



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 12, Issue 14 February 10, 2021

*Pinot Noir
Brings You
Closer to God*

Bohème Pinot Noir Shines in 2018

Bohème owner and winemaker Kurt Beitler told me in advance that his lineup of 2018 vintage Pinot Noirs was his best ever and he was not pushing BS. I have been reviewing Bohème Pinot Noir and Chardonnay since 2006 and the wines have always been consistently top-notch but the 2018 wines, in particular, stood out.

Bohème Wines is rooted in the town of Occidental in West Sonoma County. Kurt leases three vineyards that are located near Taylor Lane and are among the nearest to the Pacific Ocean of all Pinot Noir vineyards in North America: Stuller Vineyard, English Hill Vineyard and Taylor Ridge Vineyard.

The 2018 vintage in the Occidental region of the West Sonoma Coast featured a relatively dry winter, with 39 inches of rain in Occidental compared to 79 inches in 2019. Spring was cold so buds were late to push and bloom finally came in early June. Kurt believes that the late bloom facilitated a higher set rate with the corresponding above average crop. His tons per acre average went from 1.88 in 2017 to 2.67 in 2018. There were no desiccating late summer heat spikes or early fall storms that invite bunch rot so the crop was pristine. This friendly weather combined with higher-than-normal tonnage extended the ripening period. Kurt picked his last Pinot Noir on October 17. He thinks that the long development period allowed for deep, beautiful flavors and fine, yet plentiful tannins in the 2018 Pinot Noirs.



Credit Adam Decker

Kurt is a native Oregonian but his parents grew up in Napa Valley. They were even in the same kindergarten class in St. Helena! After marrying, the couple moved to Oregon for Kurt's father's forest products career and to raise a family.

On Kurt's mother's side, there is a long history of wine business success. Kurt's great-great-grandfather, Lafayette Stice, was the winemaker at Inglenook following the death of Gustav Niebaum in 1911. His great-grandfather, Charles Wagner moved to Rutherford from San Francisco after the 1905 San Francisco earthquake and opened a bulk winery business. His son and Kurt's grandfather, Charlie Wagner, along with Kurt's grandmother Lorna Belle Glos Wagner, lived in Rutherford their entire lives. They grew grapes commercially and made wine at home for decades. They launched Caymus Vineyards as a retirement business when Charlie was 60 years old in 1972. Kurt's uncle (his mother's brother) Chuck owns and runs Caymus Vineyards today.

Kurt attended Santa Clara University and studied mechanical engineering but ultimately graduated with a degree in finance. In 2000, immediately after graduation, he went to work for his uncle Chuck to manage his newly-planted Taylor Lane Vineyard in Occidental. This was an early Belle Glos label estate vineyard. Kurt soon met a neighbor, Al Rago, who owned Que Syrah Vineyard. In 2004, Al talked Kurt into leasing and farming that vineyard and that became the source of Kurt's first commercial bottling.

Kurt named the inaugural wine "Bohème" in honor of Occidental's local Bohemian Highway. Also in 2004, he found land to plant English Hill Vineyard and the following year brought Taylor Ridge Vineyard and Marsh Vineyard into the fold. Growing wine grapes for his own production continues as a focus today. Purchased grapes account for just two of the total of about 75 bottlings since starting Bohème.

Kurt's success has been predicated on consistent sources of estate fruit year after year and his direct involvement in the farming of these three Pinot Noir vineyard sources. Although he could have easily worked at Caymus Vineyards for the Wagners, he sought his own path. He did receive considerable assistance for production at Caymus Vineyards initially but eventually decided he need a wine production facility close to home in Occidental. Currently, he produces his wines at a winery building in north Sebastopol.



Credit Jerry Dodrill

Bohème wines are sold to a dedicated following on the winery's mailing list and at the winery's tasting room in downtown Occidental, open since 2010. Tasting is only available by appointment. Excellent Chardonnay and Syrahis also produced. Visit the website at www.bohemewines.com. The 2021 vintage Pinot Noirs will be released March 1, 2021. **Note:** These Pinot Noirs are stylistically much different than the Pinot Noir wines of Joe Wagner (Chuck Wagner's son) including the labels Meiomi and Belle Glos Pinot Noir.

Taylor Ridge Vineyard

This vineyard was planted in 1999 on a meadow, 5.3 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. The elevation is 880-941 feet. Its caramel-colored sandy loam soil is derived from a prehistoric marine embayment that once covered west Sonoma County. During the growing season, cool fog from Tomales Bay and Bodega Bay engulfs the vineyard, creating a climate that slows nutrient uptake by grapevines and ripening of fruit. 4.9 acres planted of Swan clone Pinot Noir and Wente clone Chardonnay at 1089 vines per acre (8' x 5' spacing).

2018 Bohème Taylor Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 206 cases, \$59. Yield 1.49 tons per acre. 25% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 22 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Light garnet color in the glass. Appealing aromas of cherry, Mediterranean spice, redwood bark and forest floor. A force of cherry fruit saturates the palate and invigorates the finish. Lively, with upbeat acidity and reserved tannins. The extravagant cherry flavor is complimented with a whiff of oak. Ready to drink upon pulling the cork but exhibiting the harmony to age. A very user-friendly wine that one could sip all night.* **96**

Stuller Vineyard

Planted in 1998, this vineyard is situated amid redwoods and hawks and peers over the Pacific Ocean, 5.8 miles to the west. The elevation is 1168-1263 feet. Two-thirds of Stuller vineyard is a south-facing hillside of red-hued gravelly loam plant to Dijon 115 while the adjacent rocky hilltop is an extreme low-vigor plot of Dijon 667 growing in mixed aggregate and sandstone. Total planting is 6.0 acres, 1089 vines per acre (8' x 5' spacing).

2018 Bohème Stuller Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 244 cases, \$59. 30% whole cluster, aged 22 months in French Burgundy barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Scintillating nose offering the classic aromas of Pinot Noir including black cherry, baking spices, tilled earth and dark rose petal. Light to mid-weight in style, with ingratiating acidity and very fine-grain tannins. The core of dark red cherry fruit is well-spiced and lingers through cherry-soaked finish. Soothing in texture with a hint of gracious oak. Excellent now but will age.* **95**

English Hill Vineyard

This vineyard is an estate-planted high-density mosaic of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah surrounded by expansive pasture and rangeland. Overlooking Tomales Bay and the Marin Coast Range, weather swings dramatically between maritime and continental influences. Pacific fog engulfs the vineyard on summer mornings while afternoon breezes lift golden minerals from the ground to the folds of leaves. 8.5 acres planted to Dijon 115 and 667, Calera, Vosne-Romanée, BRC at 2420 vines per acre (6' x 3' spacing). Soil is Goldridge sandy loam and Steinbeck fine sandy loam. The first photo is a long view towards Tomales Bay and the second photo shows the vineyard up close in the spring of 2018.



Credit to Jerry Dodrill

2018 Bohème English Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 483 cases, \$59. 25% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 22 months in French Burgundy barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of plum, black raspberry, dark rose petal and peat. More black cherry and blackberry sap in this harmonious, mid-weight wine exhibiting an intense, ridiculously long finish. Plenty of spice and umami on the palate with reserved tannins. Still profound when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. Deserves a standing ovation. 97*



Occidental Hills Vineyards Cuvée

2018 Bohème Occidental Hills Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 291 cases, \$59. A premium barrel selection from all of Bohème's estate grown Pinot Noir vineyards near Occidental. This cuvée includes six Pinot Noir selections grown on three distinct soils. 24% whole cluster fermented. Aged 22 months in French oak barrels, 17% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Somewhat reserved but pleasant nose with aromas of purple berry compote, allspice, and bark. Mid-weight plus in concentration, featuring bold waves of purple and black berry fruit augmented with a touch of spice and earthiness. A bit rustic, showing the effects of whole cluster, with the faintest oak in the background, slightly more noticeable but not imposing tannin. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was more aromatic exhibiting lovely black cherry and rose petal aromas, more giving fruit flavor and a noticeably long finish. This is the ripest fruited and boldest of the four 2018 Pinots and although it can be enjoyed now, it will undoubtedly benefit from more time in the cellar. 95*

All four of these Pinot Noirs deserve your attention but if you want the one with the best nose choose Stuller Vineyard, the one with the most intense cherry core choose Taylor Ridge Vineyard, the one with the longest finish choose English Hill Vineyard and the one that is the most robust and age-worthy choose Occidental Hills.

Masút Vineyard & Winery: Carrying the Flag for Eagle Peak AVA Pinot Noir

Brothers Ben and Jake Fetzer are third generation California vintners and the grandsons of Barney and Kathleen Fetzer who established Fetzer Vineyards in 1968. Fetzer Vineyards at one time farmed over 3,000 acres of certified organic grapes in the Redwood Valley region of Mendocino County. The brothers grew up farming and making wine in Mendocino County. In 1992, Fetzer Vineyards was sold. In 1994, Ben and Jake's parents Robert (Bobby) and Sheila Fetzer founded Masút, a 1200-acre property at the headwaters of the Russian River in Redwood Valley, California. The site was chosen as a prime location for Pinot Noir by Bobby Fetzer. His sons cleared the land and planted Pinot Noir (and later Chardonnay) on the property's mountainous slopes.

A petition for the Eagle Peak Mendocino County AVA was co-drafted by Ben and Jake and approved in late 2014. The name Eagle Peak was taken for a 2700 feet summit in the region. This is a relatively small AVA, consisting of 26,250 acres and about 120 acres of cultivated vines. Eagle Peak is significantly cooler than either than adjacent Redwood Valley and Ukiah Valley with more wind. Soils are shallow and well-draining Franciscan Complex sandstone and shale.



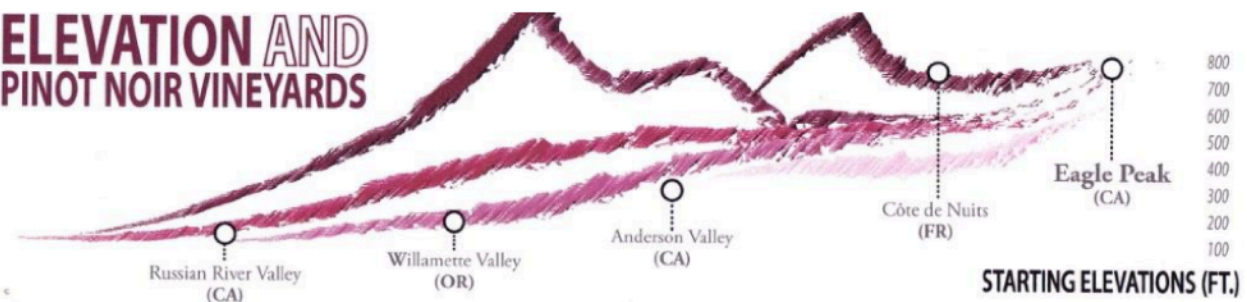
In 2008, Ben and Jake built a state-of-the-art winery specifically for small lot Pinot Noir production. The winery is constructed of old, recycled redwood and contains modern processing equipment. The brothers began commercial production of Pinot Noir under the Masút label the following year (a 2008 vintage was produced but tainted by smoke from the wildfires during the growing season and not released). Today the brothers work side-by-side handling all aspects of winemaking and farming. Their winemaking reflects many hours of study and what they learned from their father.



The winery is dedicated to their father, Robert Fetzer who passed away in a tragic river rafting accident in 2006. Masút is a former Pomo Indian word meaning “dark, rich earth.”

The 23-acre certified organic Masút Vineyard consists of 19 unique blocks of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grown at two sites. The Lower Vineyard is east-facing and sits at an elevation of 900 feet above sea level with gravelly, clay soils formed from thousands of years of weathered sedimentary rock. Pinot Noir Dijon clones 115 113 and 777 are planted here. The Upper Vineyard is southwest-facing at 1600 feet elevation with deeper red soils formed from weathered sandstone. Pinot Noir clones planted here include Mariafeld, Mt. Eden, Masút, and Swan as well as Wente and Dijon 96 clones of Chardonnay.

ELEVATION AND PINOT NOIR VINEYARDS



At harvest, each of the blocks is picked, the grapes de-stemmed and vinified separately in small, open-top fermenters at the winery and then aged for up to 15 months in around 30% new French oak barrels. After aging, the final blends are made, the wines are raked once before being bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

I first met the Fetzer brothers at the World of Pinot Noir and have reviewed every vintage of Masút Pinot Noir since the inaugural 2009 release. The Estate bottling is the winery's flagship wine but in some vintages bottlings are offered that highlight specific blocks or clones within the vineyard.

Masút Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are sold on the winery's website at www.masut.com and through a mailing list. If you get the urge to visit this special vineyard and winery, Ben and Jake accept visitors by appointment. The Fetzer brothers launched a second, value-priced label, Rural Wine Company, offering Pinot Noir from the Eagle Peak AVA. The wines are cellared and bottled (2018) and vinted and bottled (2019) at Rural Wine Company in Healdsburg. Two vintages are reviewed here.

The Masút Pinot Noirs have garnered many accolades from me over the years see reviews at www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1529/). In recent months I dipped into my cellar and drank older vintages dating including 2009, 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2016 and found that **these wines age remarkably well.**

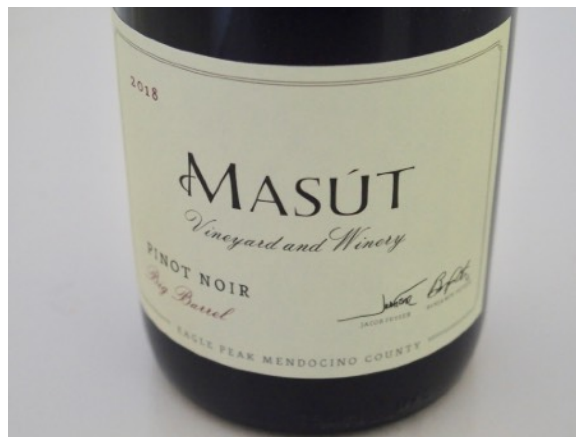
2018 Rural Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$29.99 (often discounted significantly). *Moderately light garnet in the glass. The nose opens slowly to reveal pleasant aromas of Bing cherry, dirty rose and earthy flora. Middleweight in style, with and bright and juicy core of black cherry, raspberry and blueberry fruit flavors backed by crisp acidity. Integrated oak with a restrained tannic grip and a cherry-fueled finish of some length. Ideal for current, easy drinking. 89*

2018 Rural Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$ 29.99 (often discounted significantly). *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose arrives over time in the glass revealing aromas of dark cherry, rose petal, and spice. The mid-weight plus charge of black cherry and boysenberry fruit is well-ripened and framed by noticeable but not imposing tannins. A good cut of acidity invests the modest, but satisfying finish. Better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 90*

2017 Masút Vineyard & Winery Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$38. Composition is 67% 115, 15% 113, 10% Mt. Eden, and 8% 777. Yield 2.5 tons per acre. Aged 11 months sur lie in French oak barrels, 23% new. Unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of darker berries, baking spices and burnt tobacco lead to a very ripe-flavored fruit profile on the palate including prune. The fine-grain tannins are well-proportioned and the finish is long and well-fruited. This wine is packed with ripe sap that seems to have been harvested on the cusp of "surmaturité." 90*

2018 Masút Vineyard & Winery Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$38. The composition is 60% 115, 12% 113, 12% 777, 12% Masút and 4% Mariafeld. Yield 2.9 tons per acre. Aged 12 months sur lie in French oak barrels, 32% new. Unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Alluring aromas of black cherry, blackberry and sweet oak. Full-bodied and packed with a rush of blueberry-pomegranate and cassis fruit flavors yet not jammy. Well-integrated tannins and acidity with some viscosity and modest sweet oak plying the background. A big boy, mature-fruited wine (less ripe than the 2017 bottling) that shines the day after bottle opening. 92*

2018 Masút Vineyard & Winery Big Barrel Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$65. 100% clone 115. Yield 3 tons per acre. Aged 15 months ur lie in 100% new French oak puncheon. Unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Initially the nose offered aromas of toast, ash and crusty bread. The following day, the nose had opened to reveal aromas of black cherry, spice and earth tones. A charming wine in a mid-weight style with husky fruit flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with a hint of vanilla and spice. The silky mouthfeel is particularly alluring and the generous finish is outrageous. The fruit really sings and the finish is significantly longer than the same year Estate Vineyard bottling. 93*



Kutch Wines Continued on a Path of Enticing and Uniquely Stylistic Pinot Noir in 2019

The 2019 vintage Pinot Noirs were bottled in December and released in early January. A new single vineyard wine was added in the 2019 vintage hailing from Mindego Ridge Vineyard located on Alpine Road in the upper reaches of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The dedicated owners and growers, Dave and Stacey Gollnick have created a source of Pinot Noir that exceeds Jamie's high standards and it is expected the vineyard will be part of the Kutch portfolio for years to come. A 2019 Sonoma County Pinot Noir was also offered for the first time. This cuvée is meant for early and inexpensive drinking and has been offered to restaurants and loyal mailing list customers.

I have reviewed Kutch wines favorably dating back to 2006 but Jamie did not realize his stylistic goal until the 2009 vintage. The Pinot Noirs have continued to excel since that vintage. Visit www.princeofpinot.com/winery/377/ for a history of reviews.

The Sonoma Coast, Bohan Vineyard and Falstaff Vineyard Pinot Noirs were released in January 2020 and the rest of the 2019 vintage wines will be part of the spring release. Visit www.kutchwines.com to join the mailing list and access an allocation.

Jamie recently announced that after sixteen vintages of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, he has become a proud landowner and soon will be planting his own estate vineyard in the spring of 2021. This is the dream of every winery owner. Just after Thanksgiving in 2020, Jamie found a 12-acre, 100-year-old organically-farmed apple orchard located in Sebastopol on the Sonoma Coast. Soils are Goldridge and fine-grained marine quartz sandstone.

2019 Kutch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 500 cases, \$39. A declassified blend of selected barrels from McDougall Ranch, Bohan vineyard and Falstaff Vineyard. 75% whole cluster, indigenous yeast fermentation, natural malolactic bacteria. Aged in used French oak barrels and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Complex nose offering aromas of allspice, sap, pipe tobacco, prickly pear and floral nuance. The nose picks up intensity and interest over time in the glass. Light to mid-weight in style, featuring flavors of dark red cherry, edible flower, tobacco and dried herbs. Soft and polished in the mouth with a hint of tannin in the background and juicy acidity. Still fine the following day when tasted from a previously opened bottle. 90*

2019 Kutch Bohan Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 200 cases, \$54. Vineyard first planted in 1972 at an elevation of 1400 feet 2.95 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Goldridge soil. This wine is sourced from some of the original Pinot Noir plantings that are on their own rootstock and always dry-farmed. Fermented 75% whole cluster with indigenous yeast, natural malolactic bacteria, aged in used French oak barrels and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Light garnet color in the glass. Highly pleasurable, whole-cluster-inspired nose giving aromas of red berries and cherries and burnt tobacco. Light to mid-weight in style and although very gentle and gracious, with flavors of dark red and purple fruits and a slight vegetative undertone. Good harmony, with a silky texture and a juicy, lip-smacking finish. When re-tasted one and two days after opening, more fruit intensity on the nose and palate was evident with more finishing purpose. 92*

2019 Kutch Bohan Vineyard Graveyard Block Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 100 cases, \$54. Vineyard planted in the early 1970s at an elevation of 1400 feet about 3 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation and native malolactic fermentation in barrel. Age sur lie for 15 months in neutral French oak barrels without racking until bottling. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Initially, aromas of terra-cotta and wet earth are primary with red fruit showing up over time. More intensity and structure in this bottling, with a core of well-ripened, gutsy purple berry fruit framed by moderate tannins. Layers of satisfying sap that carry over to a well-fruited and lengthy finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle, the nose displayed more vibrant dark red and purple berry fruits and the tannins had ameliorated. Still fine two days later. 93*



Bohan Vineyard

2019 Kutch Falstaff Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 300 cases, \$54. A marginal site planted in 1999 in Goldridge soil at 505 feet and 8.2 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Three clones, tiny yields. Fermented 75% whole cluster with indigenous yeast, natural malolactic bacteria, aged sur lie in used French oak barrels without racking until blended and bottled. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Lovely scent of purple berry compote and redwood forest. Delicious, mid-weight plus essence of well-spiced boysenberry and blackberry fruits that seem to be at their peak of ripeness. Firm but not intrusive tannins, silken in mouthfeel, and a hint of oak in the background. Reserved upon opening, but still displaying the darkest and most intense fruit experience of the 2019 lineup. The finish is dry and extremely long. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the fruit really popped on the palate with more integration of tannins. Two words on the second day: "Oh man." 95*

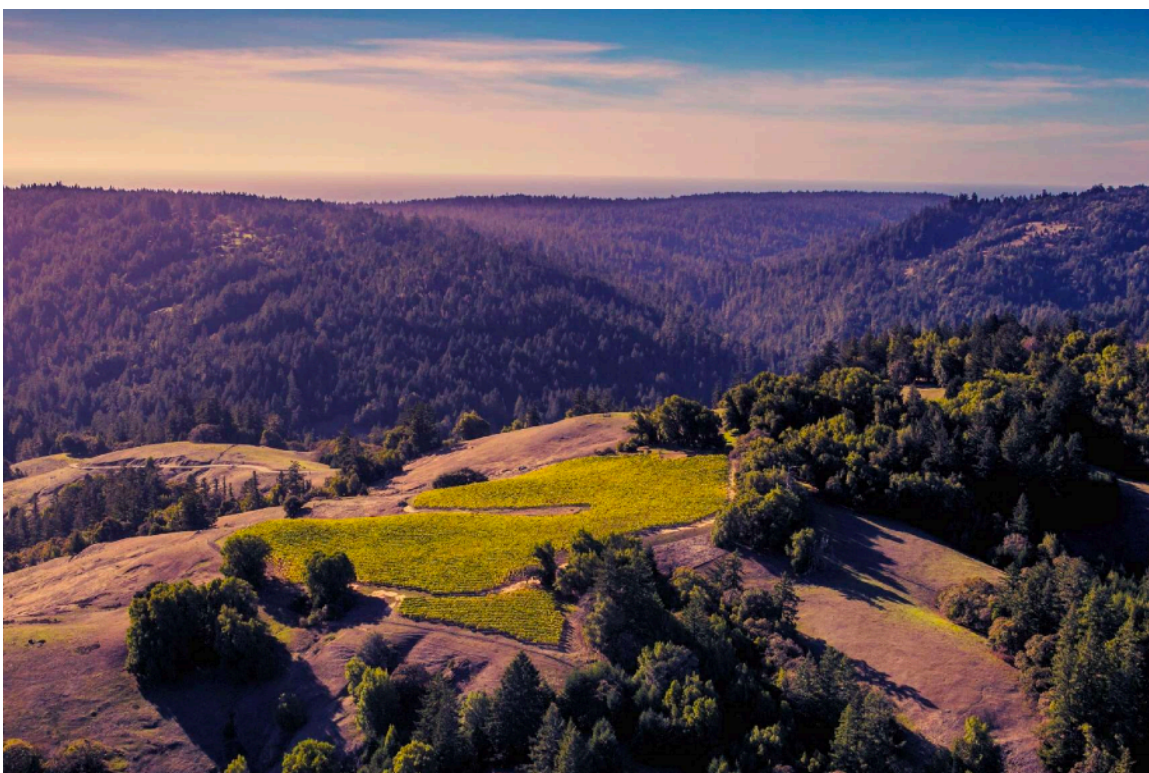


2019 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

13.0% alc., 325 cases, \$64. An exposed southern slope high above the fog-line at 1010 feet elevation and 3.5 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Extremely rocky soils of sandstone and shale. 75% whole cluster native yeast fermentation after a 3-day cold soak, native malolactic fermentation, aged sur lie for 15 months without racking until blended and bottled. My notes were the most extensive for this wine indicating it was special. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Terrific nose eager to offer aromas of dark berries, burnt tobacco, sweet pipe smoke and flower garden. The core of mid-weight olallieberry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit really engages the drinker. A hint of tobacco and violets add interest. A firm backbone of tannin is readily evident initially. When tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle, the deep aromas of purple berry compete burnt tobacco and pine sap were ridiculously sensual. The berry fruit gained intensity and seemed to last on the finish for a minute. This is a young wine that needs time to ease the tannins but the structure guarantees that this wine will go the distance. McDougall Ranch always stands out in the Kutch lineup. The finish sends the drinker immediately back for another sip.* **96**



Note: I recently opened a bottle of 2016 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and went ga-ga. Loads of spicy black cherry, very suave mouthfeel, and dreamy harmony. Exceptionally good when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. Could be the best Kutch Pinot Noir I have ever experienced!



McDougall Ranch

2019 Kutch Mindego Ridge Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 225 cases, \$54. Vines grown in sandstone, shale, quartz and Goldridge sandy loam soils at 350 to 1400 feet elevation. 75% whole cluster, 3-day cold soak followed by native yeast fermentation and native malolactic fermentation. Aged sur lie for 15 months in neutral French oak barrels with a single racking when blended and bottled. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Prodigious aromas of red cherry, exotic spices, dried rose petal and sap soar from the glass immediately upon opening. The mid-weight red and purple berry fruit coat the mid palate and lingers on the*

finish like an arrow stuck in the bullseye. The most forward drinking of the vineyard designates with refined tannins and a very suave mouth feel. The balance in this wine is spot on. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose was still inviting and spice and cola notes complimented the fruit core. The wine still wowed me two days later. A profound wine that is good young or possibly better with age. 95



Mindego Ridge Vineyard

Other Notable Recently Tasted Pinot Noir

2017 Semper Ex Orbis Terrarum Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$. Produced & bottled by Tuck Beckstoffer Estate, St. Helena. Winemaker Napa winemaker legend Phillipe Melka. *Light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of ripe berries, red rose petal and toasted oak. Crisp, bright and sleek, with a mid-weight core of red cherry and strawberry cloaked in oak-driven flavors of toast and tobacco. There is plenty of Pinot character but the oak flavor plays too great a role for me to fully enjoy the wine.* **89**

2017 Bee Hunter Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$42. A blend from six vineyards in Mendocino County. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Substantial aromas of black raspberry, spice and mocha. Very polished with a gracious charge of purple and blackberry fruits framed with modest tannins and a compliment of oak. Easy drinking with a modest finish. This is a very good daily drinker.* **90**

2019 Trader Joe's Grand Reserve Lot #23 Carneros Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$12.99. Bottled by Carneros Cellars, Napa, CA. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Lighter weighted, with aromas of cherry and blueberry with a vegetal note and flavors of cherry, raspberry and a botanical note. Smooth on the palate, with a woody them on he finish. The nose never reaches an appealing level.* **87**

The **2019 Bacigalupi Pinot Noirs** reviewed here are pre-release (February 17, 2021 release) and SRP is not known at time of review. Read more about these wines in the Bacigalupi spring newsletter where I wrote a piece on clones. Bacigalupi Vineyards includes 125 planted acres across three ranches. Most of the fruit is sold with about 10 percent from premium blocks held back to make wine under the Bacigalupi Vineyards label. Ashley Herzberg has been the winemaker since 2011. Production is between 2,000 and 2,500 cases per year. Visit www.bacigalupivineyards.com. Oh, by the way, the matriarch of the Bacigalupi family is Helen, age 94, who drinks two glass of wine a day and eats pistachios with the shells on.

The four wines below offer the opportunity to sample a Pinot Noir with 100% 828, one with 100% Wente and one with 100% Pommard. The Russian River Valley bottling is a blend of Wente and Pommard clones.

2019 Bacigalupi Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 315 cases, \$. 59% Frost Ranch Wente Clone, 21% Goddard Ranch Wente Clone, 18% Frost Ranch Pommard Clone and 2% Goddard Ranch Pommard clone. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, native fermentation, aged sur lie with stirring for 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, pie spice and woodsmoke. A cohesive blend of dark cherry, black raspberry, cola and anise flavors in a middleweight style with buried tannins and a compliment of oak in the background. Easily approached now and refreshing by virtue of a juicy finish.* **92**

2019 Bacigalupi Bloom Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.69, 96 cases. Wine club members only release. A former dairy farm purchased by the Bacigalupi family in 1973. 100% 5-year-old faux 828 selection. Harvest Brix 24.8°. 100% de-stemmed, natural fermentation, aged sur lie with stirring for 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Darker fruits are featured in this rich wine with aromas of blueberry, purple berry along with notes of cardamom spice, white pepper and exotic floral blooms. Mid-weight plus in style, with a plump core of boysenberry and blackberry fruit flavors enhanced with tiled and gamy accents. A hint of raisin and Asian spice add nuance. Welcome harmony with corralled tannins and integrated oak and a satisfying finish. Still excellent when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle.* **93**

2019 Bacigalupi Goddard Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 140 cases. The original home ranch purchased by Charles and Helen Bacigalupi in 1956. 100% Wente clone (Pommard). 100% de-stemmed, native fermentation, aged sur lie with stirring for 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of cherry compote, exotic spice, white pepper and woodsmoke. Mid-weight plush stylistically, with a redder fruit core of cherry and strawberry. The fruit really pops on the palate and lingers through a pleasing finish. Remarkably suave in texture with admirable harmony.* **93**

2019 Bacigalupi Frost Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 140 cases. A 60-acre parcel purchased by the Bacigalupi family in 1993. 100% Pommard. 100% de-stemmed, natural fermentation, aged sur lie with stirring for 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Unfined and unfiltered.

Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Heady aromas of dusty cherry, spice cake, sandalwood, burnt tobacco and 5-spice. My notes say "Amazing nose." The rapport of fruit, acid and tannin is exceptionally noteworthy. Mid-weight flavors of Bing cherry, mocha, cherry cola and 5-spice have an undertone of barnyard, a fecal quality that appeals to many Pinot Noir aficionados. Restrained tannins make it easy to cozy up to. Memories will linger from the generous and persistent finish. Pommard clone has a sensual connection to the pleasure centers in my brain that light up when I drink a wine blessed with this clone. As I have said before, and probably too often, Pommard is my paramour. 94



Marcus Goodfellow learned his winemaking while apprenticing at Evesham Wood and Westrey. He developed an affinity for whole cluster fermentation that he credits to Steve Doerner of Cristom Vineyards. He launched Matello Wines with friends in 2002. The **Goodfellow Family Cellars** label debuted in 2014 and the wines have received glowing accolades in recent vintages. The wines are all produced from non-irrigated vineyards. I found the wines to be acid-driven featuring less ripened fruit, and somewhat austere. Sold through a mailing list at www.goodfellowfamilycellars.com with some retail distribution.

2018 Goodfellow Heritage No. 14 Lewman Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 55 cases, \$sold out. A dry-farmed vineyard at 500 feet elevation on the westside of the Eola-Amity Hills planted in 1993. *Light garnet color in the glass. Aromas arrive over time in the glass including red cherry, dried orange peel, redwood bark and salumi. Light in weight, with a bright nucleus of red cherry, red raspberry and strawberry fruit flavors. A gentle, pretty wine with salivating acidity, suave, immersed tannins, and a finish awash in citrus and red cherry fruits. 91*

2018 Goodfellow Heritage No. 11 Durant Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 55 cases, \$70. *Light garnet color in the glass. Perfume of cherrywood, balsam, red rose petal and baking spices. Mid-weight flavors of red raspberry and cherry with a note of spice. Silky in the mouth, vibrant, noticeable tannins and a slightly astringent finish. Faint oak plies the background. When tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle, the tannins still dominated the fruit. Needs to be cellared. 92*

2018 Goodfellow Family Cellars Old Vine Pommard Lewman Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 55 cases, \$sold out. *Light garnet color in the glass. Lovely aromas of cherry, mushroom, spice and gentle oak. Mid-weight in style, with a noticeably intense attack of satisfying cherry fruit framed by upbeat acidity. and lacy tannins. Noticeable oak in the background. Finishes long on a bright note with tart red cherry goodness. 93*



Wine Briefs

Tannins Inhibit Two Enzymes within the COVID-19 Virus Scientists at China Medical University in Taiwan discovered that tannins in wine can inhibit the activity of two key enzymes of the virus. The researchers said that tannins have the potential to prevent infection and control the growth of viruses. Tannins are found in fruits such as grapes and bananas as well as wine, tea, cocoa, dark chocolates and vegetables. Try eating some red table grapes and you will experience an astringency due to the tannins in the skins. Researchers at North Carolina State University recently discovered that flavanols and proanthocyanidins in grapes and wine prevent the SARS-CoV-2 virus from attaching itself to human cells. The polyphenols, which are also present in green tea and cocoa, could potentially help in the fight against the pandemic.

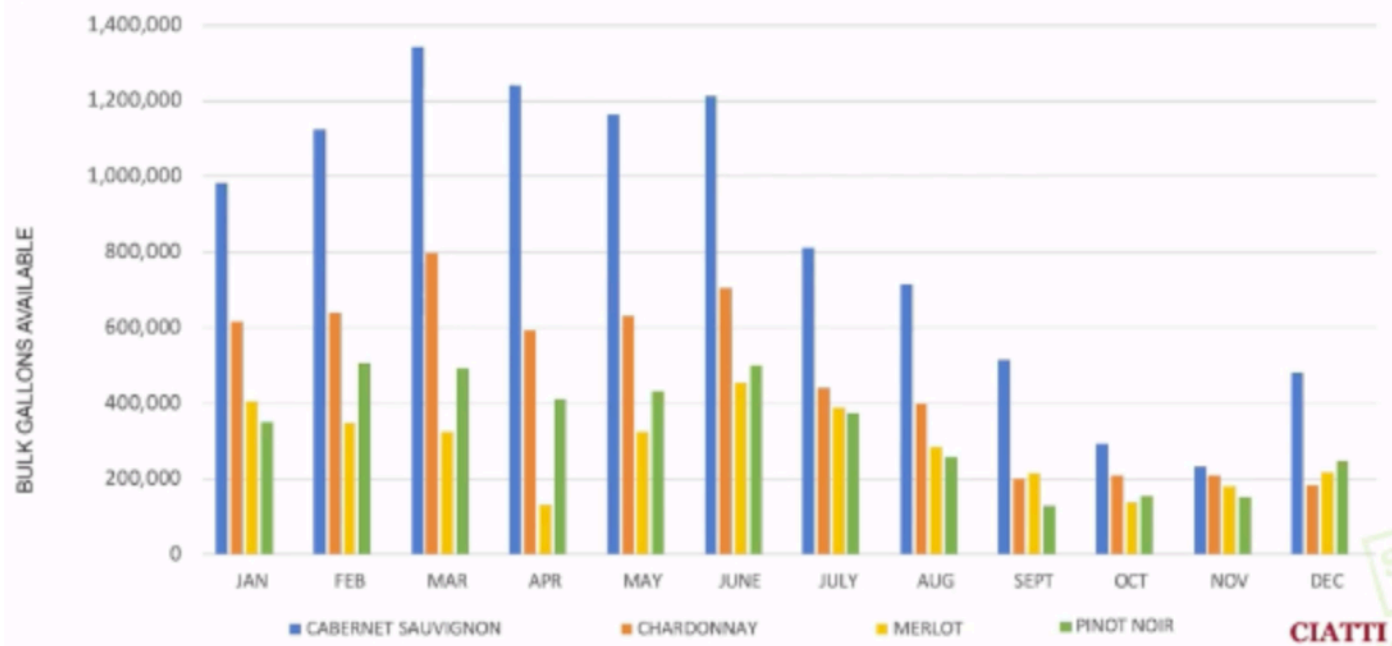
Three New Can Sizes for Wine-in-Cans Approved by TTB The ruling added three sizes to the Standards: 200 ml, 250 ml and 355 ml (equivalent to a traditional 12 oz beer can). These additions will facilitate the movement of wine in domestic and international commerce, while also providing consumers with broader purchasing options. WICresearch.com is the leading researcher of the wine-in-can market and its survey covers 40 wine-in-can producers with 24 brands using both front and rear pictures.

The Excellence of Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir It has been 12 years since I wrote a ground-breaking article on the excellence of Pinot Noir in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Noted wine writer Alder Yarrow broke an article at www.jancisrobinson.com titled “Elevating Chardonnay in the Santa Cruz Mountains.” This extensive tasting article details the history and topography of the region and reviews many Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir and Chardonnay (Yes, Pinot Noir, despite what the title implies). This is subscriber content but you can get a free one-hour trial to read the article.



Sonoma County Hit Hardest by 2020 Wildfire Smoke According to preliminary estimates from wine brokerage firm Ciatti, the 2020 Sonoma County harvest of Pinot Noir came to about 30,000 tons or 36% less than in 2019 and 50% of the bumper harvest of 2018. The smoke from 2020 is estimated to have caused more than \$66 million in losses from the Pinot Noir crop alone. The graph below shows the amount of bulk Pinot Noir available monthly in 2020.

SONOMA COUNTY 2020



Harvest Quality of Pinot Noir Considered Poor in California & Oregon According to the State of the Wine Industry report, a majority of wineries in Napa County and Northern Oregon reported that harvest quality in 2020 was “below average” or “poor” in an anonymously-generated poll. For the Willamette Valley, just 12 percent of those polled called the vintage “excellent, while 26 percent said “below average” and 28 percent said “poor.” Sonoma County fared only slightly better, with 45 percent of wineries calling the vintage “below average” or “poor.” Other regions of California over 80 percent of wineries called the vintage “excellent” or “good.” Most wineries will not bottle Pinot Noir that is smoke-damaged but in California, “repaired” or “cleaned up” Pinot Noir may end up in cheap general California appellation wines. Not so in Oregon, where there is no mass production industry so there is no place for repaired” Willamette Valley Pinot Noir to go.

Disaster for Winegrowers in 2020: Looking to the Future An article at www.wine-searcher.com titled, “Bad year turns Good for California,” looks at the brighter prospects for winegrowers in 2021 as reflected in the annual State of the Industry seminar at the recently held Unified Wine & Grape Symposium in Sacramento. Seminar host Mike Veseth pointed out that during the pandemic Americans have continued to drink wine. California’s smokey wildfire harvest led to the smallest tonnage in California since 2011. This actually brought the supply and demand for California grapes in balance since there was a glut of grapes and bulk wine in 2019. Desirable bulk wines, such as Sonoma County Pinot Noir doubled in price and although this may not be good for the consumer, it is good news for the health of the wine industry.

The Ojai Vineyard Now Owns Fe Ciega Vineyard Adam Tolmach, the winemaker and proprietor of The Ojai Vineyard announced that this iconic planting within the Sta. Rita Hills AVA owned by Hank and Brenda Klehn has a new owner as of January 2021. The 9-acre vineyard and 43-acre property will be farmed by Adam who has produced a Fe Ciega Pinot Noir since 2003. Fe Ciega (Spanish for Blind Faith as in rock fame) was planted in 1998 by Rick Longoria who produced Fe Ciega Pinot Noir for his own winery, Longoria Wines. Many of the Longoria Fe Ciega Pinot Noir wines were reviewed in the past in the *PinotFile*. Adam plans to convert the vineyard to organic farming practices and optimize the vineyard’s resilience to drought vintages. Adam is excited to carry on the legacy of this iconic vineyard.



Williams Selyem Winery Sells Minority Stake to the Faveley Family of Burgundy

Burgundy has been influential in the Willamette Valley Pinot Noir industry since the late 1980s, but the Burgundians have shunned California. Williams Selyem Winery owners, John and Kathe Dyson, sold a percentage stake in the winery on December 31, 2020, ending a five-year quest to find a successor. To their credit, the Dysons did not want to sell Williams Selyem to a private equity investor group or large corporate wine company for fear the winery would lose its boutique flavor. The Dysons bought Williams Selyem in 1998 for \$9.5 million and subsequently acquired 135 vineyard acres over the years and built a new majestic winery. Faveley has a notable collection of grand cru and premier cru vineyards in Burgundy and has been making wine from the Burgundy region since 1825. Erwan Faveley, the seventh-generation owner of the family's winery had been looking for over ten years to buy a stake in the United States wine industry. Winemaker Jeff Mangahas will stay on board as well as other key employees and production will remain at about 20,000 cases annually.

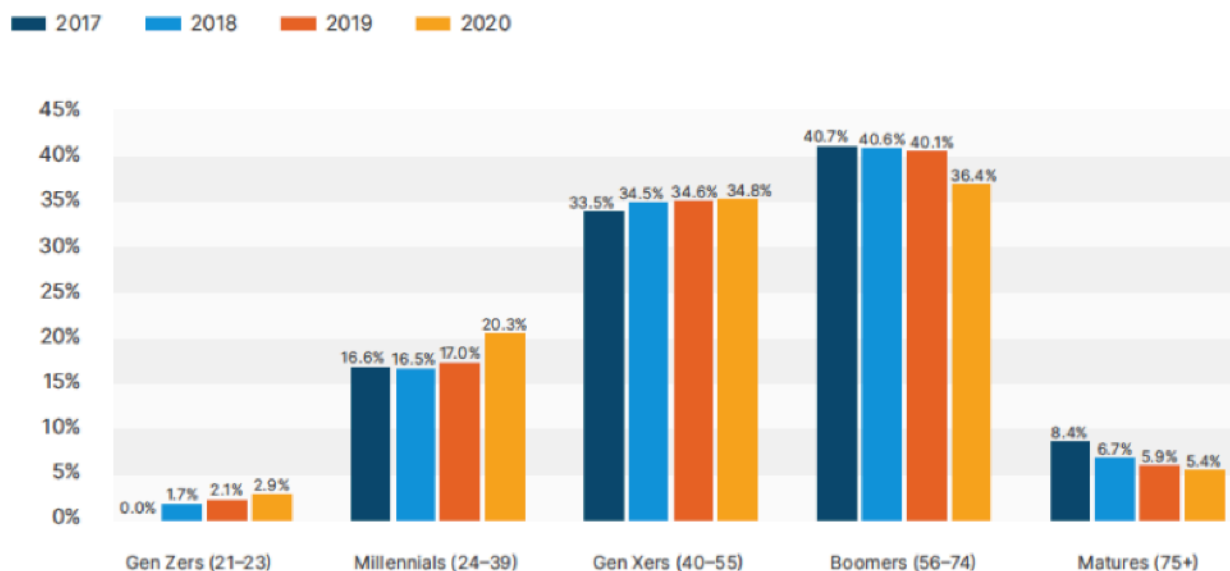


Alcohol Ruins Your Sleep An article appeared recently at www.wellandgood.com that explained in layman's terms why alcohol can ruin your sleep. Many people have a glass of wine to relax and fall asleep but even one drink significantly diminishes the quality of that sleep according to neuroscientist Kristn Willeumier, PhD. Having a drink before bed can be sedating initially, but it can reduce the time spent in the rapid-eye-movement (REM) phase of sleep that is critical to healthy brain function. Bedtime alcohol can lead to insomnia, daytime sleepiness, impaired immune, cardiovascular and cognitive health, and increase the risk of mood disorders.

Effects of Patterns of Alcohol Consumption on Risk of Mortality, Major CV Events, Cirrhosis and Cancer A large prospective cohort study reported in 2021 in *BMC Medicine* concluded that red wine drinking, consumption with food and spreading alcohol intake over 3-4 days were associated with a lower risk of mortality and vascular events among regular alcohol drinkers. The Scientific Forum on Alcohol Research agreed with the conclusions of this study.

Changing Trend on Wine Consumption As Boomers and Matures pass away, the volume of drinkers in the age group of 56-74 and 75+ are decreasing, replaced by Millennials (age 24-39).

Figure 23: Wine consumption by cohort



Source: SVB Annual Winery Conditions Survey

New Book - Vines & Vision: The Winemakers of Santa Barbara County Three years of hard work by authors Matt Kettmann and Macduff Everton went into this massive volume that is 632 pages in length and weighs 8 pounds! The book includes profiles of more than 100 winemakers and vineyard workers and intimate photography from photojournalist Macduff Everton. Chapters on history, geography, viticulture and relevant trends within the industry including the challenges local winemakers have faced as a result of the ongoing pandemic. This represents the most current information on the Santa Barbara County wine scene. Order the book at www.vinesandvisionsb.com.

Willamette Valley Wine Updates (1) **Stoller Wine Group** is opening the Stoller Wine Bar February 11 in Bend, Oregon. More than 40 wines from Stoller's family of brands will be offered including wines from Stoller Family Estate, Chehalem, Chemistry, Canned Oregon and History. (2) **Alexana Winery** has opened a new 7,500 square-foot tasting room space that will offer a covered deck for open-air tasting. (3) **Alloro Vineyard** is pouring out of a new tasting house on its property in the Chehalem Mountains. Up to six guests can participate in intimate al fresco tastings. (4) Erath has expanded its footing to Portland's Pearl District, housed in the Reid Pacific Building. A new wine program pairs Erath wines with cheeses. Carryout wines,

growler fills and curbside pickup are offered. (5) **Rex Hill** has opened a stunning new space that includes an expansive tasting bar and outdoor patio. Modern and rustic, it will be the backdrop for wine flights, glass pours and cheese and charcuterie boards. (6) **Domaine Nicolas-Jay** is about to open the doors to its new 53-acre property that is home to a wine production facility and tasting room overlooking an estate vineyard. (7) Gabriela Sepulveda Vignes has been promoted to winemaker at **Anne Amie Vineyards** in Carlton. A native of Chile, Vignes will oversee an extensive winemaking program that includes some historic Willamette Valley sites. (8) **Landlines Estates** is the new sibling winery at Montinore Estate, crafted limited production runs of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the 30-acre Tidalstar Vineyard. The vineyard was planted in 1998 and is farmed biodynamically. (9) **Willamette Valley Vineyards** is constructing a sparkling wine facility in the Dundee Hills that is set to open in 2022. It will offer tours, tastings and pairing menus. (10) **Fullerton Wines** has added a Corvallis tasting room to complement its Portland location. Reservation-only tastings are offered Wednesday through Sunday. (11) **Broadley Vineyards** has opened its riverfront tasting room in Monroe. Weekly tastings are held in a former Pontiac dealership. The tasting area overlooks the barrel room and there is an outdoor patio. The location is part of an appellation called Lower Long Tom, named after the river Broadley's renovated space overlooks. The TTB is currently reviewing comments on Lower Long Tom's AVA petition. (12) **Domaine Serene** is opening a new wine lounge in downtown Bend, Oregon. The winery's esteemed wines will be poured and paired with an inspired food menu. The lounge is being built in the historic D.H. Spheir Building, which was recently accepted to the National Register of Historic Places. (13) Over the last several years, the Willamette Valley has become a key New World source for sparkling wine. Newer producers like **Bailey Family Wines** and **Chris James Cellars** are joining longstanding producers like ROCO, Argyle, J.K. Carriere and St. Innocent Winery. Visit www.willamettewines.com for a sparkling wine producers list and learn more. (14) One silver lining of the pandemic is that more and more winemakers are delivering bottles directly to their fans in the Willamette Valley. Wineries like **Helioterra**, **Durant Vineyards** and **Division Winemaking Company** are delivering their wine to porches and stoops all across the Valley. (15) Regenerative agriculture is trending thanks to champions like Mimi Casteel of **Hope Well Wine**. this farming style stresses supporting resident organic soil in natural ways and is being adopted by a variety of labels including **Antiquum Farm** and **Bethel Heights Vineyard**. (Thanks to Emily Petterson of the Willamette Valley Wineries Association for these updates)



Only Pinot Noir (Liquid Viagra) Will Do on Valentine's Day

For serious wine drinkers on Valentine's Day Pinot Noir is the drink of choice. Pinot Noir is the most seductive of all wines and is the official wine of Valentine's Day. Writer Konrad Ejbich claims to look for places where he "can drink it with one hand under the table," and describes Pinot Noir as "heaven in a glass....the color of ruby lips." He goes on to say, "Pinot Noir smells like great sex and tastes like the ripest strawberries, raspberries and black cherries all at once."

The pheromones of the Pinot Noir grape are very closely related to male pheromones. All of the aromas in the Pinot Noir grape like spice, musk, earth and barnyard are associated with the principal male smell of androsterone. Androsterone is secreted by the sebaceous glands and is also found in the skin and urine. Truffles, vanilla and oak smells of Pinot Noir aged in oak barrels are also androsterone-like. It has been found that androsterone can affect human behavior when smelled. These smells can unlock powerful memories and open the door to lust and desire. With both the olfactory system and the emotional center located in the frontal lobes of the brain, is it any wonder that a great Pinot Noir gets you a sure thing? If it wasn't for those pheromones and Pinot Noir, we might all still be apes.

Just remember not to over imbibe on Valentine's Day because alcohol depresses the nerve centers in the hypothalamus that control sexual arousal and performance. The sexual urge may increase, but sexual performance decreases. Who can forget oversexed Jack who had to deal with an unfortunate bout of priapism in Rex Pickett's novel, *Vertical*, the sequel to *Sideways*. Jack takes Viagra to counteract the effects of alcohol, a combination that would make any physician cringe. It is the funniest interlude in the book.