



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 11, Issue 3 May 8, 2017

Chardonnay is to women like duct tape is to men: fixes everything

Surprise Yourself with Oregon Chardonnay

"Oregon Chardonnay often possesses power and finesse that is unique to Oregon, regarded highly and appreciated by those who find it fits their sensibilities."

Brian Marcy, Big Table Farm

Pinot Noir is still Oregon's signature grape, but the many changes taking place with Oregon Chardonnay are now surprising more wine drinkers. With more plantings, focus on site and viticulture, enthusiastic vintners showing interest and commitment to finding out what works best for Chardonnay in Oregon, a renaissance is unfolding.

Over the past fifty years since the initial plantings of Chardonnay in the Willamette Valley by David Lett, some wineries in Oregon have always been successful with Chardonnay, but the resurgence is the result of a number of factors that have improved upon the potential that was always evident. As Jason Lett of The Eyrie Vineyards has noted, "Oregon Chardonnay was always good when it was grown by people who understood Chardonnay."

Until recently, as Oregon emerged as a world-class wine region, there were only a few vintners who took Chardonnay seriously despite the fact that Chardonnay, like Pinot Noir, was well suited to the Region I climate of the Willamette Valley. For several decades, the best sites in the Willamette Valley were planted to Pinot Noir, with Chardonnay ending up in lesser sites because it was considered a commodity wine with considerably less economic return. Erica Landon, a sommelier and partner in Walter Scott Wines, told me, "Some believed in Chardonnay and planted great vineyards early on, but most did not, and most followed trend and money." Vines were not cropped and otherwise farmed appropriately, and over manipulation was common in attempts to emulate the popular California style of Chardonnay.

Today, dramatic changes are ongoing with Chardonnay plantings in Oregon. Erica Landon explained, "You are seeing great sites planted entirely to Chardonnay, with thought going into rootstock, clones and planting techniques. These vineyards are farmed with utmost care. The viticulturists are learning what works best for Chardonnay here and are pushing the standards to a higher level. We are learning how canopy management can have a huge impact on Chardonnay quality, how to pinpoint harvest dates that the pH and acid balance that we are hoping for, and not cutting any corners."

Pinot Gris has traditionally been Oregon's signature white wine and still outnumbers Chardonnay plantings. The 2015 Oregon Vineyard and Winery Census Report reveals a planted acreage of 3,615 for Pinot Gris in Oregon compared to 1,564 for Chardonnay, with the majority of plantings in the Willamette Valley. However, while Pinot Gris plantings and production remain have remained static in recent years, Chardonnay plantings and production are increasing. For most Oregon vintners, Pinot Gris remains a commodity wine, while Chardonnay has become an ultra premium wine.

A signature style of Oregon Chardonnay is now evident. The wines tend to have less "makeup," with limited use of new oak. They are a little riper and richer than examples of Chardonnay from Burgundy, yet stop short of the ripeness, fruitiness and viscosity of many California Chardonnays that are also frequently more oak infused. Oregon's vintage variability also separates the Chardonnays from those of California with the best examples often made in cooler years. Also, Oregon Chardonnay tends to be lower in alcohol, higher in natural acidity, flavors focused on citrus and green apple, show admirable balance, and are unrivaled food wines. Fans of buttery, well oaked Chardonnay might be disappointed.

For the full story on the history and evolution of Oregon Chardonnay, visit www.princeofpinot.com/article/1821/. An indication of the interest in Oregon Chardonnay is the annual Oregon Chardonnay Celebration. Now under the auspices of the International Pinot Noir Celebration, this popular event attracts upward of 300 attendees at the Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg for seminars and tasting. Visit www.oregonchardonnaycelebration.org.

May is Oregon Wine Month and a perfect time to introduce yourself to Oregon Chardonnay!



I reviewed a number of newer releases of Oregon Chardonnay. As you can tell by my accolades and the lofty scores, I am an enthusiast. The wines are from the 2014 and 2015 vintages, both considered “dry” years in the Willamette Valley. However, while in 2014 the growing season was uneventful with harvest occurring under warm, sunny skies, in 2015 the warm and dry growing season was interrupted by rainstorms at the end of August followed by a cool September and early harvest.

I asked Erica Landon of Walter Scott Wines to contrast the 2014 and 2015 vintages for Chardonnay in the Willamette Valley. “2014 was one of the driest vintages on record, essentially ZERO rain for over 90 days. It was warm, but never over 90 degrees. Grapes were picked early enough to have low pH and alcohols, with good acid structure. In 2015, it has hot with numerous days over 90 degrees and even some days close to or over 100 degrees. But the nights were much cooler and we had a bit more rain, balancing out the heat and allowing the grapes to retain better acidity. The 2015 Chardonnays are similar in character and ABV, but have lower pH and better polish and tension.”

Evening Land, Salem, Oregon

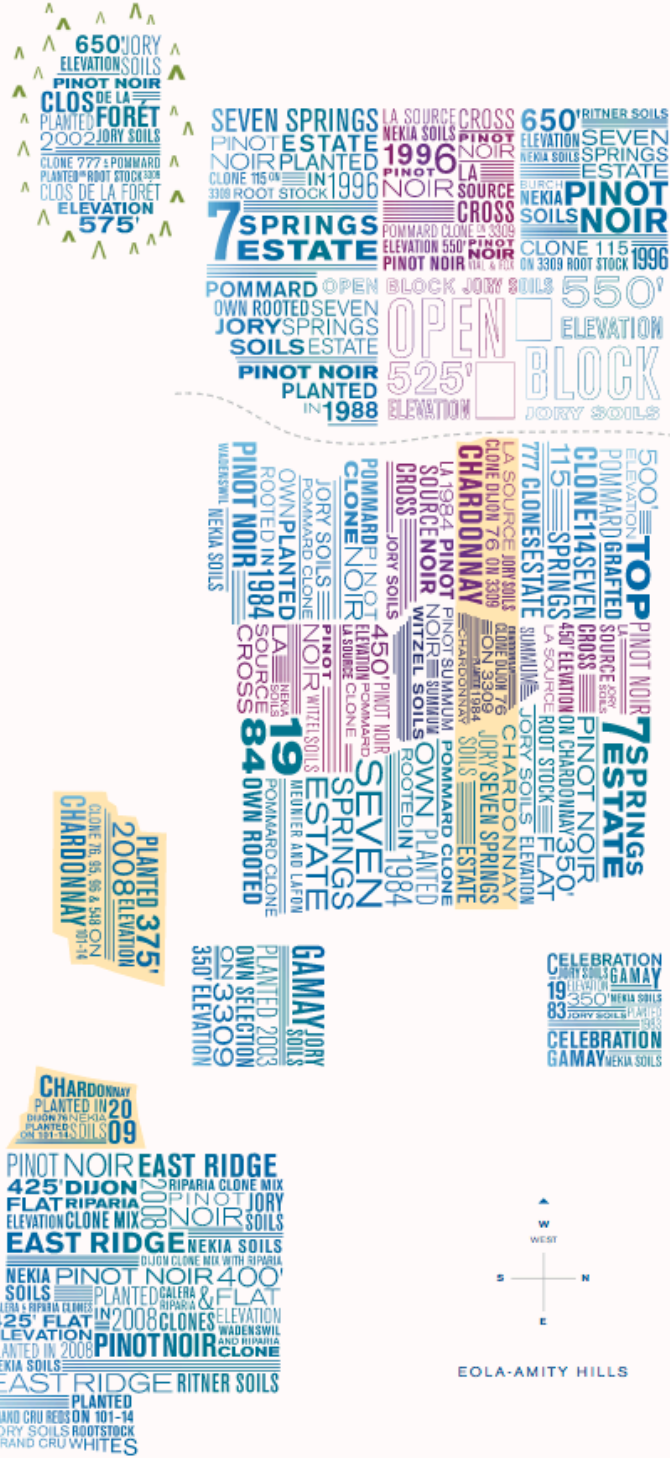


EVENING LAND

Evening Land Vineyards has a complicated history beginning in 2005. See the entry under Evening Land in the Winery Directory of the *PinotFile* for full historical details. At one time, Evening Land owned a total of 120 acres of organically farmed vineyards producing 13 estate wines and with wineries in Lompoc, California, Carlton, Oregon and Beaune, France. With the 2014 vintage, Evening Land became the name of the winery, producing exclusively Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the Seven Springs Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills AVA of Oregon. The 2014 vintage was the 30th anniversary vintage from Seven Springs Vineyard and also marks the first vintage with Rajat Parr and Sasha Moorman as the sole stewards of the vineyard. The Chardonnays are among the highest priced for Oregon, but have set a benchmark for that state. Visit www.eveninglandvineyards.com.

A map of the Seven Springs Vineyard with historical plantings:

SEVEN SPRINGS VINEYARD



CELEBRATION
GAMAY
1963
350'
NEKIA SOILS
83'
JORY SOILS
CELEBRATION
GAMAY



EOLA-AMITY HILLS

The Seven Springs Vineyard Pinot Noirs are reviewed in this issue elsewhere. All Seven Springs wines are grown, produced and bottled by Evening Land.

2014 Seven Springs Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Chardonnay 13.1% alc., \$45. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The wine leads with aromas of lemon butter, vanilla and slate. Clean and crisp on the palate, with flavors of lemon-lime, grapefruit, white peach and vanilla creme with added accents of butter and oak. Forward and giving, with a lengthy, mouthwatering, citrus-driven finish. Still perfectly fine when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*



23014 Seven Springs Estate La Source Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Chardonnay 13.2% alc., 315 cases, \$75. Sourced from old-vine Dijon clones in the lower half of the vineyard. Gently pressed into French oak barrels for spontaneous and indigenous fermentation. Raised on the lees in Damy cooperage, 75% new, for 10 months before being racked to tank. After a light fining, the wine was bottled without filtering. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. A reductive style with aromas of citrus fruits, flint and a peek of oak. Slightly creamy on the palate with flavors of lemon, white stone fruits and mineral-inflected, juicy acidity. More fruit sap, body and finish than the Eola-Hills bottling, with a seductive texture. When tasted the following day, the reductive character had largely resolved and the wine showed a range of appealing citrus flavors.* **94.**



2014 Seven Springs Estate Summum Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Chardonnay 12.9% alc., 441 cases, \$100. Sourced from just 14 rows threading the spine of the vineyard. The wine was fermented and aged in 100% new Stockinger punchones, undergoing spontaneous and indigenous fermentation. The wine was raised in puncheon for 10 months and finished in tank before bottling. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. I try to defer the use of the vague word “minerality,” but that was what came to mind when I tasted this wine. I was infatuated with the nose that offered aromas of citrus, pear, flint and toast. Slightly creamy in the mouth offering significant mid palate presence and finish, strutting flavors of lemon-lime, pear, hints of tropical fruits and a slight butter note. The soprano finish delivers grapefruit and lemon-lime goodness and tartar-chasing acidity. A bit of flinty reduction remained when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine offers both vivacious acidity and richness of flavor.* **94.**

Knudsen Vineyards, Dundee, Oregon

The Knudsen family played a very important role in Oregon's Chardonnay renaissance. Cal Knudsen first planted Knudsen Vineyards in the early 1970s making it one of Oregon's landmark vineyards. In 1990, Knudsen Vineyard was the first in Oregon to plant Dijon clones of Chardonnay. Today, the vineyard is 228 acres, of which 130 acres are producing (73% Pinot Noir, 24% Chardonnay and 3% Pinot Meunier). The vineyard is Low Input Viticulture and Enology (LIVE) and Salmon Safe certified. The winery is still directed by Knudsen family members (Page Knudsen Cowles and two of her three brothers), who reside in different cities across the country, but come together several times a year for blending and tasting sessions. The winemaker is Nate Klosterman of Argyle Vineyards. The wines are sold through a mailing list and on the website at www.knudsenvineyards.com.



Recently I was able to taste the 2014 and 2015 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Chardonnays side-by-side. I have previously reviewed the wines very favorably upon release, but found that I preferred the 2015 vintage. The additional new oak and aging in oak added more structure, body and appeal for me. Both wines actually improved when tasted over a 2-day period after opening and you might consider decanting when you open a bottle. Both wines are stunning examples of the potential for Oregon Chardonnay



2014 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.27, TA 0.63, 275 cases, \$45, screwcap. A blend of Dijon 76 and 95 planted in Jory soil in 1995. Aged 6 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon, white orchard fruits, buttery brioche and cold steel. Clean and refreshing on the palate, with flavors of apple, Asian pear, lemon-lime and a hint of vanilla, with a sleek mouthfeel, impeccable balance, and an uplifting finish. Still charming when tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94.*



2015 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay 14.0% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.71, 320 cases, \$45, screwcap. Harvest Brix 22.6. Dijon clones 95 and 76 planted in 1995 in Jory soils. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 27% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Slightly riper fruited with more body than the 2014 vintage version. Nicely perfumed with aromas of lemon curd, cut apple, nectarine, and buttery brioche. Highly satisfying on the palate with flavors of citrus, pear, ripe apple, spice and vanilla, and a zing of lemon-lime on the juicy, prolonged finish. Slightly creamy in texture and polished, combining the most desirable traits of Chardonnay. Still stunning when tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 96.*



Walter Scott Wine, Salem, Oregon

Walter Scott was started in 2008 by partners Ken Pahlow and Erica Landon after they spent years living, studying and working within the Oregon wine industry. Ken spent 18 years crafting wine alongside some of Oregon's top winemakers, learning both production and marketing. Erica is both an Advanced Sommelier and wine educator, focusing much of her passion on the Willamette Valley. The name, "Walter Scott," honors two men who meant the world to Ken. Walter, Ken's grandfather, was a flight engineer for TWA and taught Ken there were no limits to what you can accomplish if you set your mind to it. Scott was Ken's nephew, a fearless sort whose time was cut short, teaching Ken that if you have ambitions you must act on them as life is very short.

In 2012, Sue and Andy Steinman (annual attendees of IPNC) joined the winery, helping the business realize goals and grow production to 3,000 cases. The winery specializes in Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc from exceptional vineyards sourced primarily from the Eola-Amity Hills AVA of the Willamette Valley. The winery is a proud member of the Deep Roots Coalition. The wines are in high demand and sell out quickly after release. The reviewed wines (and Pinot Noirs reviewed elsewhere in this issue) were bottled in mid-December 2016 and are still young. Visit the website at www.walterscottwines.com.



The word that came to mind when I tasted the 2015 Walter Scott Chardonnays was precise. The wines were very focused and impeccably crafted in a precision manner.



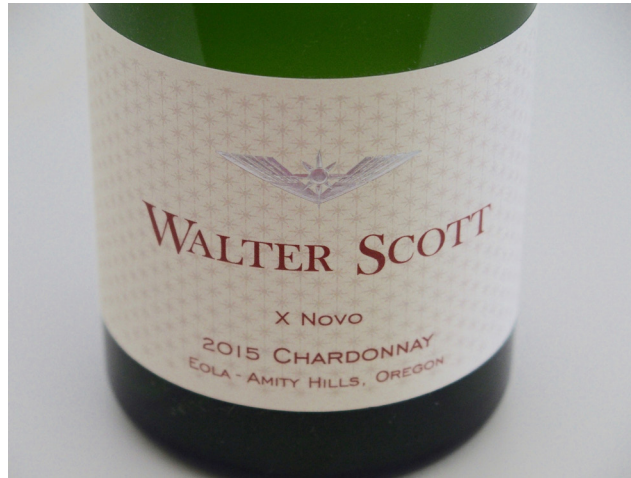
2015 Walter Scott Freedom Hill Willamette Valley Oregon Chardonnay 13.2% alc., 150 cases, \$50. Vineyard farmed by the Dusschee family. The wine was fermented and aged in a new puncheon and four neutral barrels for 11 months with 100% native yeast fermentation and minimal lees stirring. The wine was blended and finished in stainless steel for an additional 3 months. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. A highly distinctive wine offering appealing aromas of pear, cut apple, spice, buttery brioche, nuts and a touch of vanillin. Bright, clean and crisp with bracing, steely acidity, offering flavors of Honeycrisp apple, subtle citrus fruits and complimentary oak notes. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the lovely apple aromas and flavors were even more inviting, the acidity had moderated and integrated. A unique, apple-fruited joy. 94.*



2015 Walter Scott Cuvée Anne Willamette Valley Oregon Chardonnay 13.2% alc., 490 cases, \$40. A blend from the winery's best Chardonnay sites, including Freedom Hill, X Novo and Gibson vineyards. The wine is a reserve blend that represents the winery's vision of Oregon Chardonnay. The juice was fermented and aged in a new puncheon and four neutral barrels for 11 months with 100% native yeast fermentation and minimal lees stirring. The wine was blended and finished in stainless steel for an additional 3 months. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Captivating steely, stony, flinty aromas matched to fruit aromas of citrus, white peach and pear. Highly mineral-driven, with flavors of lemon-lime, pear and green apple offering a toned and trim impression, finishing with a quenching, steely attitude. A slight bit of tannin adds structure and the slightly creamy mouthfeel adds comfort. Remarkable poise and immense charm. 95.*



2015 Walter Scott X Nevo Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Chardonnay 13.5% alc., 200 cases, \$50. Vineyard planted by Craig and Robin Williams of California Cabernet fame. Sourced from a block that is planted to fifteen different clones of Chardonnay making it one of the most unique sites on the West Coast. The wine was fermented and aged in a new puncheon, a second fill puncheon, and a few neutral barrels for 11 months with 100% native yeast fermentation and minimal lees stirring. The wine was blended and finished in stainless steel for an additional 3 months. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of slate, steel, oak and lemon oil lead off. Good richness of citrus and creme caramel flavors with a subtle flinty note, showing admirable harmony, a slightly viscous texture, and a juicy, lemon-driven finish. Still gloriously fresh when the tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, with all reductive notes resolved. A high-collared, seductive wine that defies adequate descriptors. 96.*



VIDON Vineyard, Newberg, Oregon

VIDON (Vee-dohn) is a boutique winery and petite vineyard founded by Vicki and Don Hagge. The property was acquired in 1999 and planting of the first Pinot Noir began in 2000. The owners make the wine and sell it all on their property outside Newberg in the Chehalem Mountains. Of a total production of between 2,000 and 2,500 cases, a small amount of Chardonnay is produced. Very little stainless is employed, but food-grade polyethylene oxygen-permeable tanks are sometimes used for aging. Argon is used to displace oxygen, SO₂ use is low, and no enzymes or additives are part of vinification. Glass closures are preferred. Oh, by the way, Don used to be an aerospace scientist and he says, "You don't have to be a rocket scientist to make good wine, but it doesn't hurt if you are." Visit www.vidonvineyard.com for extensive information about this unique winery.



2015 VIDON Vineyard Estate Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Chardonnay 12.9% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.60, RS 0.02%, \$35, screwcap. Dijon clones 76 and 95 from a 1.25-acre block with a vine density of 1,244 per acre. Indigenous fermentation in a steel tank. The wine underwent malolactic fermentation and aging in French oak barrels and flex tanks. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon oil, pear, apple, wild flower, old book and vanilla lead to a straight-forward style that offers flavors of lemon, apple and melon with good integration of oak. Food friendly and a good value. 88.*

2015 VIDON Vineyard Estate Apollo Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Chardonnay 12.9% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.60, RS 0.02%, 25 cases, \$60, glass closure. Winemaker Don Hagge was a member of the Apollo team that landed the Apollo 11 spacecraft on the moon 7/20/69. This wine represents the winemaker's favorite barrel. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Shy aromas of lemon curd, white stone fruits and petrichor. Very appealing on the palate, with subtle flavors of citrus, and pear backed by well-integrated acidity. Discreetly rich in texture with a juicy and refreshing finish. 92.*



More Chardonnay

2015 Big Table Farm Willamette Valley Oregon Chardonnay 13.3% alc., 950 cases, \$45. Released March 6, 2017. Poured at the 2017 Oregon Chardonnay Celebration. Sourced from six vineyards, barrel fermented with indigenous yeast and aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. Bottled after 11 months of aging without fining or filtration. Label is one of Clare's honey bees humping a thistle. *Light golden yellow color with slight haze in the glass. Highly aromatic, with profuse scents of lemon curd, pear, butter, oak and cold steel. Engaging on the palate, with flavors of lemon, honey, nectarine and melon, finishing with a dry, tangy lemon-lime note. Enduring focus and tension. The bee's knees. 92.*

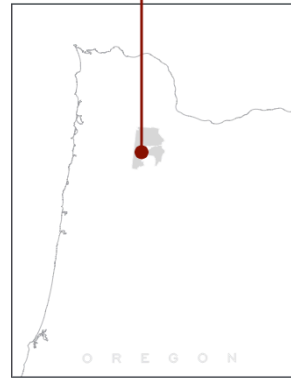


2014 Gran Moraine Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.0% alc., pH 3.23, TA 0.63, \$45, Diam. Vineyard planted in 2005 to several different Dijon clones. One of the more westerly vineyards in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA and thus subject to cooling afternoon breezes that roll off the Pacific. Gently whole cluster pressed, natural fermentation over 16 months with monthly stirring of the lees. After 16 months in barrel (7.5% new), the wine was fully racked to a stainless steel tank and left to mature outside in the cold Northwest winter. The extended aging provided natural cold stability to the wine. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The aromas of Meyer lemon, honey, pear, white peach and buttery brioche soar from the glass. Crisp and bright in the mouth, with effusive flavors of citrus, apple, apricot and spice with a flinty compliment. A stunning wine with inviting balance and a mouthwatering finish. Still enduring when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. I also tasted this wine at a restaurant in San Francisco with the same impression and found it to be a perfect food wine. 98.*

• GRAN MORAINÉ •



Yamhill-Carlton, OR



Willakenzie silty clay loams, well drained sedimentary soil formed by marine uplift.



2015 Maryhill Columbia Valley Washington Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.613, RS 0.1%, 4,941 cases, \$16. From a family-owned and operated winery and amphitheater perched on a bluff high above the Columbia River near Goldendale, Washington (90 minutes east of Portland, OR) at the southern tip of the Columbia Valley AVA. 80% Milbrandt Vineyards and 20% Tudor Hills Vineyard. Grapes whole cluster pressed on a Champagne cycle for gentleness. Juice partly fermented in stainless steel tanks with 20% French oak staves. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of lemon curd, pear and persimmon, Very pleasurable in the mouth with a creamy texture and generous flavors of lemon, white nectarine and pear. Easy going, with a juicy finish. An astonishing value. 90.*

2015 Youngberg Hill Aspen Block Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.4% alc., pH 3.12, TA 0.66, RS 0, 190 cases, \$40, screwcap. Uplifted Marine sedimentary soils (Willakenzie). Clones 75, 76, 95 and 548. 10-year-old vines. Aged 6 months in once-used French oak barrels including fermentation. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Shy aromas of apple, custard, citrus fruits and vanilla. A gentle style that is smooth on the palate, offering fruit flavors of citrus, apple and melon integrated nicely with uplifting acidity. 90.*

Sips of Recently Tasted Oregon Pinot Noir

Big Table Farm, Gaston, Oregon

2015 Big Table Farm Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 2,393 cases, \$42. Released March 6, 2017. Label depicts Big Table Farm pigs Kirby and Pickle. A blend of all 8 vineyards that the winery works with and a representation of the northern Willamette Valley. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with fresh aromas of cherry, berry and spice. Mid weight and very approachable in style, with flavors of cherry, spice, espresso, and smoky toast. Silky tannins make for easy drinking, and attractive dark red and purple berry flavors infuse the finish. A solid offering that will please at the table, although I found oak hogging a little too much attention. 89.*

2015 Big Table Farm Pelos Sandberg Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.3% alc. 402 cases, \$48. Released March 6, 2017. A maturing vineyard that offers wines of increasing complexity and depth. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Very welcoming aromas of cherry, cranberry, cardamon, bark and musk. Discreetly concentrated flavors of black cherry, truffle, game and smoke. Noticeably silky in the mouth, with secluded tannins, fresh natural acidity and a finish of redeeming excellence. A wine of impressive balance that is of exceptional quality. 93.*

Coeur de Terre Vineyard, McMinnville, Oregon

The McMinnville AVA is known for intensely fruity wines with well-structured tannins and earthy overtones. The wines of Coeur de Terre are true to this character with earth and shiitake notes pervasive in the Pinot Noirs. The 2014 vintage is notable because the fruit is perfectly ripened and owner and winemaker Scott Neal has embossed these Pinot Noirs with dreamy textures while taming the fruit tannins. These are the best wines Scott has crafted since I have been tasting each vintage. Visit the website at www.cdtvineyard.com.



2014 Coeur de Terre Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., TA 0.61, RS 0 g/L, 2,509 cases, \$22, screwcap. Harvest Brix 24.4°. 60% of fruit is from the Coeur de Terre Estate Vineyard using a selection from all blocks. Clones include Pommard, 2A, 113, 114, 115, 667, 777 and Coury. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Bright aromas of fresh cherry and raspberry, spice and sandalwood. Lighter weighted, with flavors that echo the aromas. Nice balance and fortitude with a sweet cherry kiss at the end. 89.*



2014 Coeur de Terre Héritage Reserve Estate McMinnville Oregon Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.69, 727 cases, \$36. Harvest Brix 24.5°. A barrel selection from the entire Estate Vineyard meant to represent the whole of the vineyard and the spirit of the vintage from the estate. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of plum, boysenberry and seasoned oak. Silky in the mouth, with noticeable vibrancy, offering juicy flavors of purple berries and caramelized oak. Quite seamless, with discreet sappy resolve, finishing with good verve. 90.*

2014 Coeur de Terre Sarah Jane's Block Reserve Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.56, RS 0 g/L, 46 cases, \$65. Harvest Brix 24.4°. Soils are Willakenzie in this block and there is a mixture of six different clones of Pinot Noir. This block was planted in 2000 and farmed organically since its inception. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, spice, game, mulch, cedary oak and walnut oil. Robust and concentrated yet soft and polished, with mid weight plus flavors of blackberry and blueberry-pomegranate. Earthy, with a bit of savory herbs adding character. The most tannic wine in the 2014 lineup, but not unwieldy. The creamy mouthfeel makes an impression. 92.*

2014 Coeur de Terre Abby's Block Reserve Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 60 cases, \$65. Harvest Brix 24.3°. This block is located mid slope in the Estate Vineyard at 400 to 450 feet elevation. The soils is a unique sedimentary based type. Organically farmed from inception. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Leading the way are attractive aromas of cherry, turned earth, mulch and dark chocolate. Very charming*

in the mouth with a suave texture and an elegant disposition. Giving flavors of dark red berries and blueberries, finishing with good intensity and a slight bit of astringency. 92.

2014 Coeur de Terre Tallulah's Run Reserve Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.57, RS 0 g/L, 67 cases, \$65. Comprised of two contiguous blocks, one planted to 667 and 777 and the other to 115. Planted in 2004 to 1778 vines per acre. Organically farmed since its inception. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. An earthy nose adds an assortment of black fruit aromas with noticeable oak. Silky, sexy and smooth in the mouth with a mid weight charge of purple and black fruits backed up with an iron-driven minerality. Nicely composed, with mellow fine-grain tannins. 91.*

2014 Coeur de Terre Renelle's Block Reserve Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.59, RS 0 g/L, 82 cases, \$65. Harvest Brix 24.4°. This is the original block planted at Coeur de Terre in 1999 and has been farmed organically since its inception. It is the mother block supplying cuttings for all the other blocks in the Estate Vineyard. Due south exposure with sedimentary soils that have a high clay component on the south side, to a more sandy composition on the upper end. Yield 2.6 tons per acre. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Oak dominated nose and palate upon opening, but the oak infusion dissipates soon in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, peppery spice and vanilla lid to a mid weighted wine that is soft in the mouth with firm but balanced tannins. Complex and interesting, with flavors of black cherry, blackberry, mushroom, earth and a brush of spice. A lot going on in this wine that comes together beautifully and exudes charm over time in the glass. 93.*



Evening Land, Salem, Oregon

Magnum formats are available for the wines reviewed here (and the Seven Springs Chardonnays reviewed in this issue). A 30th anniversary Commemorative Wooden Box 6-pack of the 2014 vintage bottlings of Seven Springs Estate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay is available for \$500, and a Reserve Case containing 2 bottles each of 2014 Anden Pinot Noir and 2014 La Source Pinot Noir, 3 bottles of 2014 La Source Chardonnay and 5 bottles of 2014 La Source Pinot Noir for \$1,000. Visit www.eveninglandvineyards.com. The Evening Land Seven Spring Vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are among the most-heralded world-class wines now being offered from the 2014 vintage in Oregon.



2014 Seven Springs Estate Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 2,078 cases, \$45. Produced from own-rooted Pommard and Wädenswil vines planted in 1984. 75% of fruit de-stemmed. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Embraceable aromas of black cherry, cardamom spice, toast and burnt tobacco. Mid weight flavors of black cherry with an earthy riff in a very engaging style. There is noticeable smoky oak overlay but it is not excessive. The tannins are silky, and the tart cherry finish has good persistence and cut. 93.*



2014 Seven Springs Estate La Source Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 1,611 cases, \$75. Since 2012, this wine has always been a selection of the very best barrels in the cellar. For this vintage, rather than hew to tradition, Sashi Moorman and Rajat Parr tasted through all individual blocks of Seven Springs Vineyard. The uppermost blocks planted to Dijon clones set themselves apart from the older vines downslope. The upper vines are in rockier soils and exposed to windier conditions making them stressed. Adjacent to the top block is a small vineyard called Clos de La Fôret that is encircled by a dense grove of Douglas Fir (see photo below). This block performs beautifully in a warm vintage like 2014. This wine was aged in French oak barrels, 30% new, and bottled without fining or filtration. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of cherry, pomegranate, rose petal, exotic spices and sweet pipe smoke. Delicious attack of cherry fruit with added notes of spice and rose water. Luscious, yet balletic, with refined tannins, complimentary oak, and an aromatic finish featuring cherry and strawberry at its best. This wine is a perfect example of why people get so excited about Pinot Noir. It simply grabs your heart. Still superb when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 96.*





2014 Seven Springs Estate Anden Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$Only sold as part of a 30th anniversary case of 2014 Evening Land wines. The lower half of Seven Springs Vineyard is home to the original 1984 plantings of Pommard and Wädenswil clones of Pinot Noir planted on their own roots. This wine celebrates the history of Seven Springs focusing on vines that are slowly succumbing to the ravages of phylloxera. The smallest and most beautiful clusters are harvested and fermented on the stems. 100% whole cluster. The wine was raised in 100% new Ermitage barrels and bottled without filtration. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Very shy nose initially, even reductive, picking up appealing aromas of cherry, spice and toasty oak over time. Very fulfilling in the mouth, with a whole cluster fermented demeanor, offering flavors of dark cherry, spice and burnt tobacco. There is also a savory underpinning that is intriguing. Very subtle oak support, integrated tannins and a juicy finish. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating this wine will benefit from more time in the cellar.* **94-95.**

Ghost Hill Cellars, Carlton, Oregon

The wines reviewed here were estate grown and produced and bottled by Ponzi Wines in Sherwood, Oregon.

2014 Ghost Hill Cellars Bayliss-Bower Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.39, 520 cases, \$42. Released May 1, 2017. A blend of 45% Pommard, 20% Dijon 777, 20% Dijon 114 and 15% Wädenswil. Aged in French oak barrels, 10% new. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Highly fragrant aromas of red cherry, red cherry hard candy, honeysuckle, earthy flora and sweet oak. Light to mid weight in style, with delicate, but flavorful tastes of red cherry, raspberry and spice. A genteel wine with admirable balance and a lip-smacking finish.* **90.**

2014 Ghost Hill Cellars Bayliss-Bower Vineyard Prospector's Reserve Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.42, \$55. Released May 1, 2017. A blend of six barrels that created a more masculine and intense reflection of the site and vintage. Wädenswil, Pommard, 777 and 114 clones from the oldest part of the vineyard. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Conspicuous aromas of cherry and forest floor lead to a mouthful of black cherry, blueberry and plum flavors that linger in the mouth and on the finish. Fine-grain tannins back up the fruit that is deftly touched by oak. A polished wine with gratifying balance that will benefit from a little more time in bottle to ameliorate the tannins.* **93.**



Gran Moraine, Yamhill, Oregon

This winery takes its name from the cataclysmic floods that occurred in the northern Willamette Valley of Oregon during the last ice age. The Missoula floods traveled across the Columbia basin carving out the Columbia Gorge. The Willamette Valley became a large temporary lake left with huge deposits of silt and giant boulders (erratic rocks). The erratic rock outcroppings manifest themselves throughout the vineyard. They were once part of the giant dam's moraine - thus the name "Gran Moraine."

Planting of the vineyard was completed in 2005 with multiple Dijon clones of Pinot Noir including 667, 777, 115, and 114, and Pommard and Chardonnay (clones 76 and 95). The vineyard director is well known viticulturist Ken Kupperman. The winemaker is Shane Moore, an experienced winemaker who has spent stints in wineries in Canada, Western Australia, Israel's Golan Heights and California. He moved to the Willamette Valley in 2013 to build the winemaking program for the newly-established Gran Moraine winery and became the Winemaker at Gran Moraine in 2016. Tasting is available daily at 17090 NE Woodland Loop Road in Yamhill. Visit www.granmoraine.com.

2014 Gran Moraine La Première Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.64, 85 cases, \$85. La Première is French for "the first." Limited production. 100% Gran Moraine Vineyard. Depending on vintage, block and clone, grapes undergo a 3 to 10-day cold soak. Matured in 100% French oak barrels. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of dark berries, vanilla, spice and sweet oak blend together. Mid weight assortment of black fruit flavors are accented with notes of oak-driven smoke, tar and anise. Agreeable tannins and balanced acidity, with some length on the finish. A very good wine, but I wish it had slightly less oak influence. 91.*



2014 Gran Moraine Estate Reserve Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$65. The Estate Reserve Vineyard surrounds the Gran Moraine Vineyard and consists of 35 acres planted in 2007 to a variety of Dijon and heritage clones. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The aromas of fresh dark fruits rise up over time in the glass. The onslaught of delicious black raspberry, blackberry and black cherry flavors are luscious and seductive. Big by Oregon standards, with great depth of fruit, but still charming along with a soothing texture. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose had taken on plenty of spice and floral aromas (my notes say "terrific") and the wine had assumed a harmonious demeanor. I would cellar this wine for a couple of years to achieve full enjoyment. Still a good frier*



Kramer Vineyards, Gaston, Oregon

2014 Kramer Vineyards Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.67, 200 cases, \$22. A blend of grapes from Stormy Morning Vineyard and Kramer Estate Vineyard. Harvest Brix 22.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 4-day cold soak, aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *A lighter style wine with aromas and flavors of black cherry, cranberry, raspberry, exotic spice and white pepper. Noticeable oak overlay with sprightly acidity leading to a tart finish of some persistence. 87.*

2014 Kramer Vineyards Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 125 cases, \$34. A blend of grapes from the Estate Vineyard and Yamhill vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, 4 to 5-day cold soak, aged for 16 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely appointed nose with aromas of dark red and purple berries, dark chocolate and clove. Richly extracted, with earthy flavors of boysenberry, blackberry, and black tea infused with juicy acidity and backed by sinewy tannins. 88.*



2014 Kramer Vineyards Estate Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.67, 375 cases, \$28. A blend of clones from several blocks of the Estate Vineyard, including own-rooted and grafted vines planted between 1985 and 1995 and consisting of Wädenswil, Pommard and Gamay Beaujolais clones. Harvest Brix 21.4°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of earth, oak and balsam dominate upon opening. Plenty of like able fruit on the palate including flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate. Well-composed with a savory thread adding interest.*

When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, more dark fruit showed up on the nose and the finish offered more aromatic persistence. Decant if you must drink now. 92.

2014 Kramer Vineyards Cardiac Hill Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 125 cases, pH 3.55, TA 0.59, 125 cases, \$45. Sourced from the steepest hillside of vines in the Estate Vineyard. A high clay content in the soil stresses the vines leading to low yields. Pommard and Dijon 115 clones. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The aromas of earth and forest floor play off fruit aromas of raspberry, cranberry and strawberry. Darker fruited on the palate, with mid weight flavors of blackberry and black raspberry that attack with notice and are expansive in the mouth. The refined tannins provide good structure and the finish exceeds expectations with generosity. Still sumptuous when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*

2014 Kramer Vineyards Rebecca's Reserve Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 12.1% alc., pH 3.54, TA 0.61, 75 cases, \$48. Rebecca's block in the Estate Vineyard was planted to high vine density and Pommard and 115 clones in 1992. 100% de-stemmed, 6-day cold soak, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Highly individualistic, with a rustic and earthy character. Aromas of cherry, blueberry and mulch lead to flavors of wood-infused cherry and blueberry fruits framed by firm tannins. There is a noticeable oak imprint, and the wine finishes with some power and tartness. Still dominated by earthy, oaky elements when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. I found it challenging to cozy up close to this one. 88.*



2014 Kramer Vineyards Heritage Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.68, 125 cases, \$45. Sourced from the oldest block of Pinot Noir in the Estate Vineyard. Own-rooted Pommard clone planted in 1989. Harvest Brix 22.1°. 75% de-stemmed, 4-day cold soak, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose starts off great after opening and builds in charity over time in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, rose, spice and cola are replicated in the mid weight flavors on the palate along with notes of plum and Marionberry.*

Gentle in the mouth, with seductive tannins and bright acidity in superb balance, finishing with enduring length and a subtle citrus note. This wine just kept getting better and better over time in the glass so decanting would be advised. This Pinot offers depth, dimension and freshness in a compelling package. 94.



Walter Scott Wine, Salem, Oregon

2015 Walter Scott Clos des Oiseaux Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., 275 cases, \$50. Walter Scott began leasing this 2.8-acre vineyard in 2011. Today the land is owned by Kecia and John Keller who farm the vineyard organically, with Ken doing most of the tractor work, sprays and helping with the

hand work under the direction of viticulturist Ryan Hannaford. Fermented with ambient yeasts and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Reductive upon opening with aromas of flinty oak, resolving over time as elevating blackberry aromas arise. Luscious by Oregon standards, with a mid weight plus core of blackberry and Marionberry fruit flavors that offer intense sappiness. Despite the concentration, the wine is streamlined and balanced with a wonderful fruited finish. More giving the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with an extraordinary fruit-filled finish. With this richness of fruit you might think Syrah, but this wine is Pinot at heart all the way. I sense that this wine is still a bit tight so patience will be rewarded. 92-93.*

2015 Walter Scott Sojourner Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 300 cases, \$50. This vineyard is located at the southern end of the Eola-Amity Hills, facing west towards the Coast Range at 650 feet elevation. 16 acres planted to Dijon 115, Pommard and Wädenswil Pinot Noir clones and 3.26 acres of Chardonnay. Soils are rocky, volcanic clay. Clones were co-fermented with ambient yeasts and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Slight flinty reduction upon pulling the cork, yielding to aromas of purple and black fruits over time in the glass. Very tight, with a reductive nature, offering mid weight black fruits back by toasty oak and elevated by juicy acidity. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose remained subdued but pleasant, but the wine was more expressive on the palate with layers of well-spiced black raspberry fruit, resolution of the flinty reduction, and a lengthy finish. Cellar for a year or two. 91-92.*



2015 Walter Scott Dubay Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 125 cases, \$50. This small vineyard is located on a steep, rocky hillside and is farmed by viticulturist Ryan Hannaford. Yields were 1.6 tons in 2014. Fermented with ambient yeasts and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of well-ripened blackberry, cassis, Asian spices, nut oil and vanilla in a moderately rich styled wine with impressive balance and a fulfilling finish replete with exuberant blackberry, blueberry and pomegranate fruit. Somewhat unyielding at this young age, but the charm and pedigree is evident. Considerably better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, with aromas of exotic spices, lush fruit flavors, and good cut on the juicy finish. 93-94.*



2015 Walter Scott Seven Springs Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 125 cases, \$ 65 (sold out). Sourced from one acre of the original 1983 plants of un-grafted Pinot Noir vines found in the lower half of the vineyard. Walter Scott is one of the few wineries to get fruit from this vineyard outside of the estate holder, Evening Land. Fermented with ambient yeasts and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is very open and giving, offering soaring aromas of cherry, strawberry and spice. Redder fruit is profiled in this mid weight wine with superb harmony. More open at this young age, sporting regal spiced fruit and a juicy finish filled with black cherry delight. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the quenching finish and invigorating acidity stood out. 94-95.*

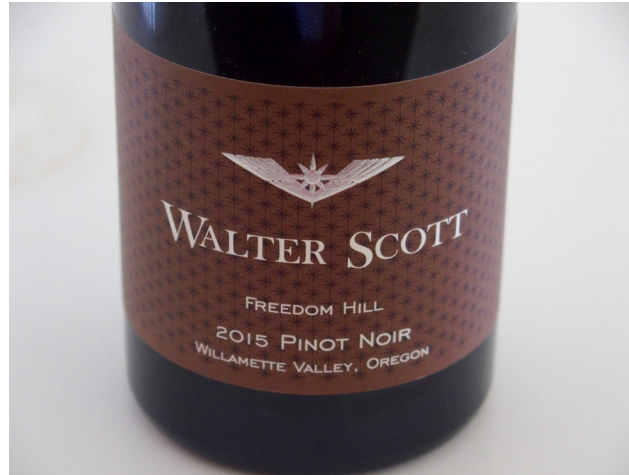


2015 Walter Scott Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 100 cases, \$50. This iconic vineyard sits on the crown of the Eola-Amity hills at elevations of 600 to 900 feet. The site, farmed by owner Dai Crisp, is exposed to cool afternoon marine breezes that define the wines and contribute to late ripening. Sourced from a block containing 24-year-old vines. Fermented with ambient yeasts and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. I was at a loss of words in describing this joyful nose offering aromas of dark berries, spice and underbrush with a feral tone. One can really taste the Temperance Hill terroir in this wine, with its structured sense and its typically vigorous black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors. The wine is in perfect harmony, with a silky mouthfeel, gracious acidity, fine-grain tannins, and a lasting finish. Still an overwhelming experience when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Pinot Noirs from this vineyard are consistently captivating. 96-97.*



2015 Walter Scott Freedom Hill Vineyard Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 325 cases, \$50. Vineyard planted in 1982 by Dan and Helen Dusschee who own and farm the vineyard sustainably with their son Dustin. The vineyard is located in the foothills of the Oregon Coast Range and vines are planted on Bellpine loam soils. The wines are typically structured and powerful. Fermented with ambient yeasts and aged for 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose is reserved but alluring with wafting aromas of cherry blossom, raspberry coulis and tobacco and an earthy underpinning. Unctuous on the palate with perfectly ripened fruit flavors of strawberry, cherry and raspberry. As typical with this vineyard, the tannins are a*

bit imposing but are not drying, and they smooth out over time in the glass. Wines from this vineyard can be a bit gruff, but that quality is not evident in this wine. I remained infatuated when I tasted this wine the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This one will stay the long course. **96-97.**



Youngberg Hill, McMinnville, Oregon

Youngberg Hill is a 50-acre estate with 20 acres of sustainably farmed vineyards. Oregon wine legend Ken Wright planted the first vineyards on this property in 1989 to source fruit for Panther Creek. The first wine labeled as Youngberg Hill was made in 1996. Current proprietors Wayne and Nicolette Bailey acquired the property in 2003 and transformed the land into a sustainably farmed wine estate and hospitality center. The vines are among the most westernmost in the Willamette Valley and receive considerable marine influence. The original own-rooted Pinot Noir vines planted 60% to Pommard and 40% to Wädenswil clones encompass 12 acres and are called Jordan and Natasha blocks, after the two oldest Bailey daughters. The winery offers several Pinot Noirs each year along with estate Pinot Gris and Chardonnay. Tastings are available daily at the winery. Lodging is also available. Visit www.youngberghill.com.



2014 Youngberg Hill Cuvée Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.62, RS 0, 243 cases, \$35. A blend of clones 777 and "828," from vineyards in the McMinnville and Eola-Amity Hills AVAs. Average vine age 9 years. Harvest Brix 22.7°. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of dark red cherry and berry with savory notes of bark, timber and underbrush. Somewhat lush on the palate, with a flavor core of dark red cherry accented with notes of red licorice, savory herbs and earth. Balanced tannins, integrated acidity, finishing with cherry-fueled goodness. 89.*

2014 Youngberg Hill Natasha Block McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.62, RS 0, 437 cases, \$50, screwcap. Willakenzie marine sedimentary soil. Harvest Brix 22.3°. 60% Pommard and 40% Wädenswil planted in 1989. Aged 13 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Deeply aromatic, with scents of very ripe black cherry, black raspberry accompanied by a slight oxidative note in the background. Full-bodied with plenty of ripe, sappy, and sweet black fruits underlain with a thread of oak. The lower pH and muscular tannins lead to some astringency and bitterness on the finish. 87.*

2014 Youngberg Hill Jordan Block McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.67, RS 0, 448 cases, \$50, screwcap. Volcanic soil. 60% Pommard and 40% Wädenswil clones. Harvest Brix 21.7°. Aged 13 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose offers aromas of blackberry jam, cassis, espresso and sage. Richly endowed with a mid weight plus charge of purple and black fruits framed by a substantial but complimentary tannic structure. Nicely crafted, with deft oak management, no bitterness, and some length on the pleasingly lengthy finish. 90.*

More Pinot Noir

2014 Argyle Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$27 (\$19.99 at Trader Joe's), screwcap. Fermented in small 1.5-ton lots and plunged by hand. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry, briar and oak barrel lead to a mid weight style offering, featuring flavors of red cherry, raspberry, cranberry and toasty oak. Secluded tannins, with juicy acidity and a modest finish. 87.*

2015 Farmlands Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., \$22. Grown, produced and bottled by Johan Vineyards in Rickreall, Oregon. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas pick up intensity over time in the glass, revealing notes of dark cherry, underbrush and toast. Light in weight and featuring a core of juicy black cherry fruit, this pleasant wine has silky tannins, a compliment of herbal oak, and a modest finish. A good value play available in supermarkets. 87.*

2015 Siduri Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,830 cases, \$37, screwcap. Cellared and bottled by Siduri. *Aromas of oak vanillin and shy purple fruits lead to a mid weight charge of succulent black raspberry and boysenberry fruits backed by balanced tannins. The oak treatment is overwhelming on the nose, but is well integrated on the palate. The finish offers a pleasingly boisterous fruit presence. 87.*

Sips of Recently Tasted California Wines

Bohème Wines, Occidental, California

Estate grown, produced and bottled by Kurt Beitler Wines in Forestville. Kurt is celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of his grower crafted wines with the 2014 vintage. The name is derived from the Bohemian Highway that meanders through Sonoma's coastal range of redwoods, valleys, farms and the town of Occidental. The wines are consistently fine and reflect hands-on craftsmanship. Visit www.bohemewines.com.



2014 Bohème Tenth Anniversary Taylor Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 308 cases, \$55. Vineyard is located on a bluff 5.3 miles from the Pacific Ocean so it is exposed to cool maritime air and fog. Soils are sandy loam. Swan selection. Yield 1.69 tons per acre. Tailored cold soak, hand punch downs, aged 22 months in seasoned French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Revealing scents of coddled black cherry, bark and rose petal. The middleweight core of well-spiced black cherry alerts the taste buds and the uplifting, juicy and prolonged finish bring refreshing closure. A real cherry bomb with a satiny texture and a deft compliment of oak. 93.*

2014 Bohème Tenth Anniversary English Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 446 cases, \$49. Vineyard is located at the southwestern edge of Sebastopol Hills. Clones 115, 667, Vosne-Romanee and Calera each vinified separately. Yields 3.3 tons per acre. Tailored cold soak, 25% whole cluster fermentation, hand punch downs, aged 22 months in seasoned French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Enchanting aromas of purple grape, pomegranate, black cherry, baking spice, and sweet pipe smoke set the stage. Flat out terrific in the mouth, with alluring mid weight flavors of raspberry and black cherry and a hint of oak and feral gaminess. Smooth and polished in texture, with a quenching cut of acidity on the finish. 94.*

2014 Bohème Tenth Anniversary Stuller Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 263 cases \$53. This vineyard is located amid the redwoods at 1,200 feet elevation with views of the Pacific Ocean 6.4 miles west. Clones 115 and 667. Yield 1.53 tons per acre. Tailored cold soak, 30% whole cluster fermentation, hand punch downs, aged 22 months in seasoned French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Leading off are aromas of strawberry, raspberry, forest floor, floral bouquet and a subtle soapy note. Mid weight plus in style, with flavors of black raspberry, strawberry, and grape with a floral note in the background. Suede tannins with a silky mouthfeel and a slightly sour cherry note on the finish. 91.*

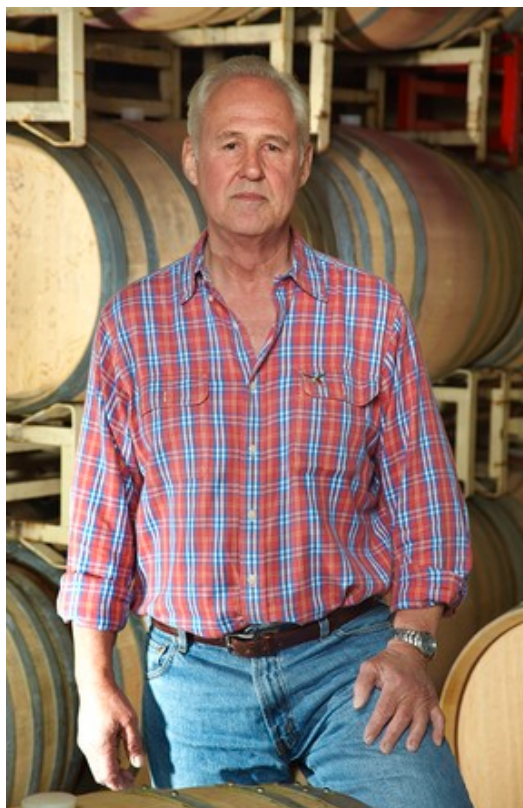


2014 Bohème Tenth Anniversary Taylor Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., 214 cases, \$45. Wente selection. Yield 3.1 tons per acre. Whole cluster pressed, cold fermented in seasoned French oak barrels, and aged on the lees for 20 months with complete malolactic fermentation. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Very inviting aromas of Honeycrisp apple, lemon butter and toasted marshmallow. Well appointed flavors of spiced apple, nectarine, vanilla creme and toasty brioche in a richly styled wine with admirable balance and a pleasing lemon drop finish. 92.*

2014 Bohème Tenth Anniversary English Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.3% alc., 192 cases, \$45. Wente selection. Whole cluster pressed and cold fermented in seasoned French oak barrels, and aged on the lees for 20 months with complete malolactic fermentation. *Moderately dark golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon oil, cut grass, nori and buttery toffee come to the fore upon opening. Robust and ripe, but toned and uplifting, with flavors of pear, yellow apple, pineapple and creme caramel. Slightly creamy in texture with a sublime well-fruited finish. A superbly crafted fruit and oak driven Chardonnay. 93.*

Chasseur, Hunter Wine Cellars, Sebastopol, California

Pinot Noir enthusiasts are often searching for the latest new producer to check out. But those in the know stay with producers with a long track record of consistent excellence. Winemaker William Hunter of Chasseur, falls into the latter category. Hunter is a 30-year winemaking veteran who has worked with growers in the west Sonoma County region for years and his wines reflect both his experience and his familiarity with his vineyard sources. Many wine critics have praised his wines, yet Chasseur has been under consumers' radar, probably because Hunter, a University of California at Davis graduate, is a dedicated winemaker and not a publicist. His production is modest because he does all the winemaking himself, infusing each wine with careful hands-on attention. A spring and fall release are sold primarily to Wine Club members. Hunter does accept visitors by appointment to his winery in Sebastopol. Visit www.chasseurwines.com.




2014 Chasseur Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$45. Moderate garnet color in the glass. Deep aromas of coddled black cherry, spice and cola that persist over time in the glass. Mid weight plus flavors of black cherry, cola and baking spices framed by integrated tannins and finishing with good but short exuberance. Easy to like with the weight and ripeness we have come to expect from Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and an ideal representative of the AVA. **90.**

2014 Chasseur Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$45. Moderate garnet color in the glass. More feral and gamey than the RRV bottling, with spirited aromas of dark red and purple berries, mulch and subtle oak. Discreetly concentrated flavors of black cherry and black raspberry are backed by quenching acidity and silky tannins. The wine has an earthbound quality that appeals with complimentary oak support and a modest but pleasing finish. **91.**

2014 Chasseur Umino Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.48, TA 0.692, , 99 cases, \$60. A collaboration between William Hunter and David Umino of Umino Vineyard. Clones 115 and 777. Harvest Brix 24.8°. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels. Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of wild berries, fruit cake, oak vanillin and brioche. Mid weight styled, with soothing flavors of dark red cherry and berry and back notes of exotic tea and nutty oak. Ideal balance, with a finish awash in berry fruits. **92.**

2014 Chasseur Sexton Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.664, 98 cases, \$60. A collaboration between William Hunter and James Pratt on Sexton Road. Harvest Brix 24.8°. Clone 114. aged 17 months in French oak barrels. Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas initially, unfold to revealing enticing scents of dark cherry, dark berry, fertile earth and oak spice. Almost mysterious in character, with interesting savory toned fruit flavors of blackberry and black grape. Generous, but not weighty sap, with honed tannins and some finishing length. A desirable mix of fruit and savory nuances. **92.**

 **2014 Chasseur Freestone Station Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.62, 124 cases, \$60. A collaboration between William Hunter and the Cleary and Dutton families. Sourced from Dutton Ranch-Freestone Station Vineyard. Clones 115 and 115. Harvest Brix 25.2°. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Moderate garnet color in the glass. Complex and alluring nose offering scents of cherry, raspberry, spice, seasoned oak, graham and even a hint of peach. One could be happy just smelling this wine. Mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and spice exude class. The wine has both precision and clarity and a pleasing grip of juicy acidity on the glorious finish. Sublime. **94.**



2014 Chasseur Soft Asylum Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.58, 105 cases, \$60. A blend of the best barrels from best blocks from the best vineyards. Harvest Brix 25.2°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Lovely aromas of fresh cherry juice, worn leather, wilted rose and vanilla. The mid weight plus flavors of black cherry and black raspberry have an ephemeral character. Satin in texture, with nothing out of place, and an extended black cherry fueled finish that transcends all other Chasseur Pinots in this vintage. Still superb when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. A ticket to heaven. 95.*



2014 Chasseur Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.1% alc., \$40. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. A rich riper fruited style with aromas of lemon curd, pineapple and crème brûlée and flavors of lemon pie, spiced apple, and buttery brioche. Bold and creamy on the palate with a welcome marriage of fruit and oak on the finish. 91.*

2014 Chasseur Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., \$40. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. A complex offering, with aromas of green apple, lemon-lime, spice and nutty oak. Very smooth in the mouth with flavors of lemon butter, pear, green apple and honeycomb. Nicely integrated acidity, with a pleasing lemon-lime finish. 90.*

2014 Chasseur Sanctuary Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.48, TA 0.63, 103 cases, \$60. Montrachet selection. Harvest Brix 24.6°. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 67% new. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Sensational aromas of lemon, chalk dust, salt air and stony minerality. Bright and focused, with impressive intensity, offering vibrant flavors of lemon, Fuji apple and caramel. The glorious finish also exudes these flavors. A very classy Chardonnay offering. 95.*



2014 Chasseur Graton's Choice Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.66, 101 cases, \$60. A collaboration between William Hunter and the Dutton Family. Sourced from Dutton's Graton Vineyard. Wentz-Hyde selection. Harvest Brix 25.2°. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Somewhat reserved but highly pleasing*

aromas of lemon, honeysuckle and crushed sea shells. A somewhat lean and steely style, that is nevertheless extremely refreshing, with a core of lemon-lime, green apple and vanilla flavors. Beautifully composed with a bright and clean demeanor. More Chablis styled than California in character and a wine that one would never tire of drinking. **95**.

LaRue, Sonoma, California

If your choice is lower alcohol, elegant wines with whole cluster inclusion, then winemaker Katy Wilson is your girl. She focuses on high quality Pinot Noir exclusively from Sonoma Coast vineyards. The label is named after her great grandmother, Veona LaRue Newell. The wines are sold through a mailing list and online at the winery's website store at www.laruewines.com. These wines have a special aura. They are very easy to drink and one never thinks of oak or tannins. At the lower alcohol levels, one can enjoy a couple of glasses without feeling sideways. The equally superb 2015 Charles Heintz Vineyard Chardonnay was reviewed in the previous issue.



2014 LaRue Rice-Spivak Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 150 cases, \$70. A 6-acre vineyard south of the town of Sebastopol. Dijon clones and Swan selection are planted in Goldridge sandy loam with volcanic ash that gives wines from this vineyard an unmistakable spice and minerality character. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. This wine is exotically spiced as typical for this vineyard. The aromas arrive over time in the glass to accolades, offering hi-tone aromas of dark cherry, burnt tobacco, vanilla, rose petal and spice. The whole cluster character infuses the mid weight core of cherry, raspberry and blueberry fruit flavors.*

*The polished mouthfeel appeals, and the citrus imbued finish is up lifting. The wine seems to gain traction over time, releasing its charms in steps. Glorious when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. **94**.*



2014 LaRue Emmaline Ann Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 70 cases, \$70. A 3-acre vineyard near the town of Freestone planted to Dijon clones in Goldridge sandy loam soils. The vineyard's close proximity to the Pacific Ocean and high elevation at 800 feet contribute to its character. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Fruit-driven aromas of dark red cherry and berry with a hint of sarsaparilla and floral intricacy. Impressive fortitude on the palate with mid weight flavors of an array of well-ripened cherries and berries. The wine sports gentle tannins and an extremely long finish. Very soothing, offering power in a velvet glove character. **95**.*



2014 LaRue Thorn Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.7% alc., 50 cases, \$70. This vineyard is farmed by Ted Klopp who also farms Klopp Ranch Vineyard. This wine is a blend of Pommard and 115 clones planted in Goldridge sandy loam soils. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of ripe berries, black cherry, spice and fertile earth lead to a middleweight fashioned wine with a solid grip of black cherry and black raspberry fruits. Very engaging on the mid palate and finish, with a silk and satin mouthfeel, a deft touch of oak, and up lifting acidity on the WOW finish. Noticeably better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. **94**.*



Maggy Hawk, Windsor, California

Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard is a breathtaking and steeply sloped site among coastal redwoods located in the “deep-end” of the Anderson Valley. It consists of a patchwork of different aspects and clones. The coolness here puts it on the edge of potential ripening. Uniquely, each bottling is from a single clone block and is named for a horse born to Maggy Hawk. Moderate weather throughout the spring and summer allowed the grapes ample time to achieve optimal ripeness, flavor development and balance. The wines are not as extracted as those from recent vintages, offering more Pinot charm. Winemaker Elizabeth Grant-Douglas (pictured below) told me, “I am so excited about the 2014 Maggy Hawk Pinot Noirs. 2014 was such a great year to be a winemaker.” The wines are sold by allocation to a mailing list at www.maggyhawkwines.com. You should have some of these wines in your cellar. The series of wines offers an opportunity to taste single clone Pinot Noir. Remember, however, clonal expression is dependent on site and these single clone wines may resemble but not accurately reflect single clone wines produced from another site!



2014 Maggy Hawk Graceful Lady Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.57, 178 cases, \$66. Clone 777. 5-day cold soak, slow moving AMII yeast fermentation, daily punch downs, and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 38% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Deep cherry aroma with a touch of spice, tobacco and bittersweet chocolate. The delicious Bing cherry and black raspberry core has a just picked quality. Upon opening, the gorgeous fruit is wrapped in an oak corset, but the oak relaxes over time in the glass. The tannins are gracious making for easy enjoyment and the wine finishes with purpose.* **93.**



2014 Maggy Hawk Unforgettable Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.57, 247 cases, \$66. Clone 667. 5-day cold soak, slow moving AMII yeast fermentation, daily punch downs, and aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose predicts an extraordinary experience with soaring aromas of fresh cherry, iced dark berries, forest floor and honey mocha. The opulent blackberry and boysenberry fruits show uncommon intensity and focus with a adulatory succulence. The wine offers impressive mid palate presence, toned tannins, and extraordinary fruit intensity on the finish. Truly unforgettable.* **95.**

2014 Maggy Hawk Afleet Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.59, 223 cases, \$66. Pommard clone. 5-day cold soak, slow moving AMII yeast fermentation, daily punch downs, and aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 27% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas of dark cherry, ripe strawberry, spice, nut oil and redwood bark. Laden with plenty of tasty black cherry and black raspberry fruits with a slightly gamey, earthy and herbal countenance. The tannins are modest, and the wine finishes with a load of sweet fruit that lasts and lasts. I like this wine a lot, but I don't think this site brings out the best qualities of the Pommard clone, probably because of ripeness issues.* **92.**



2014 Maggy Hawk Stormin' Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.57, 297 cases, \$66. Clone 667. 5-day cold soak, slow moving AMII yeast fermentation, daily punch downs, and aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Vivacious aromas of black cherry, blackberry and brioche. Just terrific smells. Descriptors can't do justice to this gorgeous wine that offers delicious flavors of blueberry, blackberry and cola with a commendatory touch of earthiness and oak. The balance is spot-on, the gentle fine-grain tannins make for easy approachability, and the extraordinary finish is particularly noteworthy.* **96.**



2014 Maggy Hawk Jolie Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.55, 614 cases, \$66. Clone 115. 5-day cold soak, slow moving AMII yeast fermentation, daily punch downs, and aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 29% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Time is needed for this wine to open so I recommend decanting. With time, the nose becomes ridiculously alluring with aromas of black cherry, cranberry, rose petal, pecan oil and allspice. Flat out delicious, with crunchy, intense black cherry, blueberry and black raspberry fruit flavors. Impeccably balanced and perfectly structured, with a finish that is a celebratory black cherry delight. I have tasted multiple past vintages of Maggy Hawk Pinot Noir, and Jolie is always the one I want to date.* **97.**



McEvoy Ranch, Petaluma, California

A 550-acre ranch in the rolling hills west of Petaluma in Marin County that was once a dairy farm and now reincarnated as an organic olive tree orchard and vineyard. Founded by Nan McEvoy who was inspired by her love of Tuscan olive oil, McEvoy Ranch became one of the preeminent leaders in certified organic, extra virgin olive oil. Grapevines were first planted in 2006 and there is now five certified organic vineyards on 38 acres. Beginning with the 2010 vintage, limited edition wines are produced including Pinot Noir, Viognier and several Mediterranean varietals, vinified by winemaker Blake Yarger. A combination of new and old French puncheons as well as concrete and stainless steel tanks are used to lend old world character to the wines.

2014 McEvoy Ranch Azaya Marin County Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 585 cases, \$50. Azaya is an estate vineyard nestled in the Petaluma gap. This is the premiere release of Azaya Pinot Noir. Aged 20 months in 500L French oak puncheons, 15% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Very shy but pleasant aromas of cherry and blueberry with a savory herb, green garden and nutty compliment. Black cherry, blueberry and spice flavors delight in the mouth. Firm but not imposing tannins provide structure and the wine finishes with length and generous black cherry and blueberry aromatic goodness.* **90.**

2013 McEvoy Ranch The Evening Standard Marin County Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., \$N/A. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is well-oaked with no discernible fruit. Light to mid weight flavors of strawberry, raspberry, and herbs are rather delicate and subdued. The tannins are somewhat prominent and a citrus note plies the background. The wine finishes with an herbal oak theme.* **87.**

2012 McEvoy Ranch The Evening Standard Marin County Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 1, 402 cases, \$45. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. This wine sports a noticeable imprint of oak. Aromas of black cherry, black*

raspberry, spice and char unfold in the glass. Lovely fruit flavors of black cherry, blueberry and pomegranate are infused with juiciness and carry through to an enjoyable ending. 88.

Roger Roessler Wines, Sonoma, California

This winery was founded in 2000 and is dedicated to making small-lot Pinot Noir and Chardonnay appellation and single vineyard designated wines. The Roger Roessler Signature Series wines are available on a limited basis to Wine Club members and through the winery's tasting room in Sonoma. Visit www.rogerroesslerwines.com.

2015 Roessler Wine Cellars Hein Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., \$54. Roger Roessler Signature Series. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is reductive, with the aroma of flint accompanying scents of herbs, forest floor, toast and tobacco. Light to mid weight in style and cherry driven with a bit of spice, game and vegetal accents. Highly individualistic, with mellow tannins and some finishing cherry fruit intensity. The fruit seems slightly under ripe and the flavor just doesn't hit home for me. 86.*

2015 Roessler Wine Cellars Bogey Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., \$50. Roger Roessler Signature Series. This vineyard is located at 1,000 feet elevation looking down on the town of Sonoma. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The fruit has a highly ripened, even roasted character in this wine. The nose offers aromas of purple grape, blackberry jam, raisin and sweet tobacco fruit. The mid weight plus core of black fruits are accented with flavors of herbs, black tea and toast. The sinewy tannins are well proportioned and there is some depth of finish. 88.*

2015 Roessler Wine Cellars 3 bbl Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$54. Roger Roessler Signature Series. 3 barrels from Western Sonoma Coast Vineyard blended together. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of dark berry mash and rose petal. Enticing mid weight flavors of dark berry and dark stone fruits underlain with a riff of hazelnut oak. The very seductive satiny texture, the seamless composure, and a long boysenberry-fueled finish are delightful. 92.*

2015 Roessler Wine Cellars Lennox Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., \$54. Roger Roessler Signature Series. This site is located in the cooler southwestern edge of the Russian River Valley. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of sweet cherries, cola and vanilla. The delicious core of black cherry, boysenberry and blackberry flavors envelope the palate and persist on the very long finish. Great harmony with toned oak highlights. Plenty of Pinot singing in this wine and true to RRV in character. 93*



2015 Roessler Wine Cellars Black Pine Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$30. A blend of grapes from vineyards up and down the California Coast. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Alluring aromas of black cherry pie and mocha lead to a very tasty core of nicely ripened black cherry and raspberry fruits with a back note of bittersweet chocolate and cola. The tannins are fine-grain and agreeable, the fruit is succulent, and the finish exhibits good fruit persistence. A terrific value. 92.*



Sandhi Wines, Lompoc, California

This winery is currently a collaboration between Rajat Parr, wine director for Michael Mina Restaurants, winemaker Sasha Moorman and venture capitalist Steve Webster. A former investor, Charles Banks, sold his interest in 2016. The Pinot Noirs are feral yeast fermented mostly whole cluster, with zero additions of water, sugar, acid and enzymes and are bottled unfinned and unfiltered. Alcohols are lower and only a small amount of new French oak is used. The goal is to produce wines that are subtle, elegant and balanced. All the wines below are also available in magnum format. Visit www.sandhiwines.com.

2014 Sandhi Rinconada Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 450 cases, \$55. This historic vineyard was planted by Richard Sanford in 1997 in silica-based soils tending to produce an earthy expression of Pinot Noir. *Light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of red cherry and red raspberry, rose petal, pine sap and turned earth lead to a lighter-weighted style wine with an array of red and blue fruits backed by vibrant acidity. There is a hint of leaf and herbal tone in the background. The most austere wine in the 2014 Sandhi lineup, offering a slightly tart cherry finish. This wine did assume more character and flavor over time in the glass and the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **89.**

2014 Sandhi Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 260 cases, \$65. Planted in 1971 by Richard Sanford, these are the oldest Pinot Noir plantings in Santa Barbara County. Mt. Eden selection. *Light garnet color in the glass. Laudatory aromas of blueberry, cranberry, spice, forest floor and rose petal. Light to mid weight in style, with a vivid core of fresh cherry and cranberry flavors infused with polite acidity. Silky in texture, with slightly astringent tannins on the finish.* **90.**

2014 Sandhi La Côte Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 99 cases, \$90. This 9-acre vineyard was originally called Evening Land Tempest. It is located on the far western edge of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA 3 miles west of other vineyard sites. This magical site produces very low yields and is extremely cool. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Nicely appointed whole cluster infused nose with aromas of cherry, spice, rose petal, pipe smoke and burnt tobacco. Mid weight flavors of cherry, cranberry, orange peel and tobacco are framed by mellow tannins. A slight thread of wood and green herbs is noted in the background. The slightly tart, lip-smacking finish has good length. For whole cluster aficionados only.* **90.**

2014 Sandhi Mt. Carmel Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 367 cases, \$55. Sourced from an organically farmed vineyard planted in 1991 and is located below Rita's Crown and above Sea Smoke. *Light garnet color in the glass. More mainstream in style with little whole cluster character. Aromas of cherry and earthy flora lead to a mid weight style with a discreetly sappy core of black cherry fruit that is nicely spiced. Nicely put together, with noticeable length and juicy cut on the refreshing finish.* **91.**

2014 Sandhi Mt. Carmel Vineyard Old Vines Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 68 cases, \$90. Sourced from an own-rooted block planted in 1990. Yields are barely 1 ton per acre. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely appointed aromas of purple berries, spice, mulch and marzipan. The mid weight flavors of boysenberry and plum have noticeably more layers of flavor and more pedigree. Silken in the mouth, with ideal integration of acidity, a respectful hint of oak, a tannic structure that predicts age ability and an appealing savory whole cluster overlay.* **93.**



Screen Door Cellars, Calistoga, California

The Donnel family was quite a discovery for me a few years back. This small producer has a knack for Pinot Noir and I have found every release to be praiseworthy. You would be hard pressed to find better Russian River Valley Pinot Noir anywhere!. The 2016 Rosé was received my highest score ever for a California Pinot Noir Rosé. Great wine made by great people. Don't hesitate on these beauties. Visit www.screendoorcellars.com.



2015 Screen Door Cellars Leras Family Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 50 cases, \$65. The Leras family has been farming grapes for over 75 years. This vineyard is planted to Pommard, "828," and 667 clones. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Terrific nose with profuse aromas of dark cherry and raspberry, spices including sage, white pepper and a hint of vanilla. An abundance of black cherry and cola flavors are accented with a back note of charcuterie and oak vanillin. Smooth in the mouth with immersed tannins and a charitable finish. Most notable is that this wine grew in appeal over time and was considerably better when tasted from a previously opened bottle later in the day.* **94.**



2015 Screen Door Cellars Roan Family Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley 14.2% alc., 50 cases, \$65. The Donnel family met the Roan family at schools their children attended. 100% Pommard clone. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Enchanting aromas of red cherry and sandalwood lead to a very charming wine that exudes pinotosity. Only modest in weight, but intensely flavored with luxurious tastes of cherry, red berry, brown sugar and spice. The wine displays cool climate vibrancy, a mellow finish and impeccable balance. A stunning wine that offers everything you look for in Pinot Noir. The lighter color may put some drinkers off, but you would be regretfully remiss. I was tasting eight Pinot Noirs and this wine was tasted at the end. It immediately made me sit up in my chair, stare at the glass and smile.* **96.**



2016 Screen Door Cellars Russian River Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 90 cases, \$22. *Moderate pinkish orange color in the glass. Soaring aromas of strawberry, white peach and blood orange. Generous layers of flavor unfold on the palate, including pear, strawberry, melon and blood orange. Clean and bright, with a welcome grip of acidity on the orange flower water themed finish. The top Rosé I tasted this year and one that can be chilled and enjoyed on its own or used to enhance any summer dining experience.* **94.**



Siduri, Santa Rosa, California

These 2015 offerings are highly extracted, sappy and ripely fruited wines that lack some aromatic charm. These are some of the biggest wines in recent memory from Siduri. The fruit muscle creates wines that are delicious, but except for the Dierberg bottling, are pretty much the same, and lack any vineyard identity.

2015 Siduri Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 286 cases, \$35, screwcap. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of soy, tobacco, straw, oak and fern lead off. An array of mid weight plus very ripe dark fruits meet the mid palate. Rather jammy and singularly fruity with no AVA identity. Some oak overlay, balanced tannins, a slight sense of alcohol, finishing with a plethora of sweet fruit but absent vibrancy. 86.*

2015 Siduri Bellflower Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 192 cases, \$55, screwcap. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Shy nose initially, slowly unfolding to reveal aromas of black cherry, blackberry, clove, smoke and cigar box. A palate saturating flood of sweet blackberry and boysenberry fruits with hints of spice and graphite give notice. The tannins are ripe and balanced, oak plays in the background, and there is some finishing intensity. A hedonistic display of RRV fruit. 90.*

2015 Siduri Barbieri Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 193 cases, \$55, screwcap. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The nose is somewhat primary, offering only hints of berry pie, wilted rose and sweet oak. Sweet-fruited and rich, offering an array of highly extracted black fruit flavors along with notes of black tea and anise. Nicely integrated tannins and oak with a juicy, generously fruited finish. 91.*

2015 Siduri Saralee's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 195 cases, \$55, screwcap. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Oak-infused berry aromas lead to a full-on attack of purple and black berry fruit flavors framed by noticeable, but well-toned tannins. A Cab lovers Pinot, with a lush mouthfeel and an unctuous fruit finish. 89.*

2015 Siduri Dierberg Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 194 cases, \$55, screwcap. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. A love able nose, with hi-tone aromas of redder fruits, potpourri and bark. Very charming in the mouth, with vivid flavors of earth-kissed cherry and strawberry backed by genteel tannins. Impeccably balanced with a compelling finish. This wine exudes charisma and is quintessential Central Coast in character. 94.*





Sojourn Cellars, Santa Rosa, California

Regular readers know I am a big fan of Sojourn Cellars Pinot Noir. The fruit sources are top notch and the owners are able to direct farming operations to assure grapes are produced using modern viticultural techniques. Erich Bradley winemaker, Randy Bennett associate winemaker and Craig Haserot proprietor. The 2015 vintage offered significantly reduced yields across much of California, but Sojourn's vineyard sources had near normal yields. The following wines were bottled in August 2016 and will be released in the fall 2017. Visit www.sojourncellars.com.

2015 Sojourn Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.60, 775 cases, \$42. Primarily sourced from Wohler Vineyard, with lesser contributions from Riddle, Pratt and Reuling vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast open-top fermentation, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Alluring aromas of fresh cherry, dark red grape, spice and a back note of oak. The middleweight flavors of cherry, spice and herbal oak have good vibrancy and complimentary support from modest tannins. A refined, easy to like style. 89.*



2015 Sojourn Ridgetop Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.58, 200 cases, \$59. This is one of those secluded west Sonoma Coast vineyards that is very hard to get to. It is owned and managed by Thomas Rivers Brown and Fred Schrader with Ulises Valdez caring for the vineyard. It is surrounded by redwood trees at 1,100 feet elevation. This is unique site, located near Annapolis, is rather tropical. Yields are miniscule with concentrated flavors as vines struggle to grow in Goldridge loam soil and remnants of ancient seabed. Clones 115, 667 and 777 were fermented separately. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Soaring aromas of dark red cherry and berry with a compliment of spice and sous-bois. Exotic and foresty in the mouth, with engaging flavors of purple berries, pomegranate, blueberry and pine needle. Gentle in demeanor, with well integrated oak, and a juicy, persistent finish. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle showing loads of enchanting black cherry, purple berry and spice flavors. A unique wine with character. 94.*

2015 Sojourn Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.63, 325 cases, \$69. This vineyard was planted in 2000 under the direction of Mark Aubert and Peter Michael Winery and is composed of 12.2 acres of Pinot Noir planted to Calera selection and two distinct "suitcase" selections reportedly from the Vosne-Romanee region of Burgundy. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation in open-tops, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black raspberry, game and earth come to the fore in the glass. Flavors of black raspberry, boysenberry, and black cherry are complimented by a riff of graphite and forest floor. Silky in the mouth, with balanced ripe fruit tannins, deft oak in the background, and a noticeably long finish. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 93.*



2015 Sojourn Riddle Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.58, 350 cases, \$59. This vineyard is located in the cool Green Valley of Russian River Valley near the town of Occidental. Planted in 2008 at high density of 3.5' x 6' in Goldridge soils. Clones 115, "828," Pommard and Mt. Eden taken as original bud wood from a prominent vineyard planted along California's Central Coast. 100% de-stemmed, open-top native yeast fermentation, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Shy, but seductive aromas of darker cherries and berries, spice and floral intricacy. Well-structured with a mid weight core of forest-tinged purple berry fruits. Admirable elegance, with opulent fruit and that appealing West Sonoma Coast savoriness. Beautifully composed, with a fat and lifted finish.* **94.**

2014 Sojourn Wohler Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.60, 600 cases, \$48. This vineyard, located in Forestville, was replanted in 2006. This wine is sourced from five distinct blocks planted to clones 667, "828," 115, 777 and 2A. Clones were vinified separately. 100% de-stemmed. Open-top fermentation with native yeasts, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. An array of pleasing aromas arrive in the glass, including black cherry, cola and spice. Noticeably sappy on the palate, with opulent flavors of spiced Bing cherry, purple berries, mocha, and cola. Very polished despite its richness, with modest tannins and a cherry-fueled finish. Still inviting when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **93.**

2015 Sojourn Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.3% alc., pH 3.31, TA 0.65, 450 cases, \$48. Cleaned-up Wente selections. Whole cluster pressed, fermented with native yeast and aged in French oak barrels, 40% new. 100% malolactic fermentation. Bottled unfiltered. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of lemon, apple, spice, vanilla creme, brioche and nuts. The palate is infused with citrus, but also pear and apple flavors with a hint of oak. A solid wine that is not too rich or too lean, with a smooth but not creamy mouthfeel and some finishing verve.* **92.**



Wind Racer, Windsor, California

2014 Wind Racer Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$50. Sourced from Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard. Clones 777, 115 and 2A. 100% de-stemmed with 70% remaining whole berries, 5-day cold soak, inoculated and native malolactic fermentation. Fermented in open tanks with daily punch downs. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 39% new. *Moderately dark ruby red color in the glass. Aromas of strawberry, cherry, baking spices and sandalwood maintain over time in the glass. Mid weight plus in style, with deep flavors of cherry, blueberry and tobacco. Impressive attack, follow through and finish with tame tannins and the right touch of oak. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **91.**

2014 Wind Racer Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$50. Sourced from Piner Vineyard, originally planted in 1996 to a mix of clones. Located in West Santa Rosa in a slightly cooler area that receives lingering fog. Well-drained Huichica loam soils. Clones 115, Pommard, 23, 2A and 777. 100% de-stemmed, 70% whole berries retained, 3 to 5-day cold soak, inoculated and native malolactic fermentation. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderate ruby red color in the glass. Vibrant aromas of Bing cherry, bay leaf, and fertile earth. Modest in weight, with an earth-toned flavor of black cherry. Silky in the mouth, with an oak*

driven riff of dark chocolate and noticeable length on the finish. Still solid when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. **90.**

More Pinot Noir

2015 FEL Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$38. Sourced from top vineyards in Anderson Valley including Ferrington, Donnelly Creek and Savoy. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of black cherry, woodland spices and mulch. Delicious cherry core accented by a note of cola. Nicely balanced, with refreshing acidity, polite oak, and a celebratory finish. A perfect, well-priced Pinot for everyday drinking. 90.*



2015 Masùt Vineyard and Winery Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir

14.4% alc., pH 3.53, TA 0.60, 1,500 cases, \$45. Eagle Peak is a recently recognized AVA marked by coastal afternoon breezes, many microclimates, and elevations ranging from 800 to 3,000 feet. Vineyard planted in 1997 in the shadows of Eagle Peak. Blocks 5, 6, 7, 12, and 13. 81% 115 and 19% 777. Yield 2.1 tons per acre. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak in stainless open-top tanks. Aged 12 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 50% new and bottled unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Nicely appointed aromas of black pie cherries, rose petal, and timber. Blackberry,*

black raspberry and black grape fruits are luscious and perfectly ripened, composed in a mid weight style with added back notes of licorice, conifer and toasty oak. Both savory and fruity, with a seductively satiny mouthfeel, and a deep black cherry infused finish. A distinctive wine with plenty of character that reveals itself nicely now, but will improve in the cellar. Congratulations to the Fetzer boys on one of the best wines yet from Masùt. 94.



2014 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.60, 1,335 cases, \$64. Clones are 777, 667, 115, 114 and Pommard 4. This vineyard was first planted in 1997 to 14 clones of Pinot Noir. The very best lots are selected and combined through many bench trials and tastings and until the best wine of each particular vintage is determined. The vineyard is certified both organic and sustainable. The winegrower and winemaker is Dan Morgan. 100% de-stemmed, whole berry fermentation with native yeasts in small, open-top tanks. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new and 50% one and two-year-old. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry and black raspberry with a compliment of smoky, toasty oak. Boisterous flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, cola and toast are rounded out with balanced tannins and acidity. Silky in texture with soft tannins that make the wine very approachable now. That said, the wine had more fruit expression and better oak integration when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating that decanting would be in order. 92.*



2014 Press Cellars Helluva Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$N/A (2013 vintage was \$30 and a Double Gold Winner at 2016 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition). Pommard clone. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of black cherry, raspberry, dark red rose and toasty oak. Impressive attack of cherry fruit that is expansive in the mid palate and finishes with length. A bit of baking spice, brown sugar and dark chocolate add interest. Ideal balance, with a glorious finish that goes on and on. A real find. 93.*

2014 Sarah's Vineyard Reserve Santa Clara Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 142 cases, \$60. Estate grown. Hand-waxed bottles. Clones 667, 777, 115 and "DRC." Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. Winemaker Tim Slater. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of very ripe cherry and berry and toasty barrel. Mid to full-bodied flavors of purple berries and black cherry entering modestly but then exploding on the mid palate with rich fruit flavor. Structured to match the sappy fruit core and enough acidity for streamlined drinking. Silky in the mouth, with accents of cola and dark chocolate, finishing with joyous fruit. Very ripe fruited in style, but highly enjoyable.* **92.**

2015 Tongue Dancer Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.58, RS <1.0 g/L, 35 cases, \$49. Released March 8, 2017. Grapes sourced from the Annapolis area of the West Sonoma Coast. Clones 2A, 114, 115, 667, 777, Martini and Pommard. 100% gently de-stemmed, not crushed. Fermented in small open-tops, 5-day cold soak, daily punch downs four times a day. Aged 17 months on the lees in 100% French oak. Light filtration without fining at bottling. James MacPhail is the winemaker. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Fresh aromas of cherry, spice, leaf and pine lead to a deeply flavored core of cherry and raspberry fruits. Succulent in the mouth, with balanced tannins and supportive oak, finishing on a luscious high with notes of cherry and pine needle.* **91.**

2015 Turtle Vines Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$25. From an organically farmed vineyard in Sebastopol owned by Doug and Joanne Williams. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, underbrush, wood pile and beet root lead to a mid weight styled wine with fruit flavors of cherry and red berry accompanied by a vegetal back note. Silky in the mouth, with good acid/tannin balance, and some cherry goodness on the finish.* **87.**

2014 Ultramarine Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.0% alc., \$85 (secondary market). This is a highly acclaimed cult producer of both sparkling wines and still Pinot Noir sourced from Charles Heintz Vineyard, crafted by The San Francisco Chronicle's 2016 Winemaker of the Year, Michael Cruse. *Light red ruby color in the glass. A similar aromatic profile to a Pinot Noir Rosé, with scents of strawberry, cranberry, blood orange, herbs and spice. Rather light in weight and lean in style, with flavors that echo the aromas. Bright and lifted with good acidity, but the attack and finish lack sustenance. Seems like a still wine made with sparkling wine ripened grapes.* **89.**

In Memoriam

Et Fille's Howard Mozeico Dies in Tractor Accident Howard was one of the first Oregon winemakers I got to know when I started the *PinotFile* 15 years ago. He was a software engineer who had started making wine in his garage in 1984. His wines were so desirable that friends and relatives encouraged him to become a winemaker. His daughter, Jessica, agreed to assist him, and a commercial endeavor, Et Fille, was launched in 2003. The French name, meaning “and daughter,” was chosen Howard said because “Mozeico Et Fille” just wouldn't work. The unique pairing of father and daughter allowed them to bring two perspectives and two palates to the wines. The resultant single vineyard Pinot Noirs with the distinctive pink labels were always superb. I tasted barrel samples with Howard several times at August Cellars where he crafted his wines and we developed an enduring mutual respect. The last Et Fille newsletter had noted that a new tasting room had opened, allowing Howard and Jessica to host intimate seated tastings. Jessica told friends of Et Fille that Howard died April 13 at age 70 while working on the land that he loved where he built his home and established a small vineyard and garden. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Mona, daughter Jessica, and a recently-born granddaughter Gabriella. Here is a photo from 2007 I have in my archives:



Famed Maître Sommelier, René Chazottes, Succumbs to Cancer I was recently saddened by the passing at age 74 of my good friend and mentor, René Chazottes. Born in French Madagascar, René came to the United States in 1967. He was the owner and chef of a French restaurant in Sherman Oaks, California, for several years when he developed a serious interest in wine and wine and food pairing. He passed the difficult exam to become a Maître Sommelier of The French Sommelier Society. In 1988, he held the title of Best Sommelier in America, and in 1990 represented the United States in the International Sommelier Competition held in Paris. At this competition, he won first place in the Harmony of Food and Wine contest competing with sommeliers from sixteen other countries. He became a respected wine judge as the only one with a background as both a chef and Master Sommelier and tasted at least 5,000 wines a year. René served as the Chief of the Tasting Panel for *The Underground Wine Journal* as well. He joined The Pacific Club in Newport Beach, California over 30 years ago as the Director of Food and Wine and was revered by the members of this prestigious club. He led members of The Pacific Club on trips to wine regions throughout the world and these trips became legendary due to his many friends worldwide in the wine business that welcomed him.

I got to know René when I asked him to conduct a wine-themed dinner at The Pacific Club for members of my wine club, Le Grand Crew. Over the years, we organized numerous wine dinners together including Superbowls of Pinot Noir, Williams Selyem Pinot Noir vertical, Burgundy tastings, a Spanish wine tasting featuring old vintages of Vega Sicilia and Marques De Murrieta, a Beaucastle vertical, and a Zind Humbrecht dinner. His knowledge inspired me and I found planning the wine dinners and spending time with him was often more rewarding than the dinner itself. When I began my newsletter, *The PinotFile*, he offered salient advice and direction. Through the years he read the newsletter faithfully and frequently offered praise and encouragement. He taught me integrity and the appropriate use of criticism.

His perspective on wine-related issues was insightful. Regarding wine service in restaurants he said, "Restaurants don't have knowledgeable staff that match food and wine. Wine lists are trendy, the wines are more drinkable upon release now, and restaurants do not need to cellar older vintages. People do not take the time to properly dine. Wines by the glass have become popular because diners do not have to commit to one or two bottles and restaurants encourage this program because they are making a killing." René told me the most frustrating part of being a sommelier was that people want to lecture you. "They have a little bit of knowledge about wine and want to pontificate. If you go to see your doctor, you don't tell him what to do. You listen to what he tells you. Make it clear you want the sommelier's help, give him an honest price range, describe a wine you have enjoyed previously, and leave it at that."

When asked about the major factors in choosing a wine with a meal, René said, "I always pay attention to the season of the year in choosing a style of wine that is an appropriate match for the seasonal cuisine. Hardier red wines in winter, lighter wines in summer for example. You match the wine selection with the freshest ingredients that are in season and the spirit of the time of year."

René's favorite food wine was Pinot Noir because of its high acidity and red fruits. Wines high in acid cleanse the palate and increase the desire for more food. He complained that domestic Pinot Noirs often had too much extraction, too much alcohol and were overpriced, and he decried winemaker's efforts to darken Pinot Noir, saying, "Purple Pinot Noir is like a blond African girl - unnatural." French Burgundy was a favorite of his because it had less alcohol and impeccable balance. "The result is that after dinner you do not feel drunk or tired. The Burgundians know how to eat. They take time to eat and they match their wines with the appropriate food."

There were a number of points René made that are highly quotable and I call "The Gospel According to René." Here are a few examples. Of course, the words sounded much better when René said them in his French accent.

*Wine was made for drinking with food and when you have the perfect match,
that is, the very best style of wine with perfectly prepared food,
that is it, the experience will bring you to your knees.*

*The best wine is the wine you have in your glass if it gives you pleasure.
It doesn't matter where it came from or what it cost.*

*Serving ice water at dinner makes me cringe. Ice in water kills the taste of wine.
Only serve plain water without ice at dinner.*

*Do not be intimidated by wine and all the hype surrounding it.
Wine is only fermented grape juice. Do not be overwhelmed by names and prices.
The wine press should not be able to tell you what to drink."*

*French food is most of the time overrated.
But when it is good, it is damn good.*

Noted Littorai winemaker, Ted Lemon, knew René, and he told me the following. "I wish I had known René better. he was a lovely man and had a deep understanding of wine, far beyond his 'fame' in the wine world. He practiced his craft with conviction, devotion and humility, the latter a quality rare indeed in the modern wine world or society in general. All the young somms in California should have been beating a path to his door. He was a connection to a different time in the world of wine. We need to carry on his spirit."



Pinot Briefs

Maisons & Domaines Henriot Buys Majority Stake in Beaux Frères The owners of Henriot Champagne have bought a majority interest in Beaux Frères Winery in Newberg along with 35 acres of vineyards. Beaux Frères produces about 8,500 cases of Pinot Noir annually. Winemaker and co-founder, Michael Etzel remains President and CEO of the winery, while Robert Parker, Jr., retains a small interest in the estate. Etzel retains ownership of his second label, Sequitur, and its vineyard.

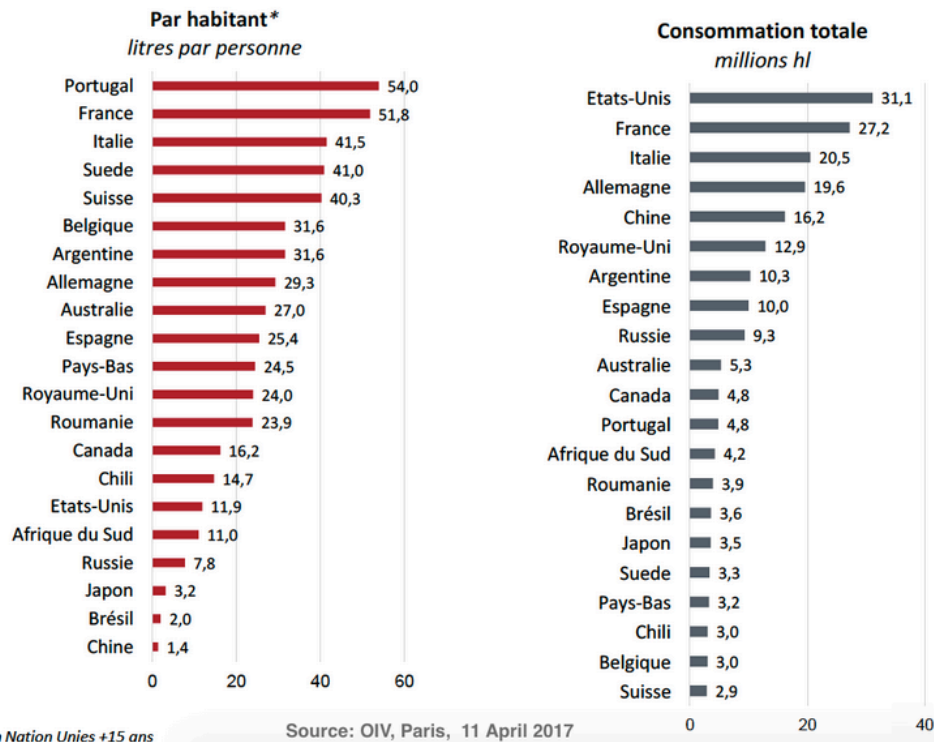
Dehlinger Winery Buys Stiling Vineyard The Dehlinger family acquired the 35-acre Stiling Vineyard that sits next door to Dehlinger's vineyards. A small amount of Stiling Vineyard grapes would go into Dehlinger wines but existing grape contracts will be honored. The Stiling Vineyard was developed by Don Stiling from 1988 to 2005.

Women May be Better Wine Tasters than Men Researchers Dr. Paul Breslin of Rutgers University and Pamela Dalton tested men and women of different ages over several years to see if there was a measurable difference in how men and women smelled. Women in childbearing years were significantly more sensitive to women in other age groups and all men, and were able to improve their ability to smell in ways that men were not. Women of reproductive age could identify smells at concentrations up to 11 orders of magnitude lower than men. Another study conducted in Brazil confirmed Breslin's research. The results do not prove that females have an edge over males in tasting wine but it would seem that cycling women can train themselves to become better at discerning specific odors if cognitively engaged. Men sommeliers have differing opinions on whether this research translates to real world wine tasting, but then the job of sommelier is largely a men's club with only 32 women among the world's 228 Master Sommeliers.

Per Capita Wine Consumption is Comparatively Low in US The US consumes more wine than any other country, but consumption per person is relative low in comparison to many other countries.



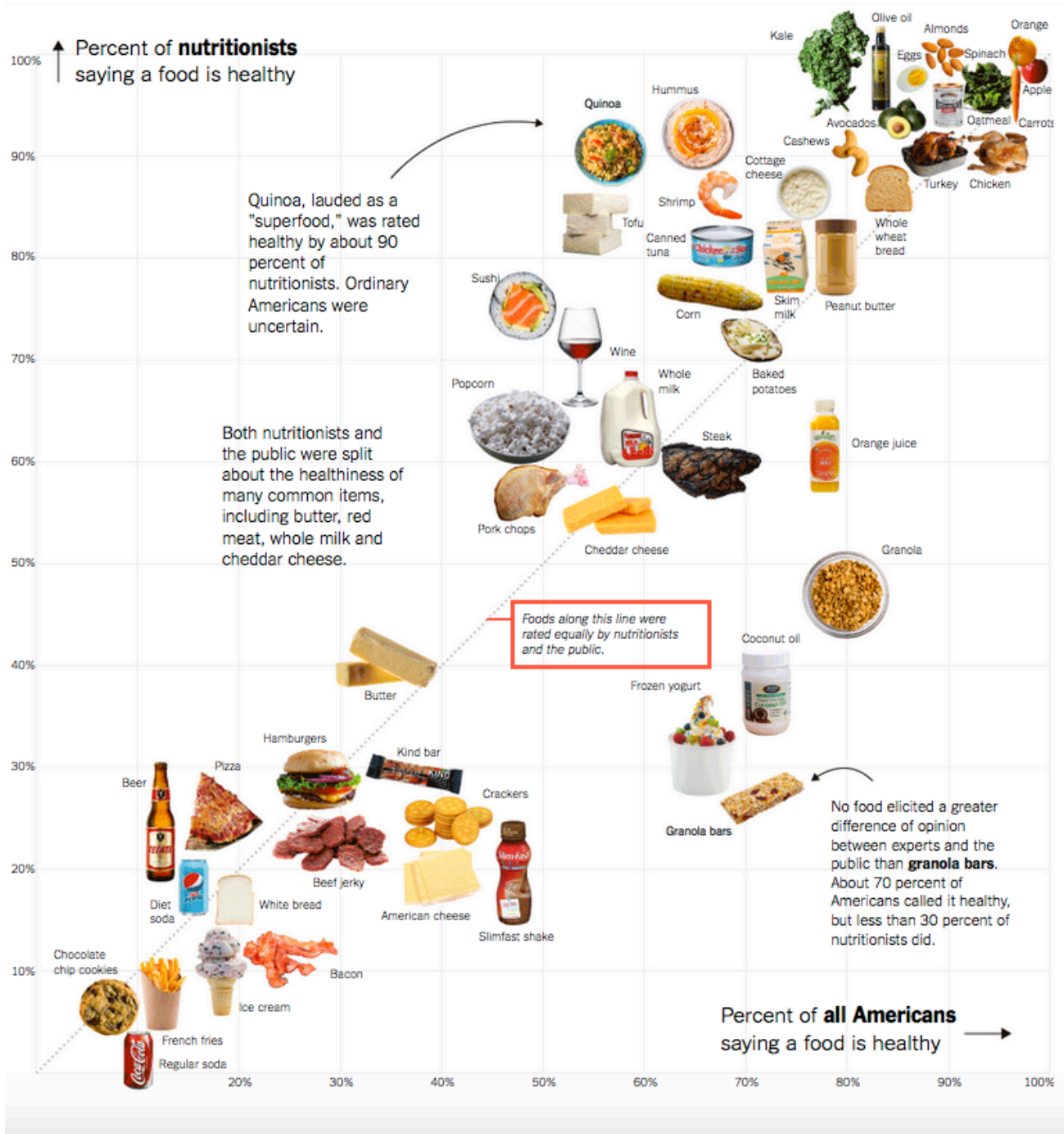
Consommation en 2015



Moving Your Wine Collection A guide, "How to Move Your Wine Collection," is available that gives an extensive overview of how to figure out what to do with your wine collection during a move. Visit www.sparefoot.com/self-storage/blog/17674-how-to-move-wine/.

DTC Wine Shipments Continue at a Furious Pace 45 states now allow direct wine shipments, with California, Texas and New York accounting for about half of DTC purchases. Sovos ShipCompliant's 2017 DTC Report indicated that shipping volume increased more than 17% last year. Sonoma County is showing the fastest growth.

Perceived Health of Wine About 60% of Americans and 70% of nutritionists say wine is health (obviously when drunk in moderation). This chart shows the opinions of nutritionists and all Americans when asked about whether a food was health.



Pinot Noir Masters 2017 *The drinks business* runs a series of tastings covering noble grapes and major wine regions called the Global Masters. The competition assesses wines purely by grape variety rather than by region and the wines are divided only by price bracket and style. The blind-tasting format was conducted by judges who include Masters of Wine and one Master sommelier on February 10, 2017. Some entries that did not receive high scores were either too green and weedy because of lack of ripeness or too alcoholic and jammy due to high temperatures during the growing season or picking too late. Judges were particularly critical of wines that had been produced with too heavy handed extraction and too much firm tannins. US entries that shined came from California's Sonoma Coast, and Edna and Santa Maria valleys, as well as Oregon. The top scoring Pinot Noir was China Girl Pinot Noir from Central Otago's Crown Range Cellar. Full results at www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2017/04/pinot-noir-results-2017/.

SommScavage 3.0 *Wine & Spirits* sponsors a yearly event in which sommeliers join in a Sommelier Scavenger Hunt. This year, four teams of three sommeliers competed to find the most site-expressive North American Pinot Noir. Each team chose a region and visited the vineyards and cellars to find Pinot Noirs with unmistakable terroir character. Forty judges (sommeliers, retailers and wine writers) then assembled at City Winery in New York City to vote on the most compelling collection of terroir-expressive wines. The regions were: Ontario, Canada, Oregon's Willamette Valley, California's Santa Cruz Mountains, and California's West Sonoma Coast. The wines of the West Sonoma Coast carried the day, earning Team Extreme West Sonoma Coast this year's championship title. Six essential West Sonoma Coast Pinot Noirs were noted: 2014 Cobb Coastlands Vineyard Diane Cobb Pinot Noir, 2014 Red Car Doc's Ranch Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2014 Littorai B.A. Thieriot Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2014 Anthill Farms Campbell Ranch Pinot Noir, 2014 Ceritas Elliot Vineyard Pinot Noir, and 2014 Joseph Phelps Freestone Quarter Moon Vineyard Pinot Noir. Josh Reynolds, one of the forty judges said this about the proceedings: "Pinot Noir can be a wine that's difficult to read, but it can also be extremely sexy. There are very few varieties that can be both intellectual and pleasurable at the same time, the flexibility of the grape is fascinating. I think sexy Sauvignon Blanc is bit of an oxymoron, Sexy Cabernet Sauvignon, probably the same way."



Booze Wedding Gift Registry Wine Enthusiast has launched ThirstyNest, the first curated wedding gift registry for wine, spirits and drinkware. If you were getting married, wouldn't you rather have a great bottle of wine to share than a mixing bowl? Visit www.thirstynest.com.

Taste of the Mountains Menlo Park Wine Walk The Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association and Station 13000, a Greenheart Land Company project, present the third annual Taste of the Mountains Wine Walk on Saturday, June 3, in downtown Menlo Park. Profits from the event will benefit the Menlo Park Atherton Education Foundation (MPAEF). Tasting of boutique wineries of the Santa Cruz Mountains such as Mindego Ridge Vineyard, Silver Mountain Vineyards, and Burrell School Vineyards & Winery will be available at various locations up and down Santa Cruz Avenue. Wines will be offered for sale at the Bottle Booth with 20% of proceeds benefiting MPAEF. Tickets are \$49 in advance at www.scmwa.com/event/taste-of-the-mountains-menlo.