



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir*

## Soliste Pinot Noir is a Modern Interpretation of the Craftsmanship of the Cistercian Monks of Vougeot

Many domestic winemakers as well as wine critics are of the opinion that Pinot Noir made from single clones lacks the complexity and completeness of Pinot Noir made from multiple clones. *Not so fast*, say partners Don Plumley and Claude Koeberle, who launched Soliste MonoClone® Pinot Noir wines with the 2009 vintage. They were convinced that California Pinot Noir should return to its ancient roots in Burgundy when Pinot Noir wines were once produced from single vineyards, single clones and matured in a single cooperage by Cistercian monks of Abbaye de Cîteaux, who created Clos De Vougeot.



Soliste is a fanatical commitment to produce very limited production MonoClone® Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir wines that harness the purity and complexity of one clone from one vineyard. In Burgundy, a vigneron may reserve a special barrel for friends and family. They call this barrel "Soliste," and Don and Claude thought this was an appropriate name for their winery. A number of the Soliste Pinot Noir wines are so selective they are produced from one or two barrels.

The Burgundy influence on this winery comes from Claude (L in photo above), who grew up in Burgundy, and became a Michelin 3-star chef at age 24 in Paris. He made his way to the U.S., worked as a chef in New York and Southern California, and founded one of the largest food production companies in this country. Despite his domestication, Burgundy still runs in his veins, and friends appropriately call him “Frenchie.”

Soliste promises meticulous farming with only the very best grapes chosen through multiple passes at harvest. Fermentation usually proceeds with a moderate amount of whole cluster inclusion and the wines are aged in 225-liter French oak barrels for an extended time up to 22 months to tame the tannins from the whole cluster inclusion. The resultant wines are unabashedly meant to join the conversation with the great Burgundies and anything less is considered unacceptable. Those with a jaundiced eye may feel this is presumptuous and pure madness, but the wines speak to this lofty goal.

The *La Philosophie du Soliste* makes this goal clear. “Our quest to create wines of great finesse and complexity requires patience, tenacity and a singular focus on uncompromising standards....Vineyard selection and care is the most important responsibility we have....As we cellar, bottle and release our wines, there are no artificial schedules. We simply wait, listen and respect what the wine is telling us....Since there is limited instant gratification in winemaking, you must have persistence of a Zen-like singular vision to stay true to the beliefs and values passed through generations.”

I had the opportunity to taste several of the 2013 Soliste releases back in 2016 when the wines were young and found them to be extraordinary at that time. Recently, I had the opportunity to revisit them once again and I was so “ga-ga” over them that I was compelled to include them in this lead-off story.

Soliste Pinot Noir is not cheap with prices often in the \$85-\$100 range. That said, having spent considerable time with Claude Koeberle and understanding his commitment and fanatical devotion to the quality of these wines, I consider them to be a tour de force and easily comparable to their Burgundy brethren.

If my lofty recommendations seem, well, unreasonably lofty, simply look at the list of restaurant partners that serve Soliste Pinot Noir in California, Washington DC, New York, Chicago, Nevada and the rest of the World. Sommeliers in many of the finest restaurants in the US clamor for Soliste Pinot Noir. Since Soliste Pinot Noir is produced in such limited quantities, some of the entire production of certain wines are snapped up and committed to single restaurants. Visit [www.soliste.com/where\\_to\\_find.htm](http://www.soliste.com/where_to_find.htm) for a restaurant listing.

The 2013 Soliste Pinot Noir wines are the current releases, available to a mailing list by allocation. Visit [www.soliste.com](http://www.soliste.com) to view current releases and join the mailing list. If you are not currently on the mailing list and wish to place an order now, contact Don Plumley at 844-SOLISTE or 707-955-3005. A 2013 MonoClone® set of six wines - Forêt, L'Espérance, Les Griottes, Nouveau Monde, Renaissance and Sonatera is available (\$525). 2013 Pinot Noir wines produced but not reviewed in this issue (but previously reviewed) include Forêt, L'Ermite Rouge (23 cases), Extravagant (23 cases), Renaissance and Sonatera. Large formats are also produced. Limited private tastings are available at the winery in Santa Rosa. Soliste also offers incredible St Andelain Sauvignon Blanc from Lake County, a wine inspired by legendary winemaker Didier Dagueneau, and Les Cailles Russian River Valley Chardonnay modeled after the Meursault wines of Jobard.

The Soliste Pinot Noir winess reviewed here represent the current pinnacle of Sonoma Coast winemaking. The wines have glorious aromatics, refined and graceful demeanors, no intrusion of oak, and some show proper infusion of whole cluster goodness. The scores are irrelevant - the wines are all highly recommended.

**2013 Soliste L'Espérance Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.3% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.59, 123 cases, \$85. Dijon 115. Grapes hand-picked at midnight with rigorous field selection and winery hand sorting. 100% de-stemmed. Brief cold soak, fermentation of small lots with ritual manual punch downs. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Claude says, “Aroma worthy of Le Musigny, becoming intoxicating in purity and depth....elegant and ethereal with a precise palate (“Droit” is the term in Bourgogne).” *Light garnet color in the glass. The nose says, “Drink me!” Outrageous aromas of cherry, wine cellar, rose petal and sous-bois hold up beautifully over time in the glass. My notes say, “fantastic,” referring to the delectable flavors of cherry, raspberry and spice with a hint of tobacco. Elegantly composed with benevolent tannins, a silken mouth feel and a lavish cherry-fueled finish, this wine goes down like mother’s milk but tastes even better . 97.*

**2013 Soliste Nouveau Monde Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 12.9% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.62, 149 cases, \$85. Pommard clone grown in Petaluma Gap. Harvested at midnight and field sorted. 100% de-stemmed, brief cold soak, gentle fermentation of small lots with ritual manual punch downs. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Claude says, "Incredibly aromatic, exotic and elegant Pinot Noir that beautifully marries the virtues of both Volnay and Pommard." *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Haunting aromas of dark fruits, potpourri, pine sap, rose petal and wine cave. Polished, silken, and dreamy on the palate with mid weight flavors of boysenberry, blackberry, tea leaves and a hint of burnt tobacco. Spot-on balance with a seductive texture and a virile finish that gives and gives.* **97.**

**2013 Soliste L' Ambroisie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 12.9% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.56, 49 cases, \$100. Clone "828." Harvested at first light and field sorted. 20% whole cluster fermentation. Brief cold soak, smooth fermentation of small lots with ritual manual punch downs. Aged 16 months in neutral French oak barrels. Claude says, "Once you have tasted L'Ambroisie, I assure you, words cannot adequately describe how you will feel." *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Unreal aromas of blackest cherry, exotic spices, burnt tobacco, Prada leather coat and earthy funkiness. Spirited mid weight flavors of cherry, raspberry and baking spices progress to the very long finish without a hitch. The texture is as smooth as a baby's bottom. Truly glamorous and almost too good to be true. Still incredible, even ambrosial, the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **98.**



**2013 Soliste Les Griottes Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.59, 73 cases, \$85. "828" clone. Harvested at first light and field sorted. 20% whole cluster fermentation. Brief cold soak, fermentation in small lots with ritual manual punch downs. Aged 16 months in neutral French oak barrels. Claude says, "Captures the alchemy that becomes great Pinot Noir, including the intoxicating nose, powerful yet refined layers of spice, sous-bois, truffles and wild cherry, amazing length and complex finish." Essentially the same wine as Le Ambroisie but intended primarily for restaurants. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Engaging aromas of ripe plum, darker cherry, peppery spices and redwood forest. Intriguing in the mouth, with mid weight flavors of Middle Eastern spices, black cherry, purple berry and a touch of nuttiness. The wine has admirable elegance, honorable balance and a driven finish.* **93.**

**2014 Soliste Narcisse Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 12.9% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.56, 819 cases, \$45. A cuvée from the other barrels not included in the MonoClone<sup>®</sup> bottlings. Barrels were blended together and aged to harmonize. 21% whole cluster fermentation. Brief cold soak, gentle ferment and aged 16 months in French oak

barrels, 37% new. This wine is primarily distributed to restaurants. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Seductive perfume of black cherry, raspberry, plum, dried herbs and toasty oak. The mid weight flavors echo the aromas with an added riff of spice. Sleek and forward drinking with plenty of phenolic ripeness to satisfy even at this lower alcohol level. The wine possesses welcome harmony with a deft touch of oak and a modest black cherry finish.* **91.**

**2013 Soliste Les Cailles Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 12.8% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.63, 73 cases, \$50. Vineyard located just north of Sebastopol, originally planted in 1971 and among the oldest Chardonnay vines in the Russian River Valley. 100% whole cluster pressed, fermented on the lees in concrete eggs. Malolactic fermentation arrested to preserve brightness and focus. Additional barrel aging in 600L Taransaud barrels for 11 months. Claude says, "White Burgundies are our benchmark....extraordinary verve, complexity and elegance." *Light golden yellow color in the glass. A wine that thoroughly satisfies with flavors of lemon, blonde caramel and vanilla creme. Fresh on the palate, with toothsome softness and a giving cut on the finish. Still inviting when tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **93.**

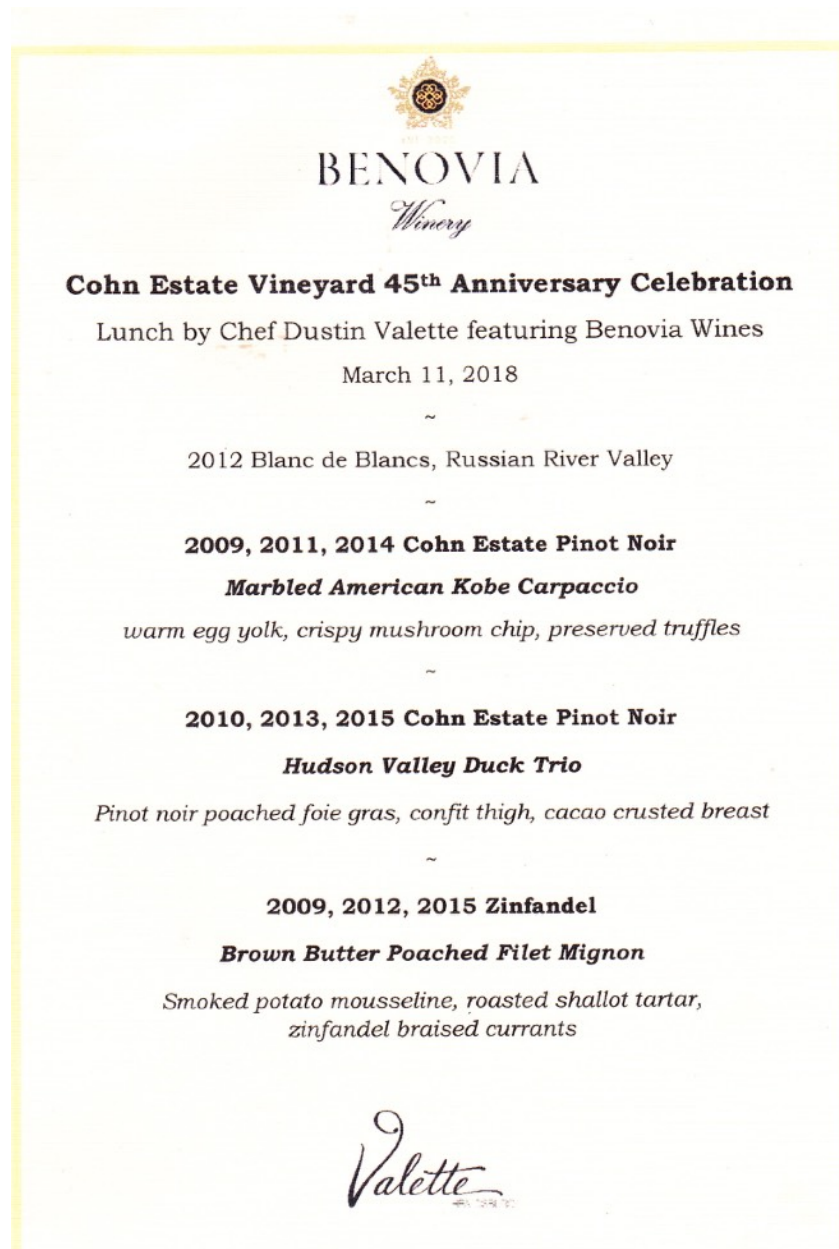
**2013 Soliste St. Andelain Lake County Sauvignon Blanc** 12.1% alc. pH 3.35, TA 0.79, 188 cases, \$55. 20-year-old vines on a mix of alluvial and volcanic soils rich in minerality and organically farmed. Mystère clone. Aged 16 months in Ermitage 265L cigar-shaped French oak barrels, 25% new. No malolactic fermentation. Claude says, "Aromas of flint minerality, marine oyster shells, sea weed and fleur de sel, reminiscent of the winter cold ocean spray in Brittany over the oyster beds....chiseled taste of tart green apple, quince, waxy star fruit and oyster shell....razor sharp long finish accented with kaffir lime." *Aromas of salty sea breeze, lemon-lime and fresh cut grass. Soft and slightly creamy on the palate, with flavors of lemon, Granny Smith apple, pear and engaging salinity. A long, lemony finish leaves a lasting impression. Clear Sauvignon blanc in character, but unlike any other California Sauvignon Blanc I have tasted.* **94.**



# Benovia Winery Cohn Estate Vineyard 45th Anniversary Celebration

On Sunday, March 11, 2018, fans of Benovia wines (“Benovians”), gathered at Valette Restaurant in Healdsburg for a special luncheon prepared by acclaimed Chef Dustin Valette accompanied by a tasting of multiple vintages of Cohn Estate Vineyard wines. Special guests at the luncheon, hosted by Benovia Winery owners Joe Anderson, Mary Dewane and winemaker Mike Sullivan, included iconic former Williams Selyem winemaker Burt Williams and the current Director of Winemaking at Williams Selyem, Jeff Mangahas. After the luncheon, a tasting of latest releases from Cohn Estate Vineyard by Benovia, Williams Selyem and Kosta Browne wineries was held at Joe and Mary’s home adjacent Cohn Estate Vineyard. Exclusive tours of the Cohn Estate Vineyard were also provided to attendees.

The luncheon menu including the accompanying wines:



Honored attendees: Upper photo, L to R, Joe Anderson, Mary Dewane, Burt Williams and Rebecca Williams. Lower photo: L to R, Benovia winemaker Mike Sullivan, Williams Selyem winemaker Jeff Mangahas, and winemaker Burt Williams in his trademark Hawaiian print shirt.



The 2012 Benovia Russian River Valley Blanc de Blancs Sparkling Wine is an inaugural offering from the winery. It was sourced exclusively from the Martaella Estate Vineyard using heritage clones of Chardonnay.



The wine was aged 5 years on the lees. Bright aromas of lemon, pineapple and vanilla cream and on point flavors of citrus and white stone fruits, leading to a dry, mouth cleansing finish. Terrific as both an aperitif and a food wine. \$50.

All of the Benovia Cohn Estate Vineyard Pinot Noirs showed beautifully and reflected the particular character of their vintage. The 2009 vintage, the first year the vineyard was farmed organically, was the favorite of many at our table. Despite the vintage differences, there was a common thread of darker fruits, spice and a perceived “minerality.” The 2009 Benovia Cohn Estate Vineyard Zinfandel was again the favorite of mine of the three vintages tasted, showing a substantial tannic backbone that had folded into the fruit in an amorous relationship.

Burt Williams, while at Williams Selyem, produced a Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir in 1987, 1989 and 1993. Because of what he considered undesirable farming issues at the time including overcropping and irrigation, he did not buy grapes again after 1993. He brought a 750 ml bottle of the 1987 vintage for the luncheon group to taste. The wine had amazing life, with vibrant notes of tart cherry, strawberry, dried flowers and sandalwood. Burt also generously brought a magnum of the 1993 vintage he produced and this wine was magnificent as well. It was the 1993 Williams Selyem Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir that was Joe Anderson’s epiphany wine, switching him from a preference for Cabernet Sauvignon to Pinot Noir, and leading him to found Benovia.





Former winemaker at Kosta Browne, Michael Browne, was scheduled to attend but could not due to a death in his extended family. He did contribute the 2004 Kosta Browne Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir that was given a score of 96 by the *Wine Spectator*. At 15.5% alcohol, the wine was extremely ripe-fruited and packed with layers of sweet fruit in a jammy, hedonistic style that I did not find particularly appealing. At home, I found a bottle of the 2002 Kosta Browne Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir in my cellar and have reviewed it here:

**2002 Kosta Browne Cohn Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., heavy wax cap. *Moderately garnet in color with rim bricking. A surprisingly still enjoyable wine with tertiary character aromas of leather, cigar box, rusty iron and mushrooms on the grill. The mid weight flavors of black cherry, spice, toast, marzipan and tobacco have appeal. Softly textured with a dried cherry finish showing modest tannic astringency. This 15-year-old wine has aged magnificently. Drink up.*

Cohn Estate Vineyard is a California heritage vineyard, first planted in 1970 by Enid Sales, a noted California preservationist. She chose to plant Pinot Noir and Zinfandel, two varietals she liked to drink. Joe Anderson and Mary Dewane acquired the Cohn Vineyard in 2002. Technically, the vineyard is just west of the Russian River Valley AVA boundary and so carries a Sonoma County designation on Benovia bottlings.

The vineyard is partially secluded by forest and offers sweeping views of the Russian River Valley by virtue of its 700 feet elevation. 18 acres are planted on the 55-acre property, almost evenly split between Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. The Pinot Noir plantings are most likely Martini 13 and Pommard clones.

Cohn Estate Vineyard is highly unique and notable for its iron-rich soil, sometimes called "Terra Rossa." There is a top layer of quartz and riverbed stones allowing for excellent drainage. The vineyard is farmed organically (certified by the CCOF) with minimal irrigation. Small clusters yield just over 1 ton per acre. It should be recognized that the Benovia team undertook an extensive rehabilitation of this vineyard after its acquisition.

The complete history of the Cohn Vineyard has been documented previously in the *PinotFile*: [www.princeofpinot.com/article/1689/](http://www.princeofpinot.com/article/1689/).

The following upper photo shows the location of the vineyard, the middle photo shows the old Pinot Noir plantings with the Russian River Valley visible in the distance, and the lower photo shows the lower Zinfandel plantings west of the access road.









The 2015 Benovia Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir has just been released and is being offered for \$75. Visit [www.benoviawinery.com](http://www.benoviawinery.com). The 2016 Williams Selyem and Kosta Browne Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noirs have not been released.

A vintage World War II-Era airplane, The Spirit of Benovia, will fly from the United States to Europe as part of the D-Day Squadron to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Invasion of Normandy. Joe Anderson's C-53 Skytrooper airplane will join dozens of World War II-era aircraft and fly in formation over Normandy on June 6, 2019. Anderson's pilot of 13 years, Chief Pilot Jeff Coffman, will fly The Spirit of Benovia to Normandy with Anderson aboard. To mark the occasion, and to honor the lives of those who fought in World War II, Benovia winemaker Mike Sullivan has crafted 56 cases of a special Pinot Noir from Benovia's Tilton Hill Estate Vineyard called *Liberation* (\$70). A percentage of sales from *Liberation* will be donated to a D-Day Squadron charitable fund that is helping to transport veterans, students and vintage American aircraft to the celebration in Normandy. For more information on the American D-day Squadron: [www.ddaysquadron.org](http://www.ddaysquadron.org). The label art:



# A Few Notable Wines Tasted Recently

**Frank Family** Napa Valley Chardonnay is the number one wine sold by the glass at restaurants according to the latest *Wine & Spirits* 29th Annual Restaurant Poll. The average restaurant price is \$21 per glass. The foundation for this wine is Frank Family's Lewis Vineyard, located in the heart of Napa-Carneros, near the shores of San Pablo Bay. The vineyard is made up of 78 acres planted on gently rolling hills with 68 acres planted to Chardonnay and 10 acres planted to Pinot Noir. Marine influence of the Pacific Ocean creates cool temperatures, fog and wind. The restrictive soils are primarily shallow and dense clay loam, receiving only 20 inches of rainfall annually, resulting in extremely low yields. Other fruit sources for this wine include Beckstoffer Vineyards and Hudson Vineyards located in Napa-Carneros and Sangiacomo Vineyards located in Sonoma-Carneros. Visit [www.frankfamilyvineyards.com](http://www.frankfamilyvineyards.com) to acquire the wine.



**2016 Frank Family Carneros Chardonnay** 14.4% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.62, 25,000 cases, \$38. Barrel fermented in 34% new, 33% once and 33% twice-filled French oak barrels for 9 months. While aging on the lees, the wine was hand stirred regularly to promote depth and longevity. The winemaker is Todd Graff. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon, white peach and jasmine. Welcome charge of lemon, pear, lychee, white peach, candied apple and spice flavors. Very congenial with valid balance and an air of sophistication. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. I can understand why this wine is so popular. 93.*



**Knudsen Vineyards** has announced their forthcoming release of the limited production 2016 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Oregon Chardonnay. The wine has already received recognition as a Gold Medal winner at the San Francisco Chronicle 2018 Wine Competition and as one of the featured wines at the recent Oregon Chardonnay Celebration. Established in 1971, Knudsen Vineyard is one of the oldest vineyards in Oregon. The Knudsen family has been farming grapes at this location for 45 years and the earliest currently producing vines were planted in 1974. The Knudsen Chardonnay is consistently one of my highest rated Oregon Chardonnays and a personal favorite. Visit [www.knudsenvineyards.com](http://www.knudsenvineyards.com).



**2016 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Chardonnay** 13.5% alc., pH 3.30, TA 0.68, 320 cases, \$45, screw cap. Offered to members of mailing list beginning March 28. Estate grown fruit from block 9 planted in 1995 to clones 95 and 76, and Block 10 planted in 1995 to clone 76. Red volcanic Jory soils. The wine was aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Complimentary aromas of citrus fruits, honey and caramel oak. Gentle and soothing on the palate, with delightful flavors of lemon, pineapple, apple pan dowdy, crème brûlée and subtle blonde caramel. The wine has a generous acid underbelly and the oak is woven in beautifully. Highly refreshing, with a finish that strongly encourages another sip. 96.*



**Sarah's Vineyard** is celebrating 40 years in the historic Santa Clara Valley appellation. The winery was founded in 1978 by a group of four wine enthusiasts led by Marilyn "Sarah" Otterman. Thursday, May 10, will be recognized as "Sarah's Vineyard Day," with tributes from local, state, and federal officials, as well as the unveiling of history displays and special activities at the winery. On this same date, an Estate Chardonnay will be released as the winery's official 40th anniversary bottling. Current proprietor and winemaker Tim Slater manages the 28-acre property in the cool climate "Mt. Madonna" district of the southern Santa Cruz Mountain range. Tim in his former life has been a DJ, a musician, and a successful "micro-machining" engineer with many patents to his name. At Sarah's Vineyard, he is able to channel both his inner "mad scientist" and his artistic side to grow and produce Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Rhone varietals. The popular Sarah's Vineyard Tasting Room is open daily on Hecker Pass Road, just outside of Gilroy. A number of excellent Sarah's



Vineyard Pinot Noir wines have been reviewed in the *PinotFile* over the past few vintages. Sarah's Vineyard online home is [www.SarahsVineyard.com](http://www.SarahsVineyard.com).

**2016 Sarah's Vineyard Muns Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 420 cases, \$45. This vineyard is one of the highest in the Santa Cruz Mountains AVA at 2,600 feet above sea level. Dijon clones 115, 667 and 777. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of cherry, underbrush and tea leaves. Forward drinking and quite agreeable in a mid weight style with fresh flavors of cherry, strawberry and blueberry. Young, grippy, mountain tannins need more time in bottle to ameliorate. The intensely fruited finish is delectable and is the wine's best feature. 90.*

**AldenAlli** is a new label that is a product of a partnership between Dan and Allison Kosta (of famed winery Kosta Browne) and Emeril and Alden Legasse. The name reflects the names of Emeril's and Dan's spouses. The 2013 AldenAlli Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir is sold through a mailing list at [www.AldenAlli.com](http://www.AldenAlli.com), in Lagasse's restaurants and in select major markets. The key grape source for the AldenAlli Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir is Campbell Ranch, located at 750 feet elevation in the Annapolis area of the Sonoma Coast. The 15-year-old vines grow on sandy, low-vigor Goldridge soil that reduces yields to barely two tons per acre. The winemaker is Shane Finley, who was formerly an assistant winemaker at Kosta Browne for many years and most recently the winemaker at Lynmar where he still consults.



**2015 AldenAlli Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.54, TA 0.62, \$65. Harvest Brix 25.2°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Highly nuanced nose offering aromas of crushed dark grapes, boysenberry preserves, dark red rose bloom, baking spice, and green tea. Silky in the mouth with gentle tannins, offering middleweight flavors of purple and black fruits with a congenial spice accent and complimentary oak. This wine aims to please upon opening, but rises up several hours thereafter to become a black cherry and spice bombast that defies adequate description. Decanting is therefore advised. 94.*

**HillCrest Vineyard** celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the first Oregon Pinot Noir bottling in 2017. It has been fifty years since Richard Sommer's reputed first commercial bottling of Oregon Pinot Noir under the Hillcrest Vineyard label from the Umpqua Valley. This occasion is not definite, as Sommers first planted vines in 1961, and my past research indicated that it was not clear that Pinot Noir was planted initially or subsequently, since Sommers also planted vines in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1968. Also, Sommers probably bottled Pinot Noir as early as 1963 or 1964 but it is unclear if those bottlings were experimental or commercial. Maureen Flanagan Battistella, writing a recent *Oregon Wine Press*, stated that Sommers brought cuttings from Louis Martini's Stanly Ranch in 1959 and subsequently transplanted them at Hillcrest. She states the the original plantings in 1961 included about 340 vines of Pinot Noir. HillCrest was bonded in 1963, and is Oregon's oldest continuously operating estate winery. Since 2003, the winery has been owned by Dyson and Susan DeMara with Dyson crafting the wines. A 2017 vintage commemorative bottling of 1968 old vine HillCrest Vineyard Pinot Noir will be released in 2019. Visit [www.hillcrestvineyard.com](http://www.hillcrestvineyard.com). The two wines reviewed here are unique, even unusual, and seem to reflect a Martini clone fruit profile.





**2012 HillCrest Vineyard Old Vine Umpqua Valley Pinot Noir** 12.4% alc., \$36. *Amazing dark garnet color in the glass. The aromatics are lacking but the wine is appealing in the mouth. Aromas of muddy earth, dark chocolate, musty wine cellar and burned timber. Mid weight plus charge of blackberry, boysenberry, black raspberry, cassis and spice flavors that saturate the palate. The wine is unusually sappy and tannic for an Oregon Pinot Noir, but the succulent fruit persistence on the finish is smile-worthy. 90.*

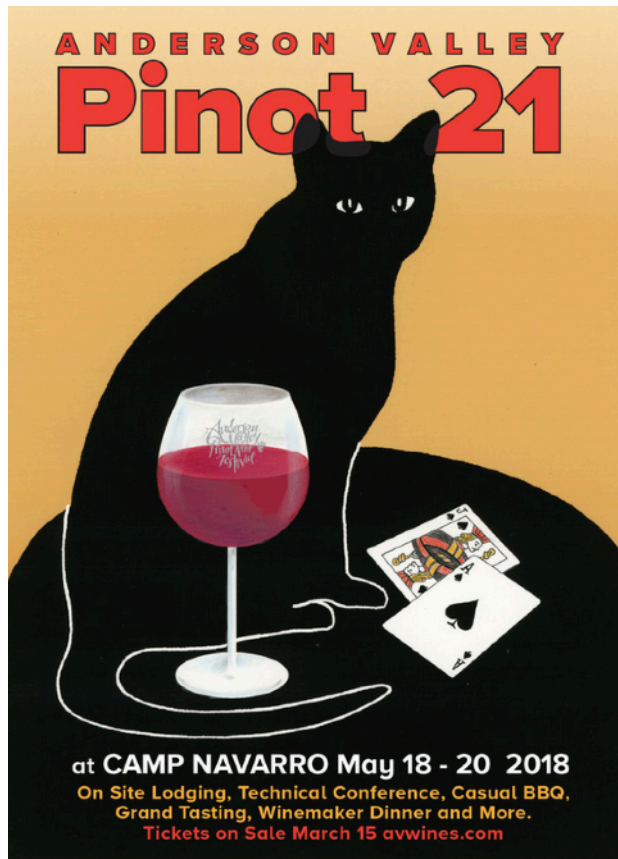


**2014 HillCrest Vineyard Reserve Umpqua Valley Pinot Noir** 12.4% alc., \$36. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Revealing aromas of blueberry-pomegranate, toast and pipe smoke. Tremendous attack of voluptuous purple and black fruits including purple grape, boysenberry and blackberry backed by an assertive, oak-driven infusion of vanilla and toast that some might find overbearing. The imposing fruit load hits the palate with intention, saturates the mid palate, and lingers through a very long, sweet-fruited finish. The fruit is ensconced by nicely integrated tannins. This is a gloriously fruited wine that is worthy of a reserve designation. 91.*



# Pinot Briefs

**21st Annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival** The Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association will be hosting this annual event at the beautiful and historic Camp Navarro located among towering redwoods in Anderson Valley's "deep end." The Pinot Noir Technical Conference will be held Friday, May 18, at Bosch Lodge at Camp Navarro, and will feature topics including red blotch vine replacement programs, tasting panels on Rhys-Bearwallow and Roma's vineyards, DNA yeast fingerprinting, wine marketing and more. A Press Tasting of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir will be held concurrently. The day will conclude with an outdoor Casual BBQ at Husch Vineyards. The Festival Grand Tasting will be held on Saturday, May 19, from 12:00 to 4:00. Taste Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, Pinot Noir Blanc, Blanc de Noirs and Pinot Noir Rosés from more than 55 producers. Enjoy live music, gourmet fare including wood-fired pizzas, fresh salmon, lamb, local cheeses and Pinot Noir ice cream. A live and silent auction will be held to benefit the Anderson Valley Health Center. A Wine Down Happy Hour from 4:00 to 5:30 will follow on the lawn featuring white and sparkling wines, ciders and rosés along with bites from Philo restaurant Stone & Embers. Saturday evening there will be a Winemaker Dinner at Camp Navarro's Bosch Lodge. On Sunday, May 20, Anderson Valley wineries will hold Open Houses - a list of participating wineries will be posted closer to the event at [www.avwines.com](http://www.avwines.com). Lodging will be available on site and Camp Navarro will be serving a Saturday and Sunday brunch. Individual event and combination tickets are available at [www.avwines.com](http://www.avwines.com).



**2018 International Pinot Noir Celebration** The Master of Ceremonies and Grand Seminar panelists have been announced. Daniel Shanks will headline the Opening Ceremony as Master of Ceremonies. He was a well-known Maitre d'Hotel at Domaine Chandon restaurant when it opened in 1977. In 1994, he became the Usher for Food and Beverage at the White House and served in this capacity for 25 years. The 2018 Grand Seminar will be moderated by Elaine Brown of [WakawakaWineReviews.com](http://WakawakaWineReviews.com) and [JancisRobinson.com](http://JancisRobinson.com) who will guide an in-depth exploration of six distinctive wines from Temperance Hill and Bella Vida vineyards. Grand Seminar panelists include Josh Bergström of Bergström Wines, Julia Cattrall of Lumos Wine Co., Brian O'Donnell of Belle Pente, Ken Pahlow of Walter Scott Wines, Lynn Penner-Ash of Penner-Ash Wine Cellars, and Patrick Reuter of Dominio IV. If you only attend one Pinot Noir celebration, this should be the ONE!. The event is held each year on the bucolic grounds of Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. The dates are July 27-29, 2018. Registration is now open. Secure your Full Weekend experience tickets (\$1295.00) at [www.ipnc.org](http://www.ipnc.org). A la carte tickets for the Salmon Bake and Passport to Pinot are also

tickets (\$1295.00) at [www.ipnc.org](http://www.ipnc.org). A la carte tickets for the Salmon Bake and Passport to Pinot are also available.



**Santa Cruz Mountains AVA 2018/2019 Wine Cruises** The Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association announced two upcoming winemaker cruises in Europe to Bordeaux and Provence in collaboration with AmaWaterways. A Taste of Bordeaux Cruise will be hosted by Dave Moulton of Burrell School Vineyards November 8-15, 2018: <http://wcartwright.dreamvacationsgroups.com/#/groups/9094429>. The Colors of Provence Cruise will be hosted by Bradley Brown of Big Basin Vineyards April 11-18, 2019. <http://wcartwright.dreamvacationsgroups.com/#/groups/9062201>.

**California Certified Sustainable** 127 wineries (74% of total statewide case production) and 1099 vineyards (22% of total statewide acres) are now Certified Sustainable by the California Certified Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA). In 2017, the certification program saw a 46% growth in the number of certified vineyards and 20% growth in the number of certified wineries. A new logo will appear on wine bottles with the 2017 vintage.



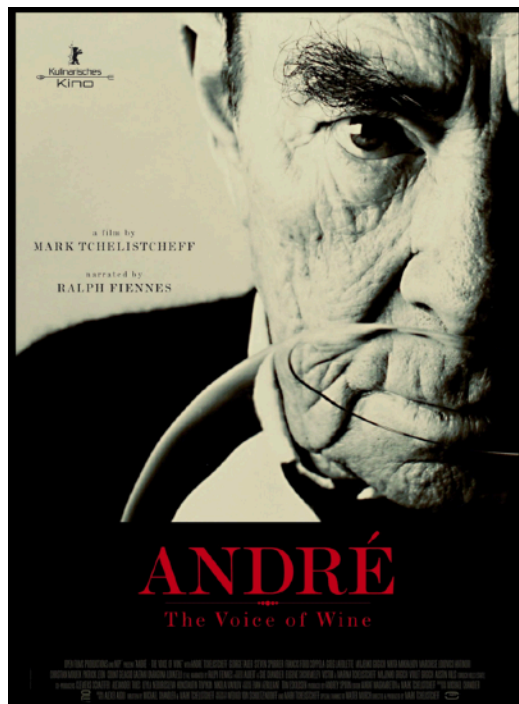
What the heck does "Sustainable" mean? Sustainable viticulture refers to the ability of a vineyard to grow grapes while protecting the health of the environment. The basic key components of sustainable winegrowing include natural conservation, human education, water quality protection, erosion control, habitat restoration and conservation, cover crops, and safe use of soil amendments. The CSWA was established in 2001 to encourage growers and vintners to adapt sustainable practices. Oregon's comparable sustainability movement dates to 1999 when the Low Input Viticulture & Enology (LIVE) organization was established.



**Constellation Brands Meiomi Label Soaring** The Meiomi label that includes a Rosé, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir showed a year over year volume change in sales of 20.6% for the latest 12 weeks and a 48.2% volume change in sales for the previous 52 weeks according to Nielsen via RBC Capital Markets. Price has gone down slightly at -1.7% over the previous 52 weeks.

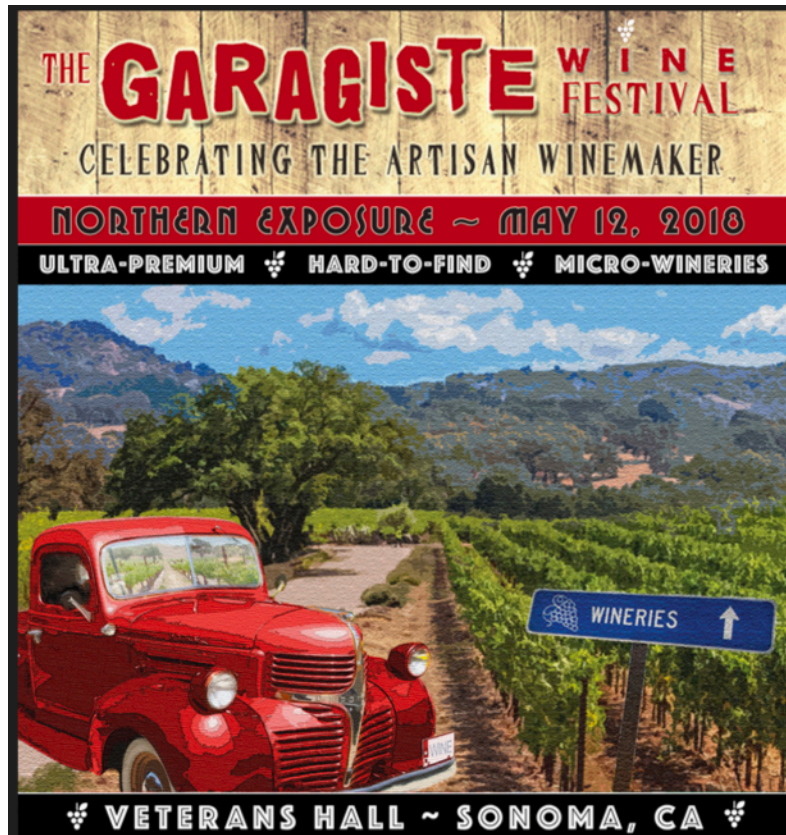
**Documentary on Life of André Tchelitscheff** Readers undoubtedly know of the iconic winemaker, André Tchelitscheff, whose influence on the California wine industry is unparalleled. You get an extra point if you know how to spell his last name. It is said that his influence and pivotal contributions almost singlehandedly reshaped the California wine industry after the repeal of Prohibition grandnephew, Mark Tchelitscheff, has produced a film, “André - The Voice of Wine,” and will host a gala premiere on Saturday, April 7, appropriately enough, in Napa Valley at the Lincoln Theater in Yountville. General admission tickets are \$20 while VIP seating offers assigned seating, a meet and greet, and a wine reception at \$95.

<http://lincolntheater.com/vbo/?page=selectevent&eid=25868&edid=0>. The documentary had its world premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival and North American premiere at the 40th Mill Valley Film Festival. The film features many interviews with vintners and winemakers André mentored, and takes the audience on a cinematic journey through Russia, Europe and the Napa Valley revealing an artist and scientist whose heart and soul were devoted to wine. Read more about André Tchelitscheff and the making of the documentary at <http://lincolntheater.com/vbopage=selectevent&eid=25868&edid=0>.



**Sonoma Wine Country Garagiste Wine Festival** The Garagiste Wine Festival comes to the heart of Sonoma on May 12 for the very first time. The festival features over 40 micro-production wineries from Sonoma, Mendocino, Livermore, Lodi and Napa, as well as other California regions. The non-profit event will be held at the Sonoma Veterans Building near Sonoma's downtown plaza. Tickets are on sale now at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1st-annual-garagiste-festival-northern-exposure-tickets-43108506704>. Some of the participating wineries have been featured in the *PinotFile* including Calstar Cellars, Camlow Cellars, Chenoweth Wines, Fallon Place Wines, Halcon Vineyards, Kendric Vineyards, La Pitchoune Winery, and Weatherborne Wine Co.





**Los Angeles' First Urban Winery in Over 100 Years** Angeleno Wine company is opening a wine production facility and tasting room on Spring Street in Chinatown. It will be the first such winery within the city of Los Angeles in more than a century. The last urban winery to open in Los Angeles was San Antonio Winery, that still operates today and opened back in 1917. Most of the grapes for the new winery will be grown in Agua Dulce, a historic winegrowing region in greater Los Angeles. Several varietals will be offered including a Pinot Noir from Rio Del Mar Vineyard just east of Santa Cruz. This vineyard is one of the closest, if not the closest vineyard to the coast of California, only three-quarters of a mile from the coast. Visit [www.angelenowine.com](http://www.angelenowine.com).



**Fatto A Mano by Riedel - a New Glass for Pinot Noir** This new wine stem combines hand made glass craftsmanship in the style of ancient Venetian tradition with the latest 21st century glass making technology of fully automated machine-blown techniques. The crystal stem and base are hand made and the bowl blown by machine. The stemware are dishwasher safe. The Fatto A Mano Old World Pinot Noir glass comes in six different colored stems and is priced at \$100.00 per stem or \$540.00 for a gift set of all six differently colored stem glasses.



## Wine as an Investment

