards in the Paul Lato portfolio. “Kokoro” is a Japanese word that means “from the heart.” 70% new French oak. Unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of black cherry, ash, tobacco and vanilla. Modest in weight, but very flavorful, with tastes of black raspberry, black cherry and boysenberry accented with oak-driven spice and toast. Quite elegant with modest tannins, some finishing power and a touch of warmth at the silky end.* **90.**

**2013 Paul Lato “Suerte” Solomon Hills Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., \$75. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry, earth, mushroom and peat. Mid weight black cherry and blackberry flavors with a hint of spice, black tea, anise and oak. Elegant with supple tannins and good length on the finish. Shows the most oak overlay of any of the 2013 Pinot Noirs tasted. A solid, even exceptional wine, but not my favorite Solomon Hills bottling.*

**2013 Paul Lato “Duende” Gold Coast Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$65. 30-year-old vines. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely perfume of strawberry preserves, cherries, and spice. Light to mid weight charming flavors of ripe strawberries with a compliment of oak. Elegant and silky on the palate, sporting suave tannins and a finishing burst of strawberry goodness. A seductive wine.* **92.**

**2013 Paul Lato “The Contender” Drum Canyon Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$75. Inaugural vintage for this source. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of dark berries and pomegranate juice with a hint of rose petal and pork cracklings. Noticeably intense on the attack but polished on the palate offering mid weight flavors of cherry and raspberry with a hint of oak vanillin in the background. Impressive length and power on a glorious finish that urges another sip.* **93.**



**2013 Paul Lato "Atticus" John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., \$70. Unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine stands out from the crowd. Enticing perfume of black raspberry jam, tobacco oak and nori. Effortless and harmonious, with racy flavors of black raspberry, boysenberry and plum attacking with intent and persisting through a finish that won't quit. The oak is very complimentary, the tannins are balanced, and the acidity is spot on. Stay for the finish. 94.*



**2013 Paul Lato "Lancelot" Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.7% alc., \$85. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas and flavors of cherry, cranberry, raspberry and sandalwood in an unusually elegant and refined style for Pisoni Vineyard. The nose is particularly stunning. Very classy, with suave tannins, impeccable harmony, and a finish to shout about. A very charming wine. Pisoni unplugged. 93.*

## Rivers-Marie, Napa Valley

Winemaker Thomas Rivers Brown is a Napa Valley superstar producer of very high-scoring Cabernet Sauvignon wines from multiple producers who indulges his love of Pinot Noir with single-vineyard bottlings of Sonoma Coast produced under his own Rivers-Marie label. The wines are highly treasured by a cadre of followers who snap up each vintage on the release day each year. Production is less than 1,500 cases so managing allocations is more challenging for Thomas than crafting his coveted wines. If you are not currently on the mailing list, your only source is the secondary market, as there is reportedly several thousand wine lovers on the waiting list. Visit [www.riversmarie.com](http://www.riversmarie.com). The wines are bold and extracted in this vintage (except for the Summa Old Vines), and I would not be in a hurry to pop the corks except on the Sonoma Coast bottling.



**2013 Rivers-Marie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$25. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromatically pleasing with scents of dark fruits, sous-bois and complimentary oak. Rich and sappy flavors of blackberry, cassis and pomegranate with a touch of spice. A generous, juicy wine without subtlety, but with suave tannins, easy approachability and a tenacious finish. 89.*

**2013 Rivers-Marie Gioia Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$50. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, mulch and green garden. More appealing on the palate, with flavors of spicy black cherry, purple berries, plum, dark chocolate and oak with a savory herbal vein in the background. The wine offers a good attack and fruit tenacity in the mouth but lacks some length and intensity on the finish. More polish than the Sonoma Coast bottling and shows a deft touch of oak. Overall, the wine lacks inspiration. It was tasted a day and two days after opening and remained unchanged. 89.*

**2013 Rivers-Marie Occidental Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., \$50. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The best nose in this 2013 lineup of Rivers-Marie Pinot Noirs, sporting effusive aromas of black cherry tart, spice and underbrush. Sweet, sappy flavors of boysenberry, blackberry and pomegranate explode on the palate in this bold and luscious wine. Despite its richness, the wine is slick and refined, with balanced tannins and a very long finish. An angelic fruit bomb. 92.*

**2013 Rivers-Marie Silver Eagle Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$50. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Brooding nose that reluctantly gives up shy aromas of dark stone and berry fruits over time in the glass. Plenty of fruit load, but light on its feet, featuring purple and black fruits with a hint of dark chocolate and cola. Polished tannins and admirable oak integration, finishing with some generosity. When tasted a day later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the aromas were more uplifting and the wine was more open and expressive. 92.*

### **2013 Rivers-Marie Kanzler Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir**

14.3% alc., \$50. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. This is a striking wine that stands out in this vintage. The nose offers bright aromas of blackberry jam, potpourri, violets and smoky oak. Lovely fruit presence in a mid weight plus style that offers impressive harmony. The purple and black berry flavors are complimented by a hint of smoky oak and show expansive power in the mouth and on the finish. 93.*



**2013 Rivers-Marie Summa Old Vines Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.3% alc., \$75. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas and flavors of cherry, cranberry relish, dried herbs, sandalwood and pine sap are quite appealing. A charming wine that fills the mouth with fruit goodness, and recedes very smoothly on the finish which has good grip and length. Not a blockbuster, and not the best Summa Old Vines I have had, but a very suave wine that satisfies. 92.*

## **Reuling Vineyards, Forestville**

Jim and Jackie Reuling own a 14.4-acre Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyard (12.2-acres of Pinot Noir including Calera selection and two different “suitcase” selections from the Vosne-Romanée region of Burgundy) and 2.2 acres of Chardonnay from Montrachet Vineyard in Burgundy) in Forestville in the Sonoma Coast appellation. The vineyard was originally planted in 2003 in conjunction with Peter Michael Winery and used in Peter Michael La Caprice Pinot Noir in 2007 and 2008. After this, Aubert bottled a critically acclaimed Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the vineyard until 2011, when the owners hired Matt Taylor as the winemaker and vineyard manager to produce Reuling Vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The 2011 Pinot Noir debuted in 2013 and the Chardonnay in the spring of 2014. Visit [www.reulingvineyard.com](http://www.reulingvineyard.com).

**2013 Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.0% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.49, 325 cases, \$70. Whole cluster pressed to barrel, native yeast fermentations, barrel fermented. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Delicate aromas of lemon oil, nut oil, brioche, and petrichor. On the palate, the citrus, white peach and honey flavors are vivid, accented with a flattering note of toasty oak. A bright vein of acidity brings a refreshing bent to the overall experience. The wine leaves a lemon butter, saline-imbued finishing sensation that is mouthwatering, and calls for another sip. 93.*

**2013 Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., pH 3.86, TA 0.50, 475 cases, \$70. Harvest Brix 22.7°-23.0°. Reuling “L” clone 60% whole cluster, Calera clone 30% whole cluster, and Reuling “R” clone 30% whole cluster. No cold soak. The 3 clones were fermented in separate tanks. 100% native yeasts. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. A high-class wine that offers appealing aromas of cherries, dried rose petal and spice. Mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, spice and earth are very polished. The fruit fills the mouth with layers of goodness, and persists through a satisfying oak-kissed black cherry finish. Great harmony in this wine that has the structure and balance to age. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 93.*



## **Sojourn Wine Cellars, Sonoma**

Based in the town of Sonoma, Sojourn Cellars is a highly acclaimed winery specializing in Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. Fruit is sourced from vineyards in both Sonoma and Napa counties, where vineyard operations are directed by the Sojourn team. The winemaker is Erich Bradley and associate winemaker is Randy Bennett. A Tasting Salon is located just off the Plaza in downtown Sonoma. Seated tastings are available daily by appointment. Visit [www.sojourncellars.com](http://www.sojourncellars.com).



Later in 2015, Sojourn will be releasing a 2012 Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. The 2013 wines are rich in color and steeped in more flavor concentration than the 2012 vintage wines.

**2013 Sojourn Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.60, 600 cases, \$38. Release in spring 2015. A blend from several vineyards including Sangiacomo Vella and Green Acres ranches, Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard, Durell Vineyard, and Campbell Ranch Vineyard. Each component was fermented separately with native yeast in French oak barrels, 30% new and underwent 100% malolactic fermentation. Regular lees stirring was performed during the first three months of fermentation and aging. After 11 months, the components were blend to create a winemaker's cuvée, and bottled unfined. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon cake, nutty spread and floral bouquet. Some richness of lemon, honey and caramel flavor with a noticeable oak overlay. Slightly creamy, finishing with a subtle saline note.* **89.**

**2013 Sojourn Sangiacomo Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.62, 325 cases, \$45. Release in spring 2015. A combination of Old Wente clone from Sangiacomo Vella Ranch (planted in 1997) and clone 95 from Roberts Road Vineyard (planted in 1998). Whole cluster pressed, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged in French oak barrels, 30% new and bottled unfined. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. A refined and classy wine with aromas of pear, melon and lychee. Crisp flavors of citrus, pear and nutty oak are complimentary. Very clean with good cut and a refreshing finish.* **91.**

**2013 Sojourn Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.56, 1,750 cases, \$39. Release in spring 2015. A blend of eight lots from the Sojourn stall of vineyard sources with Gap's Crown and Sangiacomo vineyards making up the majority of the blend. A mix of clones 115, "828," 667, Pommard and 2A. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very fragrant with vibrant aromas of black cherry, raspberry, cardamom spice and a hint of toast and smoke. Mid weight plus core of earth-kissed flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, cassis, black tea and dark chocolate brownie. Nicely balanced tannins, good vibrancy, and a lengthy finish boasting plenty of spiced plum flavor. A very good AVA wine.* **89.**

**2013 Sojourn Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.60, 1,025 cases, \$59. Release in spring 2015. Gap's Crown is located on Roberts Road just above the Sangiacomo Vineyard. "828," 115, and 667 clones. 10% whole cluster (the "828" was fermented with stems). Native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Subdued aromas of darker fruits, forest floor and spice. Welcome attack of luscious dark red and blue fruits including blueberry and pomegranate. Refined and silky in the mouth with eye-opening intensity and length on the big finish.* **92.**



**2013 Sojourn Sangiacomo Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.58, 1,250 cases, \$54. Vineyard is located on Roberts Road at the base of Sonoma Mountain. Clone 115, 777, and small amounts of Swan selection. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The deep aroma of cherries is accented with scents of wooded forest, bark and potpourri. Redder fruits are featured in this middleweight wine which offers crisp, clean flavors, modest fine-grain tannins and a pleasing cherry-fueled finish kissed by oak.* **92.**

**2013 Sojourn Rodgers Creek Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.57, 700 cases, \$48. Release in spring 2015. From a vineyard located in the Petaluma Gap. Pommard ( a portion of which is fermented whole cluster) and 777 clones. Native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry and raspberry are accented with notes of seasoned oak and stem. Light in weight but flavorful, with a vivid core of cherry fruit framed by an herbal tone. Well-balanced, with a refreshing and intensely flavored cherry-themed finish.* **90.**

**Twomey Wine Cellars, Healdsburg**

Twomey Cellars was started to produce varietals in California beyond Cabernet Sauvignon. The Duncan family used 40 years of winemaking experience to create Merlot, Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc. The Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc are produced at the company's winery on Westside Road in Healdsburg where a tasting room is also located. Daniel Baron was Twomey's founding winemaker and continues as Twomey Director of Winemaking to oversee production. Erin Miller was appointed the new Pinot Noir winemaker in 2014. She formerly had stints at Hartford Family Winery and Evening Land Vineyards. The Twomey tasting room in Healdsburg is architecturally impressive and a wonderfully relaxing spot to taste Pinot. Visit [www.twomeycellars.com](http://www.twomeycellars.com).



**2014 Twomey Sauvignon Blanc** 13.7% alc., \$25, screwcap. Released April 25, 2015. 52% Napa County and 48% Sonoma County. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Highly aromatic with effusive aromas of peach, mango, lemon and a faint grassiness. Intensely flavored with layers of fruits including pineapple, passion fruit, white peach and apricot. Thoroughly satisfying with bright acidity and a razor-sharp, stone fruit-charged finish. An extraordinary wine. 94.*

**2013 Twomey Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., \$50. Released April 25, 2015. Sourced from estate owned and sustainably farmed Monument Tree Vineyard and sustainably farmed Ferrington Vineyard. Aged 12 months sur lies in 100% French oak barrels, 32% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very fragrant initially with aromas of black cherry, black raspberry and smoky oak. Delicious core of strawberry raspberry and cherry fruits framed by mellow tannins. Good vibrancy and tension, with admirable finesse and balance, finishing long with a charge of cherry goodness. 92.*



**2013 Twomey Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., \$50. Released April 25, 2015. Sourced from estate owned and sustainably farmed Last Stop Ranch, estate managed West Pin Vineyard and sustainably farmed Bailey Family Vineyard. Aged 12 months sur lies in 100% French oak barrels, 37% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine has a typical Russian River Valley profile with aromas and flavors of Bing cherries, cola, rhubarb and spice. It is a rather delicate wine that is very smoothly textured and elegant, but is a bit shallow in the mid palate and finish. 89.*

**2013 Twomey Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.7% alc., \$50. Released April 25, 2015. Sourced from sustainably farmed Gap's Crown Vineyard, sustainably farmed Bailey Family Vineyard, and estate owned and sustainably farmed Last Stop Ranch. Aged 13 months sur lies in 100% French oak barrels, 37% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy aromas of berry mash and sous-bois. Intense flavors of boysenberry and black raspberry on entry, expanding to fill the mouth with sweet, sappy fruit. Substantial ripe fruit tannins are supportive and the persistent finish is expansive and intensely fruity. The most penetrating fruit of the three 2013 appellation wines tasted here. 91.*

## More



**2013 Bogle Vineyards California Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.53, \$9.99. Released December 2014. Grapes were sourced from Russian River Valley, Monterey hills, and Clarksburg Delta. Aged 10 months in French and American oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly aromatic, with scents of black cherry, black raspberry, spice, rose and vanilla persisting over time in the glass. Plenty of tasty dark berry and dark stone fruit accented with spice and vanilla from complimentary oak. The broad-shouldered tannins are well matched to the fruit load, making the wine easy to drink. This wine will stand up to substantial, hearty foods. It reminds me of the highly popular Meiomi California Pinot Noir in style and flavor. A crazy value. I challenge you to find a better California Pinot Noir at this price! Widely distributed. 89.*



**2014 Red Car Sonoma Coast Rosé of Pinot Noir** 23.7% alc., \$28. Backbone is from the biodynamically farmed Bybee Vineyard in Sebastopol Hills. Pinot Noir was harvested at 21° Brix, whole cluster pressed off skins immediately, and fermented with wild yeast in a mix of stainless steel and French oak. *Delicate orange color in the glass. An exceptional rosé with a fragrant perfume of strawberries and blood orange juice and flavors of Rainier cherry, strawberry, and yellow peach. Bright, crisp and bone dry, with a lip-smacking finish that begs another sip. Chill, serve, chill. 91.*



**2013 Valerie's Vineyard One Acre Carneros Pinot Noir** 93 cases, \$40 (sold out but available at select retailers). Winemaker Jeff McBride (Benziger Family Winery). Aged 18 months in French oak barrels. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. A very savory wine with aromas of herbs, sous-bois and cigar box. Middleweight flavors of black cherry, blueberry and black raspberry with a riff of grilled mushroom and sweet oak in the background. Very earthy, with satiny tannins and some finishing length. I liked it more over time in the glass. 90.*



# Pinot Briefs

**International Pinot Noir Celebration 2015** The IPNC has announced that over 60 chefs from Oregon and Washington will be participating in this year's IPNC. Visit the IPNC website at [www.ipnc.org](http://www.ipnc.org) for a full list of the culinary talent. Also, the Pre-IPNC Dinners for Thursday, July 23, have been announced. These dinners are offered to all pinotphiles, not just IPNC guests. A complete list of dinners and reservation details is available on the IPNC website. If you haven't obtained tickets for the Full Weekend, do it NOW as a sell out is approaching.



**Check Out Website: Tastemac.com** McMinnville, Oregon, now has 17 urban wineries and tasting rooms, 7 breweries and tap rooms and 34 unique restaurants. Visit [www.tastemac.com](http://www.tastemac.com) for a full listing and plan your wine tour on foot. There are a number of lodging options as well so you can park your car and never drive again during your stay.

**Dirt + Vine = Wine** A new book by Dundee Hills wine, travel and lifestyle writer Kerry McDaniel Boenisch recounts the history of winegrowing in the Dundee Hills of the Willamette Valley where she grew up. It is based on stories from winegrowers about vineyard life in the Worden Hill neighborhood during the 1970s and 1980s, and is a revised and updated edition of her previous book, "Vineyard Memoirs." The book will be released Memorial Day Weekend 2015, and will be available at [www.dirtvinewine.com](http://www.dirtvinewine.com), Amazon, and at Oregon wineries.

**Big Changes at Clos Pepe Vineyards and Estate Wines.** In the past 21 years, the Clos Pepe family has accomplished every goal a vineyard and winery could hope for including being recognized as one of the top Pinot Noir vineyards in the New World, involvement in the development, approval, promotion and defense of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA, scores of 92-95 in every major US wine publication, and highest rated wine tour and tasting in California two years running on both Yelp and Trip Advisor. After the 2014 harvest, owners Steve and Cathy Pepe decided to retire, and partnered with Hall/Walt Wines of Saint Helena, CA. Wes Hagen will be looking for a new winemaking job and life on the Central Coast, while Wine Club Manager, Andrew Turner, will stay until all the remaining wines are sold. Clos Pepe Vineyards has been leased for 15 years by Hall/Walt and Wes Hagen will no longer make the Clos Pepe Estate or Axis Mundi wines. Hall will continue to sell grapes to contracted producers, but the 2014 vintage will be the last for the Pepes and Hagens. The Steve and Cathy Pepe will still live in the home on the property, but will no longer participate in vineyard management or wine production. Current customers of Clos Pepe will not receive unsolicited emails or offers from Walt. Since the announcement this week, Clos Pepe has received over 100 inquiries for wine orders and final tours.

**Fort Ross-Seaview Harvest Festival** This wine and food festival celebrates centuries old Russian heritage and Native American settlement along California North Coast wine country. On Saturday, October 17, the third annual Fort Ross-Seaview Harvest Festival will be hosted by Fort Ross Conservancy and California State Parks. Visitors can explore the restored Fort Compound of the early 19th century Russian settlement and enjoy a locally sourced lunch prepared by some of Sonoma County's best chefs and paired with wines from the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA. There will also be a grand wine tasting of cool climate Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and other varietals from wineries in the AVA including Del Dotto, Flowers, Fort Ross, Martinelli, Pahlmeyer Wayfarer, Siduri, Tin Barn WesMar, Wild Hog and Williams Selyem. For more information, visit the event website at [www.fortross.org](http://www.fortross.org), and [www.fortross.org/about.htm](http://www.fortross.org/about.htm), and [www.fortross-seaview.org](http://www.fortross-seaview.org). There is a variety of accommodations in the area.

**Cinema in the Vineyard** The Madrones and The Philo Collective partner with Mendocino Film Festival for a weekend of food and wine paired with film at Cinema in the Vineyard. The dates are Saturday May 23 and Sunday May 24. 'Occupy the Farm,' 'Finding Gaston,' and 'A Year in Champagne' will screen along with 'Shorts: Festival Favorites.' This year, a farmer's market and wine garden have been added. On Sunday, wineries in Philo will have open houses. The Philo Collective is an esteemed group of wineries located in the heart of Anderson Valley (see below). The Madrones is a Mediterranean compound that is home to four vintners, a rural lifestyle shop, a restaurant (Stone & Embers), several estate guest quarters, a culinary kitchen garden for local produce, serene courtyards and English gardens. Visit The Madrones website for information on seasonal events at [www.themadrones.com](http://www.themadrones.com). For more information on the Tenth Anniversary Mendocino Film Festival, contact Kira Wojack at [marketing@mendocinofilmfestival.org](mailto:marketing@mendocinofilmfestival.org).



**Raptor Ridge Celebrates 20 Year Anniversary** Scott Schull founded Raptor Ridge in 1995 with the goal of producing single vineyard Pinot Noir from some of the best sites in the Willamette Valley. Named for its location on a ridge in the Chehalem Mountains AVA, is home to Tuscowallame, an 18-acre estate vineyard acquired in 2000. The winery also sources from long-term growers such as Shea, Meredith Mitchell, Temperance Hill and Gran Moraine vineyards. A Barrel Select, Estate and single vineyard Pinot Noirs are offered along with Pinot Gris Tempranillo and Grüner Veltliner. A *méthode champenoise* program was launched with the 2011 vintage. Both Scott and Annie Schull are very active in Oregon wine industry organizations. Visit [www.raptorridgewinery.com](http://www.raptorridgewinery.com).

**Pinot Noir Experiencing Price Inflation Like Burgundy** K&L Wine Merchants sells and auctions domestic Pinot Noir. The California retailer is selling the 2012 Peter Michael "Ma Danseuse" Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir, rated 100 points by Robert Parker's Wine Advocate and 98 by James Suckling, is currently for sale on the website for \$449.99 (ouch!). This is the highest retail price I have ever seen for a currently released California Pinot Noir. An auction lot of 2002 and 2004 100 Point Marcassin "Marcassin Vineyard" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir has a starting bid of \$515 on the K&L website. Scores and scarcity drive these crazy prices.