



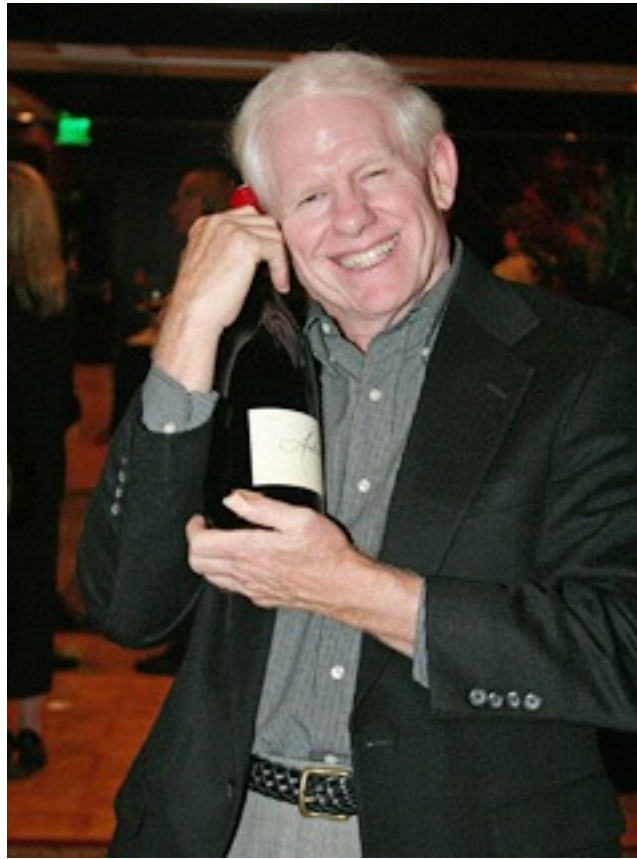
# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir

## Dreamy California Pinot Noir Deserves Some Love



A few years back, Eric Asimov was quoted in *the Journal of Fine Wine* saying, “The wine media in general, in my opinion, is overly focused on greatness - on killer wines, as too many Americans like to say.....We need to pay greater attention to wines intended for drinking rather than wines that will be collected.” I am happy to say in this issue there are many “great” wines that are affordable and intended to be drunk now. They would not be considered “collectible,” but that does not diminish their excellence. Francophiles may turn up their noses, but California Pinot Noir can be dreamy.

It is astonishing to realize how far domestic Pinot Noir has come over my adult lifetime. Noted wine critic, Robert Lawrence Balzer, wrote in 1978 in his book, *Wines of California*, some derogatory, but correct comments about Pinot Noir in California at the time. He said, “I can cite isolated examples of superlative California Pinot Noir, but they are few and far between. Pinot Noir, both the grape and the wine, remains an enigma to California viticulturists and winemakers alike.”

When Balzer penned those quotes, I had begun my medical practice. With new found spendable income and an interest in Pinot Noir through previous experiences with Burgundy, I began to survey the marketplace. As Balzer pointed out, there were few domestic Pinot Noirs that were worthy, with Chalone being the most notable one that I latched on to.

Forty years later, domestic Pinot Noir offers an embarrassment of riches, with great wines easy to find and acquire. As a perfect example, I offer you the superb wines from California reviewed in this issue. In step with California's increasing Pinot Noir riches, the consumer's palate has matured leading to more interest in the subtleties and complexities of Pinot Noir. Also, consumers now hold high standards for great producers. As Jake Lorenzo noted in *Wine Business Monthly* in 2012, "We need to take the time to find out who is uncompromising when making their wines. Once we identify these winemakers, we need to buy their wine and pony up the amount of money they need to stay in business. Consumers with a true appreciation for the craft of winemaking need to do it the right way."

Some readers will not find that all the wines highly rated in this issue meet their personal standards of deliciousness. I would emphasize however that the most lauded wines need to be respected for their balance, complexity and subtleties, and admired for what the winemaker set out to accomplish. I believe you will find the best wines money well spent. Pay special attention to the Pinot Noirs from Morgan and Eric Kent.

September is the 13th annual California Wine Month so this is a timely issue. It is a time to reflect and celebrate California wine. The Golden State now has 4,700 wineries and over 900,000 acres planted to wine grapes throughout 138 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). California produces 85 percent of United States wine and is the number one state for wine and food tourism, attracting 24 million tourist visits to the state's wine regions each year. Two-thirds of the wine shipped in this country comes from California.

A series of videos on California wines, "California Wines: Behind the Glass," is being released by the California Wine Institute. The videos convey the appeal of the regions, climates, and grapes and people that come together to make California wine. "California Wine Month" is the first in the 23-part series debuting on September 6 on Instagram ([california.wines](https://www.instagram.com/california.wines)) before rolling out across social media channels including Facebook ([CaliforniaWines](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaWines)), Twitter ([CalifWines\\_US](https://twitter.com/CalifWines_US)) and YouTube ([California Wine Institute](https://www.youtube.com/CaliforniaWineInstitute)), and going live on [www.DiscoverCaliforniaWines.com](http://www.DiscoverCaliforniaWines.com). A new video will be posted each week until the final video, "Road Trip," wraps up the series on February 7, 2018.

Visit [www.discovercaliforniawines.com/californiawinemonth](http://www.discovercaliforniawines.com/californiawinemonth) to view a full list of September events by date.



Several members of the California Association of Boutique & Breakfast Inns (CABBI) are offering special wine packages for guests at harvest time. For information on the special deals, visit [www.cabbi.com/specials](http://www.cabbi.com/specials).

# Sips of Recently Tasted California Pinot Noir & Chardonnay

## Featured Winery: Morgan Winery

Winemaker Daniel Morgan Lee has been at it a long time. A graduate of the University of California at Davis, he launched Morgan Winery in 1982 while he was the winemaker at Durney Vineyard. This was before the Santa Lucia Highlands became an official AVA, but Daniel recognized the uniqueness of this yet to be discovered mountainside district. In 1984, he moved into his own winery in Salinas and released the first Morgan Pinot Noir in 1988.



In 1996, Daniel and Donna Morgan purchased and planted a 65-acre property in the northern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands. Planting began the following year in what was named Double L Vineyard (in honor of Donna and Daniel Morgan's two daughters). Today, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and other varietals are produced from the 48.5-acre (28 acres of Pinot Noir), organically-farmed, estate Double L Vineyard, the core of Morgan Winery's wine program. The vineyard is near Rosella's and Garys' vineyards, both of which supply grapes for a Morgan vineyard-designated bottling.

A variety of Pinot Noirs are offered including multiple single vineyard wines and clonal wines, all from Santa Lucia Highlands vineyards. The wines are consistently superb and what one would expect from a veteran winemaker. I found the 2015 Pinot Noir releases to be the best wines I had ever tasted from Daniel.

The 2015 growing season in Santa Lucia Highlands was a continuation of the drought in California. The lower than normal rainfall totals and dry winter led to early bud break. The vineyards' proximity to Monterey Bay (the area has a cool Region 1 type climate) mitigated the few heat events, allowing for a fairly normal, gentle, long ripening period. Yields were very low, yet fruit quality was uniformly excellent.

Morgan Winery has been named "Winery of the Year" by *Wine & Spirits* in 1996 and the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 2003.

The winery's tasting room is in the Crossroads Shopping Center off Highway 1 and Rio Road in Carmel. For information and to purchase wines, visit [www.morganwinery.com](http://www.morganwinery.com).



**2015 Morgan Twelve Clones Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14,1% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.61, \$35. An appellation blend of the Santa Lucia Highlands that includes Morgan's Double L Vineyard (36% of final blend). The "Twelve Clones" designation denotes the original diverse Pinot plantings at the Double L Vineyard. Contains over 12 unique clones of Pinot Noir. Aged 9 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Engaging aromas of cherry, strawberry and cranberry draw interest. The mid weight flavors echo the aromas in a nicely composed wine with good intensity of flavor, harmonious tannins, juicy acidity and a resolute finish replete with red berry goodness. A terrific value. 90.*



**2015 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.60, 1,335 cases, \$64. Vineyard Certified Organic since 2002 making it the first vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands to achieve both organic and sustainable certifications. Clones 777, 667, 115, 114 and Pommard 4. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Very special nose that attracts with aromas of plum, blueberry, blackberry, cardamom spice and floral blossom. A high-collared wine that is flat out terrific, offering mid weight plus flavors of an array of blue and black fruits. Gifted with plenty of extract yet discreet in generosity with the right touch of oak and earthiness. A tenacious finish completes the picture. 95.*



**2015 Morgan Double L Vineyard Clones 667/115 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.738, 68 cases, \$64. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Those nose is spectacular, offering waves of aromas over time that include fresh raspberry, black cherry and spice. Perfect in every way, with a heavenly core of deep red cherry, strawberry and raspberry fruits. Very giving, soft and satiny in texture, with a finish of uncommon length. 94.*

**2015 Morgan Double L Vineyard Pommard 5 Clone Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.679, 52 cases, \$64. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Hi-tone aromas of Bing cherry, rose petal, fertile earth and underbrush are followed in the mouth by a mid weight plus charge of deeply flavored black cherry and black raspberry fruits. The masculine styled wine keeps getting better over time in the glass. Very polished, with restrained tannins and a very long and generous finish. 93.*

**2015 Morgan Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.68, 62 cases, \$64. "Pisoni clone" and Dijon 777. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Plenty of interest in this wine that is typical of this vineyard. The perfume of red cherry, violets, green tobacco and baking spices are attractive. Light to mid weight in style, the wine offers a delightful mix of well-spiced red fruits with a notable candied cherry character. Elegant, with a cashmere texture, juicy acidity, and a compliment of tobacco oak in the background. 93.*

**2015 Morgan Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.48, TA 0.65, 71 cases, \$64. Vineyard planted to "Pisoni clone" of Pinot Noir. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The scent of strawberry, raspberry, earth and tar fill the glass. Explosive attack of black cherry fruit saturates every nook and cranny in the mouth. A very appealing accent of spice adds to the experience. Silky in the mouth with a mouthwatering finish of impressive length. 93.*

**2015 Morgan Tondre Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.64, 45 cases, \$64. Dijon clones 943, 115, "828," and 777. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Reserved but pleasant aromas of purple grape, blackberry juice, spice and nutty oak. Intensely fruity, with layers of purple and black fruited extract. The most intense fruit attack in the 2015 Morgan lineup. There is enough tannin to corral the fruit and the finish is notable for its generosity. 92.*

## Featured Winery: Eric Kent Wine Cellars

I have followed the winemaking career of Kent Humphrey since 2004, a year after he produced 375 cases in his inaugural 2003 vintage. His wines, including Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah have shown significantly more sophistication over the years, displaying a refinement that is reflective of his modest personality. His wines have always been popular, but the three Pinot Noirs reviewed here show that his winemaking acumen has reached the equivalent heights of many of California's most notable Pinot Noir winemakers.

Kent (there is no Eric Kent, rather the name inverts his first and middle names) also has the distinction of offering artistic labels that are truly collectable. His wife, Colleen, is an accomplished artist, and the couple



decided early on to showcase artists on their bottles. The two work in harmony in choosing the individual and striking art works that grace the bottles of Eric Kent wines. The art work is from deserving, but often as yet undiscovered talent. Each artist brings a unique vision that compliments the spirit behind the wines. For the story behind the art work, visit the Art Tour on the website at [www.erickentwines.com/gallery/tour.jsp?catid=233](http://www.erickentwines.com/gallery/tour.jsp?catid=233). Both the label art work and the wines in the bottle inevitably lead to discussion. Labels of three wines reviewed here presented above. For the story on making wine at Eric Kent, visit the Wine Tour on the website at [www.erickentwines.com/gallery/tour.jsp?catid=232](http://www.erickentwines.com/gallery/tour.jsp?catid=232).

Kent crafts his wines at a custom crush facility in Santa Rosa. Assistant winemaker Hanna Chort has had a hand in every Eric Kent wine since the 2011 vintage. Eric Kent Wines are sold almost exclusively through the winery's mailing list, with very limited retail distribution. The wines reviewed here are from the 2017 spring release.

**2015 Eric Kent Small Town Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.7% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.66, 221 cases, \$52. Released spring 2017. Artist Kelly Puissegur. Fruit sourced primarily from Freestone area including Michael Valentine, Cleary Ranch, and Rayhill vineyards with additions from Grand Vent Vineyard in the Petaluma Gap and a small amount from Stiling Vineyard in the Russian River Valley. Multiple Dijon clones and Swan and Pommard. 25% whole cluster. Aged in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The aromas reach new heights over time in the glass, revealing notes of black raspberry preserves, spice and sawn oak. A complete wine featuring flavors of blueberry-pomegranate and black raspberry framed by gentle tannins. Steadfast and seamless, with persevering mouth and finish presence. 93.*



**2015 Eric Kent The Pianist Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.3% alc., pH 3.53, TA 0.65, 70 cases, \$52. Released spring 2017. Artist Dutchess. 100% Grand Vent Vineyard. A special barrel selection from assistant winemaker Hanna Chort. 69% Pommard, 25% 667 and 6% 113. Small amount of whole cluster, 30 days on the skins. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Resolute aromas of boysenberry, plum and peppery spice lead to a mid weight core of vivid and vibrant fruit mimicking the aromas. Nicely balanced, with unpretentious tannins, and a glorious finish that has both determined intensity and unrelenting length. A Grand Cru finish for sure. 94.*



**2015 Eric Kent Sascha Marie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.63, 218 cases, \$52. Released spring 2017. Artist Valerie Savarie. 56% Roberts Road, 22% Grand Vent and 22% Stiling vineyards. 50% Swan, 28% 777, 15% Pommard, 4.5% 113 and 2.5% 667. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 62% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. A toned and trim wine with both weight and weightlessness. Aromas and flavors of dark cherry and blackberry are accented with nutty oak. Noticeably juicy, with a gentle grip of tannins and a finish that is joyously long. This wine is a wine of immense charm and poise.* **95.**

## More California Wineries

### Attune Wines, Sonoma

Wines from a sustainably farmed 8.5-acre Pinot Noir vineyard in Carneros owned by vintner partners Mike and Nancy Scribner and Ken and Debbie Venner. The Eight Street Vineyard is planted to a field blend of Dijon 667 and 115. The winemaker is Kenneth Juhasz. The Pinot Noirs are typically aged for 18 months in barrel and an additional year before release. The wines are available on the website at [www.attunewines.com](http://www.attunewines.com).



**2016 Attune Carneros Rosé of Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., \$28, 165 cases, screwcap. The beautiful bottle design should win an award - clear with embossed labelling that really shows off the pink color. Aged 5 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Pretty in moderate pink color. Highly engaging aromas of strawberry, peach, blood orange and spice. Nicely composed, with generous flavors of strawberry, watermelon, orange zest and herbs, finishing with a bright cut of acidity.* **90.**



**2015 Attune Station Ranch Carneros Chardonnay** 13.5% alc., 175 cases, \$36. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Nicely appointed aromas of peach, white rose, spice and vanilla. Sleek in the mouth, with flavors of citrus, warm spices, honey and fresh brioche with a subtle oak note in the background. Nicely balanced with a bright, quenching finish.* **91.**

**2014 Attune Sonoma County Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 320 cases, \$48. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose offers little fruit respite, featuring primarily aromas of oak, campfire and vanilla. Better on the mid weighted palate with a juicy core of fresh black cherry and black raspberry fruit, but the fruit is buried in heavy oak overlay. There are some good features here including a silky mouthfeel and well honed tannins as well as some finishing generosity, but the oak spoils the experience. The winery's name, Attune, means bring into balance, but this wine doesn't quite live up to the name.* **87.**

### Cambria Winery, Santa Maria

Led by Katie Jackson and Julia Jackson of the Jackson Family, Cambria Winery has launched their estate-inspired wine series that includes both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. This series of wines focuses specifically on different micro sites throughout Cambria's Katherine's and Julia's vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley of Santa Barbara County.

A new winemaker has been announced at Cambria this month. It was noted in a previous PinotFile that Jill DelaRiva Russell has been hired to work alongside former Cambria winemaker and general manager, Denise Shurtleff. The wines are available exclusively from Cambria's website at [www.cambriawines.com/wine](http://www.cambriawines.com/wine). All wines are grown, produced and bottled by Cambria Winery in Santa Maria.

**2015 Cambria Element Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 13.6% alc., \$45. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is highly aromatic, featuring the scent of black cherry, dark bittersweet chocolate and toasty oak. Welcome attack of black cherry, boysenberry and tar flavors with a quenching finish offering slightly astringent tannins. The wine has definite merit, but the voluptuous oak treatment is not for me personally.* **89.**

**2015 Cambria Mesa Terrace Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., \$45. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Forceful and assertive, with attractive aromas and flavors of black cherry, blackberry, fertile earth and oak-driven dark chocolate and spice. The flavors fill the mouth without over reaching. Mid weight plus in style, with a firm backbone of tannin that keeps the fruit in line. The broadly flavored finish is appealing. 91.*



**2015 Cambria Fog Tide Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay** 14.4% alc., \$38. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Sumptuous oak, butter and subtle herbaceousness dominate the citrus oil aroma. Serious extract of citrus and orchard fruits greet the streamlined palate with some, but not overbearing dependence on oak. Rich, but not too rich, with enough vibrancy and freshness to appeal. 90.*

**2015 Cambria West Point Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., \$38. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. A strong butter note accompanies aromas of citrus peel, nuts and vanilla. Richly styled and quite succulent on the palate, with flavors of lemon, pear, apple, caramel and honey. Viscous in texture with well integrated acidity. A Callesque style of Chardonnay that is quite popular. 89.*

## En Garde Winery, Glen Ellen

Fourth generation Hungarian winemaker Csaba Szakal left the computer programming field in 1996 to pursue a career in winemaking. He started En Garde Winery in 2007, producing multiple varietals including an appellation blend and vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs from the Russian River Valley.

I have reviewed the wines since the 2011 vintage and the latest 2014 releases are stellar. In 2014, Csaba used less new oak to let the fruit shine through and he achieved that goal. All the wines were bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

The winery's tasting room is located on Sonoma Highway in Kenwood and is open daily.

**2014 En Garde Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 130 cases, \$45. *Martini, Pommard, 667 and 23 clones. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Light garnet color in the glass. The nose offers aromas of oak-kissed black cherry, underbrush and peppery spices. The fruit core features black cherry with added accents of baking spice and smoky tobacco. Welcome balance with a sweet, black cherry finish that hangs on. 89.*

**2014 En Garde Gold Ridge Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., 96 cases, \$55. *Clones 667, "828," 115. Harvest Brix 24.0°. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Light ruby red color in the glass. The nose engages with fragrant notes of dark red Bing cherry and fertile earth. Light in weight, but flavorful, offering the essence of red cherry fruit framed by nutty oak. Crisp and elegant, with good transparency, a suede texture and an appealing cherry-blessed finish that has good length. 91.*

**2014 En Garde Olivet Court Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 73 cases, \$55. *Vineyard is located on Olivet Road in Santa Rosa. Owned and tended by Bob and Ida Montgomery. 35+-year-old vines that are two different Martini selections. Harvest Brix 25.0°. 10% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. Light garnet color in the glass. The scent of plum, blueberry-pomegranate and spicy oak lead to a middleweight styled wine with real interest. Extroverted flavors of purple grape and purple and black berries have a gentle accent of oak spice. Well-rounded, with a beguiling attack and mouth presence set off by well-integrated tannins and an exit that is long and chewy. 93.*



**2014 En Garde Starkey Hill Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.2% alc., 138 cases, \$55. Vineyard is located in Sebastopol just outside the Green Valley AVA. Owned by Diane Starkey and cared for by Arturo Robledo. 30+-year-old vines including clones 23, "828," and Pommard. Harvest Brix 23.6°. 15% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 40% new.

*Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A wine with special drive and purpose, offering engaging aromas of blueberry-pomegranate, blackberry preserves and subtle oak. Enters with a charge of blue and black berry fruits framed by fine-grain tannins and maintains in the mouth. Impeccable harmony, with a long, powerfully aromatic finish. 94.*



**2014 En Garde Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3%, 123 cases, \$70. Favorite barrels. Clones "828," 115, Martini, Pommard and 23. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is richly fruited with spiced black cherry and sumptuous oak. Tenacious flavors of black cherry and blackberry in a juicy, mid weight style with firm tannins for the long haul. The toasty oak is a bit too extroverted now but should integrate further over time. This wine is like an awkward teenager that will need a few years to mature and may be more deserving of a higher score at that time. The winemaker had a vision for this wine as it is composed of favorite barrels in cellar. 92.*

## Gracianna Winery, Healdsburg

This beautiful winery and hospitality center is located on Westside Road. The winery is owned by the Amador family who have been in Sonoma County for decades. The winery is named after Gracianna Lasaga, the family's French Basque great-great-grandmother. 2017 marks the tenth year in business and to mark this occasion, a special Westside Reserve Pinot Noir has been released for which sales will fund the \$10,000 Gracianna Gratitude Grant for Bay Area non-profits serving women and children.

The Estate Vineyard, Mercedes Riverblock, is located in the Middle Reach of the Russian River Valley and is planted to Dijon clone 115. The vineyard is named after Lida Amador's grandmother on her father's side, Mercedes Siordia Amador.

The winery's tasting room, located between Rochioli and Williams Selyem on Westside Road is open daily from April 1-November 30 (5-star Trip Advisor rating). Wines may be purchased on the website at [www.gracianna.com](http://www.gracianna.com).





I have tasted the Gracianna Pinot Noirs going back to 2009. There was a rough patch with the 2012-2014 vintages and I did not review the wines favorably. The wines were ultra ripe with very high ABV leading to a roasted flavor set off by significant tannins and some VA in a couple of wines. The wines reviewed here are back on track showing considerably more refinement, with better balance and charm, and positively recommendable. Winemaking is a family affair.

**2015 Gracianna Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., 514 cases, \$52. Aged in French oak barrels for 11 months and bottle finished. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, oak cask and mushroom are slow to arrive in the glass. More expressive in the mouth, with tastes of Bing cherry and raspberry fruits accented with a deft touch of oak. The tannins are suave, the mouthfeel is satiny and the finish leaves a good impression. 90.*

**2015 Gracianna Estate Mercedes Riverblock Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.6%, 153 cases, \$64. Clone 115. Aged in French oak barrels for 11 months. Unfined and unfiltered. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Initial aromas of blackberry, cassis and black grape give way to fertile earth. Deeply flavored in a mid weight style with a delightful array of well-ripened black fruits framed by ruddy tannins and a deft touch of oak. Quite seamless and like a Swiss watch, keeps on ticking in the glass. My only nit is a slight bit of alcoholic warmth on the finish. 93.*



**2015 Gracianna Westside Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., 150 cases, \$72. Released July 2017. A selection of the best four barrels in the cellar. Bacigalupi Vineyard. Blend of Dijon 667 and 777, and Pommard clone. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Alluring aromas of Bing cherry, cola and baking spice. Delicious flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate in a beautifully composed mid weight style that offers easy going tannins, a soothingly silky texture and tucked in alcohol. A glamorous wine. 94.*



## Mansfield-Dunne, Portola Valley

Lynn and John Peterson, Jr. started this small family label with the 2011 vintage. In 2010, the couple had purchased the 8.8-acre Peterson Vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands planted to Pinot Noir and added another 1.1 acres of Chardonnay. The vineyard has 5 clones of Pinot Noir: "828," 667, 777, 115 and Pommard. All wines are estate grown. The winemaker is veteran Ed Kurtzman.

A second estate vineyard is being developed beginning in 2014 in the Santa Lucia Highlands. The property is at a higher elevation of 1100-1300 feet and consists of 24.7 more acres of Pinot Noir, 5.6 more acres of Chardonnay and a small amount of Syrah and Viognier. The first small production from this vineyard was realized in 2016.

The wines are allocated through a mailing list at [www.mansfield-dunne.com](http://www.mansfield-dunne.com).

**2015 Mansfield-Dunne Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.55, RS <0.1 g/L, 280 cases, \$36. Released September 1, 2017. Clones 667, 115, 777 and Pommard 5. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of dark berry compote are joined by aromas of nutty oak and a hint of soap. Rather luxurious in the mouth with a richly appointed core of boysenberry and black cherry fruits. The tannins are quite agreeable making for easy drinking. The wine finishes long and fruity with a bit of tartness. Two bottles tasted. 88.*

**2015 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.59, RS < 0.1 g/L, 232 cases, \$48. Released September 1, 2017. Clones "828," 777, 115, 777 and Pommard 5. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 70% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nutty oak dominates the nose with added aromas of dark berries and floral bouquet. Soft in the mouth, with a likable core of black cherry, blackberry and vanilla flavors. As in the nose, the nutty oak plays a noticeable role. The wine finishes*

cherry, blackberry and vanilla flavors. As in the nose, the nutty oak plays a noticeable role. The wine finishes with aromatic power accompanied by noticeable tartness in a citrus tone. Two bottles tasted. **88.**

**2015 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.68, RS , 0.1 g/L, 250 cases, \$43. Released September 1, 2017. Hyde clone. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately dark golden yellow color in the glass. The nose is replete with the scent of citrus and toasty oak. More complex on the sleekly textured palate, with flavors of grilled lemon, cooked apple, honey, caramelized sugar and creme caramel. A rich, heady style showing significant winemaking input.* **88.**

## **Mi Sueño Winery, Napa Valley**

Founder Rolando Herrera was recently featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 2017. This winery produces 8,000 to 10,000 cases of Pinot Noir, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Petit Verdot, a red blend, and Chardonnay. Employing 16 workers, the winery farms 40 acres of vineyards. The winery's name, Mi Sueño, means "My Dreams" in Spanish.

Herrera's story is fascinating. He was working a summer job in high school at Warren Winiarski's house in the Napa Valley. Winiarski was the founder of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and offered Herrera a job during harvest. Herrera was quickly entranced with winery work, and stayed at Stag's Leap while he finished Napa Valley Junior College and took viticulture courses from University of California at Davis. Winiarski eventually promoted him to cellar master. He eventually moved on to Chateau Potelle for three years where he made his first wine in 1997. He became a winemaker at Vine Cliff Winery where he started his own tiny label, Mi Sueño, on the side. Eventually, he was able to acquire a warehouse home in downtown Napa for his winemaking.



Herrera sources from estate vineyards farmed exclusively by Herrera Vineyard Management Company for Mi Sueño from multiple appellations in Napa and Sonoma counties. Pinot Noir is sourced from Castiglioni Vineyard in the Russian River Valley and Tierra Blanca Vineyard in Los Carneros.

The wines may be purchased on the website at [www.misuenowinery.com](http://www.misuenowinery.com). Tours and tastings are available by appointment daily. Herrera also produces high-end varietals, including Chardonnay and Pinot Noir under the Herrera label and sold to Herrera Wine Club members only.

**2013 Mi Sueño Los Carneros Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., 915 cases, \$42. Sourced from Tierra Blanca Vineyard Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Leading off are aromas of black fruit compote, fertile earth, dark chocolate, smoke and oak char. Gracious and juicy in the mouth with a mid weight core of purple and black berry fruit with an earthy, mushroom undertone. There is a firm backbone of tannin and a riff of oak in the background. A quintessential Carneros Pinot Noir that tastes like it came from there.* **92.**

## Pellegrini Wine Company, Santa Rosa

This winery traces its heritage in winemaking back to the early 1900s with the arrival of Nello and Gino Pellegrini in New York City from their native Tuscany. After settling on the West Coast, they became Sonoma Country grape merchants in 1925 shipping grapes throughout the United States for home winemaking. After the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the brothers established the original Pellegrini Wine Company and began producing wines from Sonoma County for many of San Francisco's finest shops and restaurants. This heritage now continues today at the winery located at the Olivet Lane Estate that reopened in 2013 after Robert and his mother Aida Pellegrini purchased the winery and vineyard in total from other family members.

The Olivet Lane Vineyard dates to 1973, when the Pellegrini family purchased a 70-acre plum and apple orchard on West Olivet Road in Santa Rosa that became the historic Olivet Lane Vineyard and home to today's modern Pellegrini Wine Company. In 1975, Robert Pellegrini and his father Vincent planted the property to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay using the Martini and Wente clones respectively. This established Olivet Lane Vineyard as one of the first pioneers to grow Pinot Noir in the Russian River Valley.

Winemaker Lynn Krausmann, who has been at Pellegrini Wine Company since its rebirth in 2013, produces wines under the Pellegrini Wine Company and Olivet Lane Vineyard labels with an emphasis on vineyard designated Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from estate grown grapes. Her career spans nearly three decades, including experience as winemaker at Esterlina Vineyard and Williams Selyem.

Pellegrini Wine Company was honored to be one of the featured wineries at this year's International Pinot Noir Celebration.

The tasting room is open daily under the direction of Alexia Pellegrini, Robert's daughter and Chief Operating Officer. Visit the website at [www.pellegrinisonoma.com](http://www.pellegrinisonoma.com).

**2014 Pellegrini Hurst Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., \$50. *Light garnet color in the glass. The aromas of spice cabinet dried herbs and cherry draw you in. Elegant in composure, with lighter weighted flavors of black cherry, blueberry and blackberry set off with appealing spice. A harmonious wine with demure tannins, juicy acidity and a fruit-inspired finish. 92.*

**2014 Pellegrini Toboni Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$50. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of black fruits and oak spice with unique notes of haystack and eucalyptus. Discreetly concentrated flavors of cherry, blueberry and blackberry framed by fine-grain tannins. Satisfying, but a bit shallow on the mid palate and finish. Forward drinking with admirable balance. 89.*



**2016 Pellegrini Russian River Valley Unoaked Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., \$24. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon oil, white grape, honey and white blossoms are echoed in the flavors in the mouth. Better over time in the glass with an appealingly smooth mouthfeel. The wine is driven by lively acidity and finishes with a tight, citrus note (grapes on a high wire). 90.*

**2014 Olivet Lane Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., \$65. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The seductive perfume of spiced Bing cherry is remarkable. Delicious mid weight core of black cherry, cola, anise, spice and toasty oak flavors nicely teamed together. Forward drinking, with tame tannins, juicy acidity and an enduring finish. A classic Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. 93.*



**2014 Olivet Lane Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., \$45. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon, pineapple, spice, brioche and caramel. Rich and ripe in style with a rather luscious core of citrus fruits set off by toasty oak and butter notes. The wine reflects the well-ripened, even tropical fruit character found often in Russian River Valley Chardonnay.* **92.**

## Seal Beach Winery, Los Alamitos

Refer to a recent article on this winery in the *PinotFile*: [www.princeofpinot.com/article/1933/](http://www.princeofpinot.com/article/1933/). It is always interesting to taste single Pinot Noir clone wines. It is challenging to find a unifying thread in wines made from the same clone from different sites since site always trumps clone. The single clone wines are primarily offered in the tasting room and to wine club members and although I don't have retail prices, the wines represent good value.



**2014 Seal Beach Winery Kessler-Haak Vineyard Clone 667 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc.. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, fresh mulch and bark. The mid weight essence of black cherry and blackberry fruit is clothed in oak-driven spice and tobacco that tends to integrate over time in the glass.. The mouthfeel is lush and sleek, the tannins are well integrated and the finish offers good generosity.* **91.**

**2014 Seal Beach Winery Kessler-Haak Vineyard Clone 2A Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc.. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of black berries, underbrush, and rose petal. Sleek in the mouth with flavors of black raspberry and blackberry along with a subtle green herbal thread. Nicely integrated tannins, with some finishing power.* **90.**

**2014 Seal Beach Winery Rio Vista Vineyard Clone 667 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc.. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The aromas are slow to arrive over time in the glass, eventually offering cherry, strawberry and pipe smoke. The palate is more satisfying, with a pleasing combination of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors. Velvety in texture, with modest tannins and a modest finish.* **89.**

**2014 Seal Beach Winery Rio Vista Vineyard Clone 115 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 13.7% alc.. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Comforting aromas of strawberry, red cherry and potpourri. Lighter in weight and rather elegantly styled, with flavors of cherry and baking spices. Very modest tannins and a silky mouthfeel make for easy drinking. I like this wine for its charming delicacy.* **90.**



**2014 Seal Beach Winery Taylor Noelle Pence Ranch Vineyard Clone 459 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., \$35. *Light garnet color in the glass. The nose is rather exotic, offering aromas of unusual spice and flower blossom along with aromas of cherry and underbrush. Light in weight and elegantly composed, with flavors of cherry and red raspberry framed by gentle tannins and subtle oak. Nicely balanced, but rather austere.* **89.**

## Sean Minor Family of Wines, Napa

Sean Minor is a veteran of the wine industry for over 25 years who founded Sean Minor Wines and Four Bears Winery in 2005. Pinot Noir is offered under the Sean Minor, Four Bears and Point North labels. The wines, many of which are value priced, are widely distributed and available on the website at [www.seanminorwines.com](http://www.seanminorwines.com).



**2016 Four Bears Central Coast Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.57, \$15.99. Vinted and bottled by Sean Minor, Graton, CA. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak, fermented in stainless steel open-top fermenters with daily punch downs. Aged in oak. *Light ruby red color in the glass. The aroma of black cherry is set off by oak-driven toast and burnt tobacco. Easy drinking in a straight forward style, with a core of cherry accompanied by swank oak. Sleek in the mouth with imperceptible tannins. 88.*

**2015 Sean Minor Sangiacomo-Roberts Road Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.54, \$48.99. Vinted and bottled by Sean Minor, Sonoma, CA. This vineyard, planted in 1999, is located at the base of Sonoma Mountain at the far northern edge of the Petaluma Gap. A blend of Dijon 777 and Pommard clones. 100% de-stemmed, natural yeast fermentation in open-top fermenters, daily punch downs. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Mellow aromas of black cherry pie and biscuit. A sophisticated wine that attracts by its polished and balanced demeanor. Extroverted flavors of black cherry and blackberry are framed by modest tannins and complimentary oak. The pedigree of the fruit shines through. 92.*

**2014 Point North Oregon Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.58, \$21.99. Produced and bottled by Sean Minor, American Canyon, Napa County, CA. A blend of grapes from vineyards in the Willamette Valley and Umpqua Valley. 100% de-stemmed, 2-day cold soak, fermented in open-top bins and stainless steel fermenters, and aged 6 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Very light ruby red color in the glass. Very shy aromas of red cherry and berry with cozy oak. Light in weight and somewhat austere, offering the essence of oak-infused cherry flavor and gossamer tannins. A simple wine that probably would taste best slightly chilled. 86.*



**2014 Sean Minor Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.56, \$21.99. Produced and bottled by Sean Minor, American Canyon, Napa County, CA. A blend of Dijon and Pommard clones. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak, fermented in open-top fermenters with daily punch downs. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderate light garnet color in the glass. Demure but likable aromas of dark red cherry and berry, fertile earth and seasoned oak lead to an easy drinking mid weight wine with plenty of ripe cherry and blackberry flavor to satisfy. Admirable balance, with a sleek mouthfeel and a modest, but pleasing finish. 89.*

## Siduri Wines, Santa Rosa

Winemaker Adam Lee manages to craft multiple appellation and vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs from Sonoma County, Santa Lucia Highlands, and the Sta. Rita Hills. His expanded number of Oregon bottlings state on the label that they are "Cellared & Bottled by Siduri Wines, Santa Rosa, CA," meaning the wines were vinified in Oregon, presumably at a Kendall-Jackson facility with Adam's oversight. The one exception is the Zena Crown Vineyard bottling that has a label that states, "Produced and Bottled by Siduri Wines, Dundee, OR). The wines are never fined and only occasionally filtered. The appellation wines are consistently solid and represent very good value. All wines are closed under screwcap.

Adam's comments on the 2015 vintage and wines. "Yields were low and the further West or further South one went, the worse the yields were. The Sonoma Coast really got slammed. With these low yields we were incredibly fortunate that things didn't get terribly hot during harvest. It was an early year, but the heat largely held off until later in the harvest - September - and there were really only two short heat spikes in August. We were able to pick around those. 2015 is a year where later ripening grapes such as Cabernet complained of a hot year, but Pinot Noir didn't see that."

Tasting is available daily at the Siduri Wine Lounge in Healdsburg or by appointment at the Siduri Warehouse Winery in Santa Rosa Thursday-Monday. The wines may be purchased on the website at [www.siduri.com](http://www.siduri.com). Wine Club members receive significant discounts.

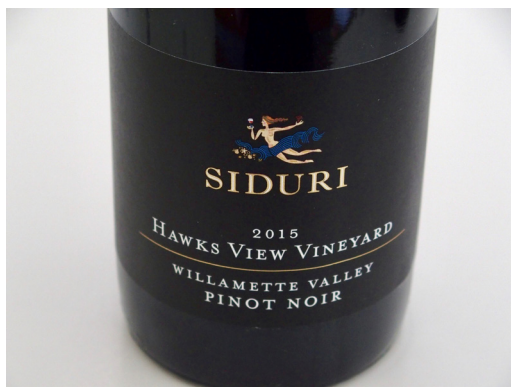
**2015 Siduri Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir** 14.7% alc., 143 cases, \$39, screwcap. Released April 2017. Sourced from four vineyards at the northern end of the Willamette Valley (Muirfield, Hawks View, Arbre Vert and Shaw Mountain). *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose picks up interest over time in the glass, displaying hi-tone aromas of fresh strawberry, cherry, allspice, burnt tobacco and bramble. Very tasty and vibrant offering a mix of deep red and purple fruits. Juicy and refreshing and tres Oregon. 91.*

**2015 Siduri Muirfield Vineyard Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., 291 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released April 2017. Vineyard planted in 1991. Ungrafted and non-irrigated vines. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Intriguing aromas of muddled black cherry and loamy earth. Rather bold, but refined, in a mid weight plus style with highly flavorful notes of earthy plum and black raspberry back by immersed tannins. A satiny texture and persistent finish add to the appeal. The fruit is very classy and seductive. 93.*



**2015 Hawk's View Vineyard Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 295 cases, \$50, screwcap.

Released April 2017. A combination of grapes from ungrafted vines and newer Dijon clones on roots, all dry farmed. *Light ruby red color in the glass. A real charmer with seductive aromas of cherry, cranberry baking spices and earthy flora that hold up nicely over time in the glass. Juicy, forward and elegant, with a light to mid weight core of delicious Bing cherry, cola, red licorice and spice flavors. The wine has a balletic character with impeccable harmony and is thoroughly delightful. 94.*



**2015 Siduri Zena Crown Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., 219 cases, \$70, screwcap. Release October 2017. Inaugural release from this vineyard. Both block and barrel selection. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Deep, dark fruit aromas including black cherry and blackberry with a hint of freshly turned earth and a bit of floral delight. Velvety in the mouth, with an intensely fruited core of sweet purple and black fruits that are expansive in the mouth and through the finish. There is a subtle petrol note and some astringent tannins on the finish that should ameliorate with more time in bottle. 92.*

**2015 Siduri Van der Kamp Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., 143 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released April 2017. Vineyard originally planted in the 1950s. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. There is definitely terroir at work in this individualistic wine but not necessarily in a favored way. Aromas of dusty black cherry, dark raspberry, savory herbs and smoke. The mid weight purple and black fruits are framed by substantial tannins. A brambly herb and earthy mountain character runs through this wine that is more savory than fruity. A slight bit of alcoholic warmth shows up on the finish. 89.*

**2015 Siduri Lingenfelder Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 142 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2017. Vineyard offers a combination of Pommard and Martini clones located in one of the cooler spots in the Russian River Valley. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Lovely aromas of Bing cherry, spice, rose petal and BBQ rub. Very tasty core of fresh and vivid cherry fruit along with a supportive tannic backbone and a very sensual mouthfeel. A fresh and juicy expression of Russian River Valley lusciousness. 92.*

**2015 Siduri Keefer Ranch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., 438 cases, \$55, screwcap. Released September 2017. Vineyard is in the cool Green Valley of Russian River Valley. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pedigreed fruit runs through this wine that features aromas and flavors of strawberry and black cherry fruits with a thread of tobacco oak. Impressive length in the mouth and a drawn out finish in a middleweight style that is welcoming and forward drinking. 91.*

**2015 Siduri Betty Ann Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc., 100 cases, \$55, screwcap. Released September 2017. Clone "828." Revitalizing this vineyard. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Brooding aromas of black fruits and smoky oak. Aggressive onslaught of smoky black cherry and blackberry fruits in a ultra ripe style that has a delicious juiciness. There are enough tannins and acidity to harness the fruit load and the alcohol is submerged, so the wine touts commendable balance. Pinot purists will be turned off by the enormity of the bombastic fruit, but the wine will delight others who cherish luscious, sappy fruit. Totally unique among the Siduri lineup. 90.*

**2015 Siduri Ewald Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.7% alc., 196 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2017. 3.1-acre vineyard located directly behind Kistler Winery. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A straightforward wine featuring aromas and flavors of red cherry, cranberry and toasty oak. Modest in attack and finish modes, with easy going tannins and integrated acidity.* **89.**

**2015 Siduri Parson's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 667 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released April 2017. Vineyard located west of Santa Rosa. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Lovely aroma of fresh cherries, cola and fertile earth. Pleasingly forward and fruit driven, with a mid weight plus core of earthy black cherry and purple berry fruits. Nicely composed with good harmony. Should develop more nuance with more time in bottle.* **90.**

**2015 Siduri Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., 314 cases, \$55, screwcap. Released September 2017. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Comforting aromas of dark berries and sandalwood. Sleek and polished on the palate, with middleweight flavors of blackberry, black raspberry and spice with an earthy undertone. More darkly fruited than usual for Rosella's. The tannins are woven in nicely and the sweet fruited finish satisfies. There is the slightest sense of alcoholic warmth on the finish.* **91.**

**2015 Siduri Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 145 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released May 2017. Clones 667 and Pisoni. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose is both fruity and oaky (charcoal, tobacco, BBQ spices). Sweet fruited in a mid weight style featuring black cherry and black raspberry with a serious investment in oak. Well proportioned tannins and acidity with good persistence on the finish that offers black cherry and sweet tobacco aromatics.* **89.**

**2015 Siduri Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., 390 cases, \$60, screwcap. Released May 2017. A blend of two different sections of the vineyard, both Pisoni clone but on different rootstocks. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant scent of cherry, ripe berry and dried herbs that builds in aromatic intensity over time in the glass. Intense, mouth filling attack of black raspberry, blackberry and cassis flavors that really alert the senses. The tannins hold the fruit in check and the fruit-filled finish is noticeably generous. One senses the alcohol on the lips.* **91.**

**2015 Siduri Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., 272 cases, \$65, screwcap. Released September 2017. Small crop in this vintage led to a more typical bigger, full-bodied wine. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Brooding aromas of fertile earth, black cherry and ripe dark berries. A big boy wine with an exuberant load of fruit extract that captivates with its intensity and length. Mature tannins provide a good frame. A dreamy wine with a soothing texture that is built for aging. My only nit would be the sense of alcohol if you look for it.* **93.**

**2015 Siduri Clos Pepe Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., 190 cases, \$60, screwcap. Released June 2017. Frost decimated yields. Sourced from two hillside blocks. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of pie cherry, spice and toasty oak. The luscious dark cherry and raspberry essence fills the mouth with goodness. Fruit driven in a good sense with immersed tannins, palate harmony, and a tenacious finish.* **92.**

**2015 Siduri John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 190 cases, \$55, screwcap. Released September 2017. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Gracious aromas of dark cherry and berry, granola and toast. Plenty of black raspberry and boysenberry fruit flavor to satisfy in a fruit driven, mid weight style with complimentary oak in the background. Perfectly fine, with some, but not exceptional length on the finish.* **91.**

## **Westwood Estate Wines, Sonoma**

The Annadel Gap Vineyard that serves as the core of Westwood Estate Wines has been certified Biodynamic™ by the Demeter Association following an extensive revitalization of the site led by consultant Phillipe Coderey, winemaker Ben Cane and proprietor Carl Stanton. First planted in the northernmost Sonoma Valley in three stages between 2001 and 2009, the 22 planted acres consist of nine clones of Pinot Noir, four clones of Syrah, and micro blocks of Counoise, Mourvèdre, Grenache, Tannat, Roussane and Viognier.

The wines are produced and bottled by Westwood Wine company in Sonoma. The website is [www.westwoodwine.com](http://www.westwoodwine.com).



**2016 Westwood Estate Annadel Gap Vineyard Sonoma Valley Rosé** 13.5% alc., pH 3.32, TA 0.628, 189 cases, \$25. Released May 2017. Harvest Brix 23.0°-25.0°. Counoise (40%) and Tannat (13%) grapes picked early for making a rosé and then whole cluster pressed. The Pinot Noir (40%), Mouvèdre (3%) and Syrah (4%) were collected as a saignee. All varieties individually fermented in neutral French oak puncheons, aged on lees for 4 months, and underwent partial malolactic fermentation. Gently fined and filtered. *Moderate pinkish orange color in the glass. Market reduction upon opening (burnt match, sulfur) that resolves over time in the glass revealing aromas of strawberry, juniper berry and underbrush. Quite flavorful with tastes of plum, cherry, Damsel plum, spice, apricot, peach and savory dried herbs. Only the slightest tannins show up on the finish that has some length. Much better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, so this may be a rare instance of a Rosé benefiting from decanting.* **89.**

**2015 Westwood Wendling Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., pH 3.53, TA 0.53, 216 cases, \$72. Released May 2017. This is the closest vineyard in Anderson Valley to the Pacific Coast. 23 acres, five clones including Pommard, 667, Calera, "828," and 115. Clones fermented separately, 25% whole cluster, 5 to 6-day cold soak, 18 days on skins. Gently basket pressed. Aged 16 months on lees in French oak barrels, 56% new. Gently fined and bottled unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. This wine needed a day after opening to unwind. Aromas of black cherry, dried herbs and smoky oak. More fruit expression on the palate, offering tastes of black raspberry, boysenberry, blackberry and spice framed by facile tannins and a touch of oak. The fruit really comes out of its shell the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **90.**



**2015 Westwood Clone 90 Estate Annadel Gap Vineyard Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.521, RS 0.7 g/L, 48 cases, \$64. Release October 2017. Harvest Brix 23.6°. Clone 90 is the Chambertin clone. 6-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, 15 days on skins. Gently basket pressed. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Gently fined, bottled unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Highly perfumed with aromas of black cherry, spice and pipe smoke. Light to mid weight in style with flavors of black cherry and blackberry along with a thread of savory herbs. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose was more appealing with a combination of cherry, spice and undergrowth aromas and more fruit expression on the palate. You must decant now or cellar.* **92.**

**2015 Westwood Calera Clone Estate Annadel Gap Vineyard Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.506, RS .5 g/L, 100 cases, \$64. Harvest Brix 24.1°. 6-day cold soak, gentle punch downs, on skins for 15 days. Basket pressed, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new, for 16 months. Gently fined and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely appointed aromas of cherry, spice, earthy flora and toast. Mid weight plus flavors of black raspberry, blueberry-pomegranate, black tea, Hoison and earth. There is good length in the mouth and on the finish that is juicy and intensely fruity. Oak shadows the background as a compliment. Considerably better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **92.**

**2015 Westwood Sangiacomo Vineyard-Roberts Road Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.29, TA 0.73, 289 cases, RS .4 g/L, \$44. Released May 2017. Harvest Brix 22.8°-23.2°. Vineyard planted in 1999. Clones 17 and 95. Native yeast fermentation in egg-shaped vessel. Primary fermentation and partial malolactic fermentation finished in 35% new and neutral French oak barrels and puncheons for 11 months with 6 months of lees stirring. Clones blended after 11 months and finished in stainless steel for 5 months. Lightly fined and filtered. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Complex aromatic profile that features lemon, olive oil, banana and nutty oak. Rich flavors of lemon, pineapple and white peach in a rather decadent style. Slightly viscous in the mouth, with a very long, intensely fruited finish.* **90.**

## **Zina Hyde Cunningham, Sonoma ( Associated with Ledson Winery & Vineyards, Kenwood)**

**2014 Zina Hyde Cunningham Julia's Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Reserve Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.52, RS 0.42 g/L, 99 cases, \$68. Winemaker Steve Ledson crafts this wine from 10 acres of vines containing 4 Dijon clones, planted at high elevation on Ledson's 6,000-acre Bald Hills Ranch. Native yeast fermentation. Aged 21 months in French oak barrels, 28% new. Bottled without filtration. *Moderately dark*



garnet color in the glass. Very fragrant with elevating aromas of plum, black raspberry, blackberry, pipe smoke and cardamom spice. A gorgeous wine that is rich and full on the palate with black fruits, yet weightless. Delicious flavors of black fruits, spice, black tea and smoke. The oak a slightly heavy handed but the bodacious fruit shines through. **93.**



**2015 Zina Hyde Cunningham Adeline's Vineyard Anderson Valley Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., pH 3.31, TA 0.588, RS 1.55 g/L. Sourced from a Wente selection planted on 2 acres at 1,450 elevation on Steve Ledson's 6,000-acre Bald Hills Ranch. Native yeast fermentation. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Bottled without filtration. *Light golden yellow color in the glass.*

*Bright aromas of lemon-lime, peach, cantaloupe and buttery brioche. Discreetly rich flavors of citrus, pear and white peach with a hint of caramel. Slightly creamy in texture, with integrated acidity and a uplifting finish. Quintessential California style of Chardonnay. **94.***



## More Wines



**2013 Iris by 1849 Wine Company Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., \$25.70. Produced and bottled by 1849 Winery, Lodi, CA. Artwork on label is "Tool of Dissent" by Saber, a legend in the graffiti world and an urban art pioneer. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Deep aroma of well ripened dark fruits with hints of vanilla, toast, spice and rose petal. A explosion of very ripe black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors*

*greet the palate. Well-structured tannic backbone with a touch of oak and some finishing persistence. Powerful fruit is the main feature of this wine. **89.***



**2014 Pence Ranch Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., \$27. Winemaker Sasha Moorman.

Produced and bottled by Pence Ranch, Lompoc, CA. I could not find this wine on the website or wine-searcher. I bought it at Whole Foods. *Light ruby red color in the glass. The nose opens beautifully over time displaying scents of cherry, cardamom spice, rose petal, pipe smoke and a touch of toasty oak. Light to mid weight in style, and forward drinking, offering flavors of cherry, cranberry, raspberry, and exotic spices backed by easy going tannins. A deft touch of oak plies the background, and the wine finishes with a nice cherry kiss. A terrific value in a Pinot displaying some whole cluster sensibilities. **90.***



**2015 Viluko Mayacamas Mountains Sonoma County Chardonnay** 13.5% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.58, 90 cases, \$38. Produced and bottled by Viluko Vineyards, Sonoma, CA. Vineyard planted to a Robert Young selection (clone 17). Frost damage reduced crop in this vintage by 50% (less than 0.5 tons-per-acre). Harvest Brix 22.5°. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented with lees stirring twice monthly for 6 months during malolactic fermentation, then aging on the gross lees with monthly lees stirring for another year. Aged in 45% new and 55% second use French oak barrels. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon oil, green apple, smoke and pine sap lead off. Sleek and polished in the mouth, with alluring flavors of lemon, grapefruit, spice, and oak-*

*driven notes of vanillin, caramel, toast and buttery brioche. Quite satisfying, with good but not imposing cut on the finish. **91.***

# Kingston Family Vineyards

Kingston Family vineyards is a boutique winery located on a farm that has been in the owner's family for a century. C.J. Kingston left Michigan and headed to Chile in the early 1900s searching for gold. He never did strike gold, but he found a large cattle ranch 12 miles from the Pacific Ocean in the hills of Chile's Casablanca Valley. Third generation, Courtney Kingston, while attending Stanford University, convinced her family to expand their ranch from dairy and cattle into wine. The family planted a vineyard on the property beginning in 1998. The area was known exclusively for white wines but she bet on Pinot Noir and Syrah. The initial release was 400 cases of Pinot Noir and Syrah in 2003.

Today, Kingston Family Vineyards is recognized as one of the top wineries in Chile and known for producing some of Chile's best Pinot Noirs. The winery produces 5,000 cases annually of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc from estate vineyards in Casablanca, Chile. Kingston collaborates in MOVI, Chile's Movement of Independent Winemakers, whose members make small lots of artisan wines by hand.



The 300-acre estate vineyard is planted to Dijon clone 777 and Kingston Grande and Chico that are the winery's own selections, as well as Valdivieso and Conco y Toro. 95% of the vines are own rooted in red clay loam containing decomposed granite.

The wines are produced under the guidance of American consulting winemaker Byron Kosuge in association with Chilean winemaker Amael Orrego. Photo below is of Byron and Courtney. Byron says, "A lot of things have come together at Kingston Family Vineyards in the last few years. The vines have reached an age where they are naturally balanced and more consistent in yield and quality. We have fine-tuned our combination of small barrels, larger casks and concrete tanks to better develop and preserve the wines."



The winery has been a notable participant in the World of Pinot Noir and the International Pinot Noir Celebration. It was awarded “Brand of the Year” honors in 2016 by *Wine & Spirits* magazine.

The wines are imported to the United States by Kingston Family Vineyards LLC, Portola, CA, and worth seeking out. They are also sold on the website at [www.kingstonvineyards.com](http://www.kingstonvineyards.com). These wines are among the best values in the current Pinot Noir and Chardonnay marketplace.



**2016 Kingston Family Vineyards Tobiano Casablanca Valley Chile Pinot Noir** 12.5% alc., 860 cases, \$24. Released September 2017. Aged primarily in oak barrels but most are neutral. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A savory nose leads off with aromas of dried herbs, floral bouquet, strawberry and tobacco. Forward drinking with bright flavors of red cherry and red berry boosted by lively acidity, displaying some persistence on the quenching finish. This is a welcome Pinot that is pleasurable without needing analysis. 90.*



**2016 Kingston Family Vineyards Alazan Casablanca Valley Chile Pinot Noir** 12.5% alc., 365 cases, \$38. Released September 2017. Some whole cluster. Aged 8 months in oak barrels and concrete egg vat. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose becomes more expansive over time in the glass, revealing aromas of cherry, spice, sous bois and a hint of toasty oak. Well-mannered in the mouth with impressive harmony, offering mid weight flavors of earthy cherry, raspberry and spice. The tannins are nicely integrated making for easy drinking now. The somewhat earthy and savory character reminds me more of Old World than New World. In any case, an excellent wine. 93.*



**2016 Kingston Family Vineyards Sabino Casablanca Valley Chile Chardonnay** 13.0% alc., 415 cases, \$30, screwcap. A combination of oak and concrete vessels are used for fermentation and aging. Native yeast, a little lees stirring, slow malolactic fermentation and little or no sulfur. Aged 10 months and released September 2017. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. comforting aromas of lemon oil, apple and lees. Round and composed on the palate with flavors of lemon, grapefruit, pear and apple that persist through the finish that offers an energetic grip of acidity. No oak in sight, just terrific purity of fruit. Tasted twice with same result. 93.*

# Knudsen Vineyards New Releases

The fourth vintage of Knudsen Vineyards Pinot Noirs includes the 2015 Estate Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir and the 2015 Estate Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. Knudsen Vineyards was founded in 1971 and is one of the oldest wineries in Oregon and still Knudsen family owned.

450 cases of the 2015 Estate Pinot Noir were produced in the winery's traditional style blending estate grown fruit from Block 5, planted in 2001, and Block 6, planted in 2004, both clone 777 and Block 3, planted in 2000, clone 667. The wine was released to the public in September. 225 cases of the 2015 Estate Reserve were produced. This wine includes traditional Blocks 5 and 6 and a new vineyard Block 1 planted at a higher elevation in 2006. This wine was produced because of the extraordinary vintage and a blocks of grapes that revealed themselves to be special and distinct. The Estate Reserve will be only offered to mailing list members. To purchase wine, visit [www.knudsenvineyards.com](http://www.knudsenvineyards.com).

The family owners came together from across the country in July to blend the 2016 Chardonnay that will be released in spring 2018. Ryan Collins, previously Director of Viticulture at A to Z Winery, became Head Viticulturist at Knudsen Vineyards. Jose Sanchez, who started as a field worker over ten years ago, was promoted to Vineyard Manager at Knudsen Vineyards.

**2015 Knudsen Vineyards Estate Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.57, 500 cases, \$55, screwcap. Clones 777 and 667 planted in Jory soil. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Light ruby red color in the glass. A very friendly wine with cozy aromas of red cherry, cranberry and sandalwood. Light to mid weight in style, with a charming core of red fruits with cherry as the centerpiece. Additional accents include baking spices and brioche. Elegantly styled and forward drinking with harmonious tannins and a robust finish that seems to build in generosity over time in the glass. This lovely wine reveals the demure, angelic side of Pinot Noir.* **93.**



**2015 Knudsen Vineyards Estate Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.55, 225 cases, \$70, screwcap. Clone 777 planted in Jory soil. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass.*

*Welcoming aromas of fresh cherry, spice and rose petal. Upon entry, the wine engages with riveting and luscious black cherry, black raspberry and plum flavors accented with a charming dose of spice. A sophisticated wine that is truly special with impeccable balance, a seamless texture and a grand finish that lingers until the next sip. This collectible wine was even more seductive when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle when my wife and I eagerly polished it off.* **96.**



# George Wine Company

Proprietor and winemaker George Levkoff is a disciple of Burt Williams. After a career in academia and bond trading, he had a wine epiphany with the 1991 and 1992 Williams Selyem Rochioli Vineyard Pinot Noir. Four years later, he left his bond trading job in Los Angeles and headed to Sonoma County. He interned at Williams Selyem from 1999 to 2002 while also working with Margi Williams at Brogan Cellars. With grapes from Hirsch Vineyard, he released 150 cases of his inaugural Pinot Noirs in 2003. The wines quickly caught the fancy of top sommeliers in Las Vegas and New York and George (or "george" since George has a thing for lower case) Pinot Noir became a cult wine showing up on the wine lists of this country's most notable restaurants. I have tasted and reviewed practically every wine from George Wine Company going back to 2005. I was always captivated by the wines that replicated the Burt Williams' years of Williams Selyem Pinot Noir.

George resides in Healdsburg and is a one-man operation, performing every step of winemaking from sorting, to vilification, to bottling, and even some delivering. The wines are allocated to a faithful mailing list at [www.georgewine.com](http://www.georgewine.com).

George has released Vintage XIV Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and there are less than 100 cases still available. Current offerings include Hansen Vineyard Pinot Noir, Leras Vineyard Pinot Noir, Martinelli Ceremonial Vineyard and Sonoma Coma (a blend of all three Russian River Valley vineyards). The wines are \$60 a bottle with the Sonoma Coma priced at \$50 a bottle. I did not get a chance to review these wines but I did taste a number of older vintages from my cellar recently.



**2004 george Vintage II Hirsch Vineyards Block 3A Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., 634 bottles. *Dark brown, root beer color in the glass. Aromas of worn leather, barnyard, black cherry, sweet smoke, geranium and oak spice. Still offers from fruit but it is dried out with added flavors of earth, orange pekoe tea, and wood. Juicy, with silky tannins. The fruit fades quickly over time in the glass. 85.* Drink up.

**2004 george Vintage II Hirsch Vineyards Block 4A Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., 647 bottles. *Dark brown, root beer color in the glass. Aromas of grape must, Nutella, dark chocolate, pipe smoke and rose petal. Still enjoyable, with a mid weight core of dried cherry, nought, cola and fig flavors. Juicy with silky tannins, fading over time in the glass. 87.* Drink up.

**2005 george Vintage III Hirsch Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 492 bottles. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Very engaging, fresh aromas of black cherry, black raspberry and mulch. Still delightful, with a mid weight charge of blackberry fruit engaged with a compliment of oak. Slightly viscous and polished in the mouth with immersed tannins and a long finish. Easy to mistake this wine for a more recent vintage. 92.* Drink now to 2025.

**2007 george Vintage V Sonoma Coma Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., 1,111 bottles. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. The nose leads with deep aromas of Bing cherry. An easy quaff, with light to mid weight flavors of cherry, strawberry, baking spices and guaiacol. Still some freshness with refined tannins. 88.* Drink now to 2020.

**2007 george Vintage V Ceremonial Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., 3,888 bottles. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry and pomegranate with a sniff of volatile acidity. Commendable attack and finish of tasty black cherry fruit accent with a touch of oak. Still some tannins evident and slight astringency on the finish. Quite satisfying and vibrant due to juicy acidity.* **89.** Drink now to 2022.

**2007 george Vintage V Hansen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.** 13.6% alc., 959 bottles. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of sweet smoke, mulch and cow manure. Wines from this vineyard always show a fecal, guaiacol note making them very distinctive and terroir-driven. Mid weight flavors of black cherry and black raspberry framed by silky tannins and honed acidity. Still fresh, with a generous finish.* **90.** Drink now to 2022.

**2008 george Vintage VI Sonoma Coma Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 2,499 bottles. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Really inviting aromas of black cherry, spice and sweet oak. Satiny in the mouth, with plenty of fresh black cherry fruit delivering an expansive experience that lasts through a noticeably persistent finish. Oak plays a supportive role.* **90.** Drink now to 2025.

**2008 george Vintage VI Martaella Vineyard 50% King Family Vineyard 50% Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.** 14.9% alc., 1,555 bottles. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of very ripe purple and black fruits are echoed in the flavors of this mid weight plus styled wine. Sappy and extracted, even hedonistic. Unusual richness for a george Pinot Noir. Mild oak input, proportional tannins, and a hint of alcoholic warmth on the finish.* **89.** Drink now to 2022.

# Pinot Briefs

**33rd Annual WineSong Event Raised More Than \$700,000** Mendocino's premier food and wine event on September 8 & 9, 2017, had increased auction sales and more guests than ever participating in auctions. Over \$700,000 was raised for the Mendocino Coast District Hospital.

**2017 Sonoma County Wine Auction Raised Record-Breaking \$5.2 Million** This year's event was held on September 16 at La Crema Estate at Saralee's Vineyard. The money raised supports Sonoma County charities focusing on literacy, education, health and human services, the environment, and arts and culture. The top wine-only lot was a six bottle collection of rare large format 2014 Kosta Brown Pinot Noir that sold for \$37,000. Photo courtesy of George Rose.



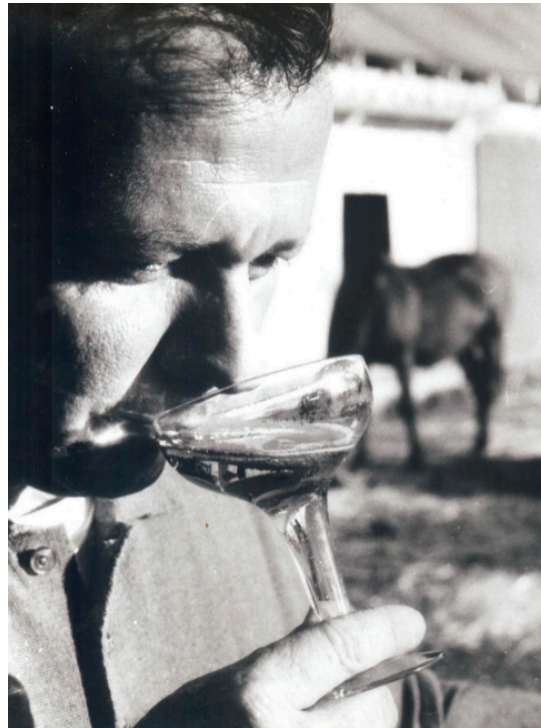
## **Silver Oak's Duncan Family Buy Dick Erath's Prince Hill Vineyard in Dundee Hills**

*Wine Spectator* reported online on September 14, 2017, that the family behind Silver Oak purchased the 40-acre Prince Hill Vineyard in Oregon's Willamette Valley. The vineyard will be used as a source of grapes for the Twomey label. The vineyard was planted by Oregon pioneer Dick Earth in 1983. Neighboring vineyards include Archery Summit, Bergstrom and Domaine Serene. Erath had previously sold his winery in 2006 to Chateau Ste. Michelle Wine Estates but kept the Prince Hill Vineyard because he had a home on the property. Twomey winemaker Eric Miller joined Twomey in 2014 after working at Evening Land in Oregon and was eager to craft Pinot Noir from Oregon. The first vintage for Twomey from Prince Hill Vineyard will be 2017 but a vineyard designate may not be immediately forthcoming as some revitalization and change in clones in the vineyard is planned.

**2017 Garagiste Wine Festival** Sixty micro-wineries will be featured at the Garagiste Wine Festival in Paso Robles, November 10-12. A wide variety of wines, styles and regions are included. Founder Doug Minnick said, "Because our winemakers aren't concerned with getting their product onto supermarket shelves, they are free to explore their winemaking passions, which makes for an absolutely unparalleled and exciting range of cutting-edge wines. The three-day festival includes the "Rare and Reserve" event, a Grand Tasting at the Paso Fairgrounds, Tasting Seminars, and the Garagiste Paso Passport day. Some wineries known for Pinot Noir

participating include Asuncion Ridge, Camlow Cellars, Cutruzzola Vineyards, RN EState, Ryan cochrane Wines, Silver Wines, Stolo Family Vineyards and Weatherborne. The nonprofit festival raises money for The Garagiste Scholarship at Cal Poly to educate future winemakers. To buy tickets, visit [www.californiagaragistes.com/buy-tickets/](http://www.californiagaragistes.com/buy-tickets/).

**Bacigalupi Releases First Sparkling Wine** Bacigalupi Vineyards has announced the release of the Brilliant sparkling wine as a family tribute to Paul Robert Heck, forty years after his passing. Pamela Bacigalupi, winegrower and part owner of Bacigalupi Vineyards and Heck's daughter, is pleased to recognize her Heck family roots. The 2014 Brilliant is an estate grown Methode Champenoise cote of 50% percent Pinot Noir and 50% Chardonnay. Released in an extremely limited production, each bottle retails for \$70. Paul Robert Heck was the son of Adolf Ludwig Heck Sr. who emigrated to America from Alsace-Lorraine in the early 1900s. He reopened Cook's Imperial Champagne Cellars after Prohibition. Upon returning from WW II, he joined his father and worked for the American Wine Company. In 1948, Paul and his wife, Anna Marie, moved to Lodi, where Paul worked for Italian Swiss Colony. He later relocated to Healdsburg and oversaw operations at the company's Asti winery. Along with his brother, Adolf Jr., Paul and their families purchased Korbel Champagne Cellars in 1954 and part of Korbel is still owned by Heck descendants. Pam spent her childhood on the Korbel estate. Today, she farms Bacigalupi Vineyards with her husband, John, and negotiates contracts with local grape growers and buyers. Photo of Paul Heck below. Visit [www.bacigalupivineyards.com](http://www.bacigalupivineyards.com).



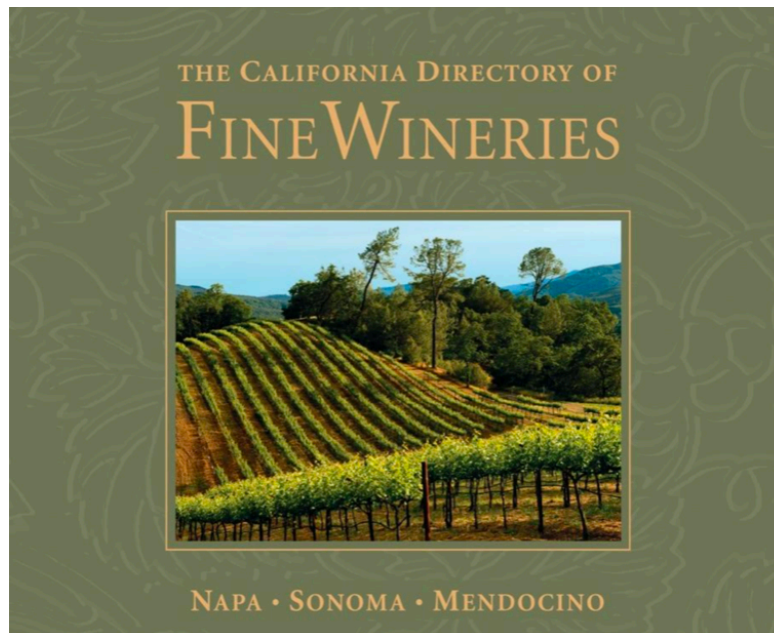
**English Pinot Noir Attracting Interest** An article online in *Decanter* by Jane Anson is titled, "Is English Pinot Noir really getting better? Pinot Noir is the second most planted variety in England, accounting for almost one quarter of total plantings. Most English Pinot Noir is used in sparkling wines that account for 70% of all English wines. Global warming, improved vineyard management and cellar practices have all contributed to the success of English still Pinot Noir. The clones that seem to work best are Dijon and a few German clones. The wines are crafted in a lighter, fresher style, similar to an AOC Bourgogne Rouge in quality.

**Russian River Valley Wine Experience with Kosta Browne** Hotel Healdsburg and Dry Creek Kitchen are offering a food and wine escape. Stay two nights in a guest room at Hotel Healdsburg and enjoy a private tour of the Kosta Browne winemaking facility that is not open to the public. Complete the day with a special tasting menu at Dry Creek Kitchen paired with Kosta Browne wines. The package (starting at \$1149 plus taxes and fees) also includes a daily gourmet breakfast and valet parking. Call reservations at 707-922-5256.



**Maggy Hawk Releasing 2014 Unforgettable Pinot Noir** Allocations are opening soon for Maggy Hawk Unforgettable Pinot Noir, only made in the years when the vineyard block best expresses itself. I gave the wine a rating of 95. To reserve your bottles, call 888-339-7726. There are limited amounts of 2014 Jolie, Afleet, Stormin' and Graceful Lady still available.

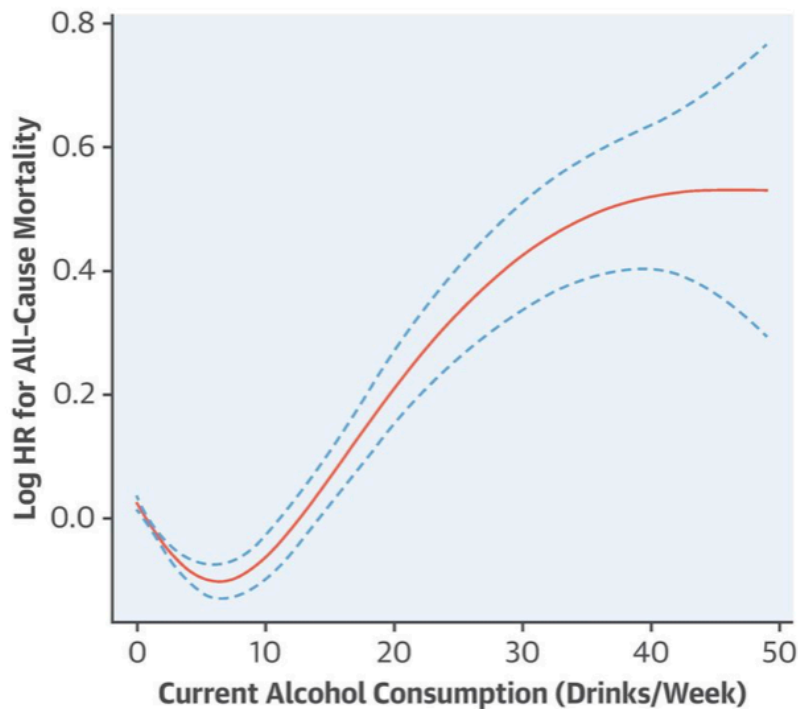
**8th Edition of North California Fine Wineries Published** This hardcover wine country travel book (and ebook for Kindle and iPad) is the top seller on Amazon for "California Winery Books." The latest title: *The California Directory of Fine Wineries, 8th Edition (Napa/Sonoma/Mendocino)*. The new edition includes many notable Pinot Noir producers including Anaba Wines, Donum Estate, Domaine Anderson, Dutton-Goldfield, Gary Farrell Vineyards and Winery, Handley, Hartford Family, Iron Horse Vineyards, Lichen Estate, Papapietro Perry, Patz & Hall and Three Sticks. Each winery is profiled including location, tasting room hours, and winemaker. Photos are by noted photographer Robert Holmes. Can be used as a guide to the Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino wine regions. Easy to find the book on Amazon - [www.amzn.to/2wtTszB](http://www.amzn.to/2wtTszB) - or Barnes & Noble, or CostCo.



**Premium Wine Sales Decelerating** Rob McMillan of Silicon Valley Bank reported at [www.svbwine.blogspot.com](http://www.svbwine.blogspot.com) the following. "While premiumization is in full force and the wine business is still growing, today we are at a tipping point: The growth rate in premium wine is decelerating and has been since late 2015. We are at the start of a long term secular market change." One reader responded, "The largest percent of the population was born prior to 1967, over 50 now and history has shown that afterimage 50 individuals spend less each year going forward on stuff. There is roughly another 7-10 years before the millennials have a large enough presence in the prime buying age bracket to stimulate another rally like we saw from 1995-2000."

**Important Study of Relationship of Alcohol Consumption to All-cause Cardiovascular, and Cancer-related Mortality** The study was published in the *Journal of American College of Cardiology* recently. 34,754 patients were followed looking at what participants died of in median follow-up of 8.2 years. Compared with lifetime abstainers, those who were light or moderate alcohol consumers were at a reduced risk of mortality for all causes. There was a significantly increased risk of mortality for all causes and cancer in adults with heavy alcohol consumptions. Binge drinking equal to one or more than one day a week was also associated with an increased risk of mortality for all causes. The authors concluded that light and moderate alcohol intake might have a protective effect on all-cause and cardiovascular-specific mortality in U.S. adults. The author's analysis shows a clear J-shaped curve for the relation of alcohol to mortality, with lower total, cardiovascular, and even cancer mortality rates for light and moderate drinkers who do not binge drink.

## CENTRAL ILLUSTRATION: Alcohol Consumption and All-Cause Mortality Risk in U.S. Adults



Xi, B. et al. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2017;70(8):913-22.

**Jeff Pisoni's New Luli Release** Luli is a partnership between Master Sommelier Sara Floyd and the Poison Family. A new Luli release is the 2015 Highlands Ranch Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (\$45). Luli Pinot Noir has been typically a blend of various Santa Lucia Highlands Vineyards, but this inaugural release is from a single vineyard. Only 85 cases produced. Great value wines at [www.luliwines.com](http://www.luliwines.com).

**New Releases from Zena Crown & Gran Moraine** Three limited production Pinot Noir from the Eola-Amity Hills are new released to the mailing list. 2014 Zena Crown Slope, 2014 Zena Crown Conifer and 2014 Zena Crown The Sum. The wines, crafted by winemaker Shane Moore, were stunning in the last vintage. Call 866-462-4641. Shane Moore is also the winemaker at Gran Moraine. This winery has released the 2015 Dropstone Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir and 2015 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir. Call 855-831-6631.

**Inaugural Elton Vineyard Releases** The inaugural vintage of Elton Pinot Noir (\$75) and Chardonnay (\$75) are now released. Dick and Betty O'Brien planted Elton Vineyard in 1983 and spent their lives growing Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Today, the vineyard is owned by Willamette Valley Vineyards. It has often been recognized as one of the top vineyards in Oregon. Consulting winemaker Isabelle Meunier made the inaugural wines. Call 503-588-9463.

**Damn Computer** My 9-year-old iMac hard drive crashed on me last week, an eternity for a computer that gets a workout every day from me. The tattooed millennials at the Apple store were shocked, using subtlety insulting words like "obsolete." Needless to say, I kept my iPhone 4s in my pocket. I bought a new iMac and unlike the iPhone, prices have not changed much for iMacs during that 9 year period. Fortunately, everything was backed up on a hard drive so I didn't lose anything important. That said, it has been a challenge to compose the *PinotFile* using the new iPages program because it has changed significantly from the older program I was using. iPages is not the ideal program for composing a newsletter to begin with but I am comfortable with it. My blessed wife took the brunt of my constant moaning and cries of desperation. Thanks to help from my techie son, Dane, I managed to adapt and even triumph, and this issue is the first composed on the new computer and software. I would rather be drinking Pinot Noir.