



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir*

## Wishful Drinking: 2021 Pinot Noir All-Americans

It is my annual tradition since 2004 to name the best Pinot Noir performers of the year as “All-Americans.” The All-Americans are a testimony to the cadre of passionate winegrowers and winemakers who have successfully corralled the temperamental nature of Pinot Noir.

The All-Americans are selected for their description-defying sensuality, their uniqueness, and for the emotion they illicit. The All-Americans are judged on merit independent of price, style, vintage, or region of origin. Only finished, bottled wines that are formally tasted in 2021 in controlled, and therefore comparable circumstances are eligible for All-American consideration.

The All-American Pinot Noir wines are special because the winners include trophy and cult Pinot Noir wines that are infrequently reviewed by major wine publications or wine competition panels. Some wineries choose not to submit their wines for review so I frequently purchase these wines and review them anyway.

I tend to focus on current drinkability rather than age-ability since most consumers prefer to drink domestic Pinot Noir when it is relatively young. I often re-taste wines later the same day with food at dinner to replicate the consumers drinking experience, or the next day or two from an opened and re-corked (but not gassed) bottle. This gives me insight into the quality, balance and age-ability of the wine.

I have no monetary arrangement with any winegrower, winery, winemaker, retailer or wholesaler and accept no advertising. I do not charge wineries for inclusion of the reviews or label images that appear in the *PinotFile*.

I am convinced that arriving at an apropos description of a wine is not only more challenging than awarding a score, but it is the fairest way to evaluate a wine. That said, the All-Americans are chosen when given scores of 94 or above rather than subjective opinions, and designate wines of exceptional merit.

To seek out any of the All-American Pinot Noir wines, contact the winery first, then the retail marketplace through any of the popular search engines such as [wine-searcher.com](http://wine-searcher.com).

Since early 2020, I have decreased the number of Pinot Noir wines reviewed and no longer review Chardonnay. I primarily taste Pinot Noir wines submitted by invitation. and the overwhelming majority of these fall into the premium and ultra-premium categories and are priced appropriately.

In the section of this to follow, I will list the wineries whose wines most often appeared in my All-American honor roll in the *PinotFile* during the past 17 years.

## **2021 California First Team Pinot Noir All-Americans**

**2016 Joseph Swan Vineyards Trenton Estate Vineyard Pentagon Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 99**

**2016 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 98**

**2018 Bohème English Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 97**

**2018 Davis Family Vineyards Soul Patch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 97**

**2019 Drew Wendling Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 97**

**2018 Dutton-Goldfield McDougall Ranch Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 97**

**2017 Gary Farrell Terra de Promisio Vineyard Swan Clone 97 Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir 97**

**2018 Maggy Hawk Jolie Maggy Hawk Estate Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 97**

**2017 Mount Eden Vineyards The Tanaka Project Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 97**

**2012 Rhys Alpine Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 97**

**2018 Williams Selyem Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 97**

## **2021 California Second Team Pinot Noir All-Americans**

**2018 Bohème Taylor Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Cattleya Belly of the Whale Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2017 Cobb Diane Cobb Coastlands Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2016 Fulcrum Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 J. Rochioli Little Hill Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Littorai One Acre Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 96**

**2018 Pisoni Pisoni Estate XX Anniversary Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 96**

**2016 Soliste Renaissance Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Testarossa Brousseau Vineyard Chalone AVA Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Testarossa Sierra Mar Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Three Sticks Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 96**

**2019 Williams Selyem Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir 96**

## **2021 California Honorable Mention Pinot Noir All-Americans**

**2018 Ancien Fiddlestix Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Bohème Stuller Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Bohème Occidental Hills Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Calera Jensen Vineyard Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Dutton Estate Manzana Vineyard Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Hirsch Vineyards Reserve Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Holdredge Rochioli Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 J. Rochioli Sweetwater Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Joseph Phelps Vineyards Pastorale Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 Kutch Falstaff Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Rivers-Marie Summa Old Vines Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Rhys Horseshoe Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Sanford Founders' Vines Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 95**

**2017 Sea Smoke Southing Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 95**

**2013 Soliste Solitaire Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Talley Vineyards Rosemary's Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 Testarossa La Rinconada Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 Testarossa rosemary's Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2019 Three Sticks Walala Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**

# 2021 Oregon Pinot Noir All-Americans

In 2021 I reviewed fewer Oregon Pinot Noirs, but here is the best. Note: Mark and Tina Hammond sold their vineyard and winery in 2018 to Piper Underbrink who wants to keep all things consistent. Visit [www.princeofpinot.com/article/2312/](http://www.princeofpinot.com/article/2312/).

**2018 Privé Vineyard Joie de Vivre Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 99**

**2012 Privé Vineyard le sud Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 98**

**2013 Privé Vineyard le nord Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 98**

**2013 Privé Vineyard Joie de Vivre Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 97**

**2018 DION Vineyard Old Vines Reserve Release Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 96**

**2014 Privé Vineyard le nord Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 96**

**2018 Broadley Vineyards Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Lenné Esrtate Cinq Elus Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Open Claim Vineyards Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Privé Vineyard le nord Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 95**

**2018 Red Electric TGV Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 95**

# 17 Years of Pinot Noir All-Americans

I reviewed seventeen years of California and Oregon Pinot Noir All-Americans to find the wineries that most often received this award. This is the highest indication of a winery's consistently extraordinary output. Hitch your dedication to these dependable wineries and you will drink extremely well.

## California

**Benovia Winery^**  
**Black Kite Cellars**  
**Brogan Cellars\***  
**Calera Wine Co\***  
**Castalia^**  
**COBB Wines^**  
**Davis Family Vineyards**  
**Dehlinger Winery^**  
**Donum Estate^**  
**Drew Family Cellars**  
**DuMOL^**  
**Dutton-Goldfield**  
**Foursight Wines^**  
**Freestone Vineyards^**  
**Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery**  
**george Winery**  
**J. Rochioli Vineyard & Winery^**  
**Kutch Wines**  
**Littorai^**  
**Lynmar Estate**  
**Maggy Hawk^**  
**Morgan Winery**  
**Paul Lato**  
**Pisoni Estate^**  
**Rhys Vineyards^**  
**Rivers-Marie**  
**Sea Smoke Cellars^**  
**Siduri Wines\*\*\*\***  
**Sojourn Cellars\***  
**Soliste**  
**Talisman**  
**Three Sticks Wines**  
**Wayfarer Vineyard^**  
**WesMar Winery\***  
**William Selyem**

**Woodenhead  
Windy Oaks Estate Vineyards & Winery^**

## **Oregon**

**Alloro Vineyard^  
Anam Cara Cellars^  
Antica Terra  
Bethel Heights^  
Big Table Farm  
Broadley Vineyards^  
Cristom Vineyards^  
DePonte Cellars^  
Dion Vineyard^  
Domaine Drouhin Oregon^  
Et Fille  
Evesham Wood^  
Ken Wright Cellars  
Laura Volkman Vineyards\*  
Lenné Estate^  
Lumos Wine Company  
Ponzi Vineyards^  
Privé Vineyard\*^  
The Eyrie Vineyards^  
Walter Scott Wines  
White Rose Estate**

- \* Brogan Cellars closed in 2018
- \* Calera sold to Duckhorn Wine Company in 2017
- \* Laura Volkman closed in 2013, now Potter's Vineyard
- \* Privé Vineyard sold to new owner and winemaker in 2018
- \* Siduri sold to Jackson Family Wines in 2015
- \* Sojourn Cellars sold in 2020
- \* WesMar closed in 2021

^ Close to or 100% "estate bottled" Pinot Noir (The federally regulated term "estate bottled" on a label is very special for it indicates that the wine was produced in a continuous process and bottled at the winery from grapes grown from vineyards owned or farmed by the producer located within the same AVA as the winery. Look for "Grown, Produced & Bottled By" on the back label.)



# Pinot Briefs

**“Pommard is My Paramour”** If you have been a regular reader of the *PinotFile*, you know that Pinot Noir wines made from the Pommard clone are my favorite. I have ended a number of my reviews with the words, “Pommard is my paramour.’ One of my readers, Jim Slone, apparently agrees and his wife made him a hat for Christmas that made me laugh out loud.



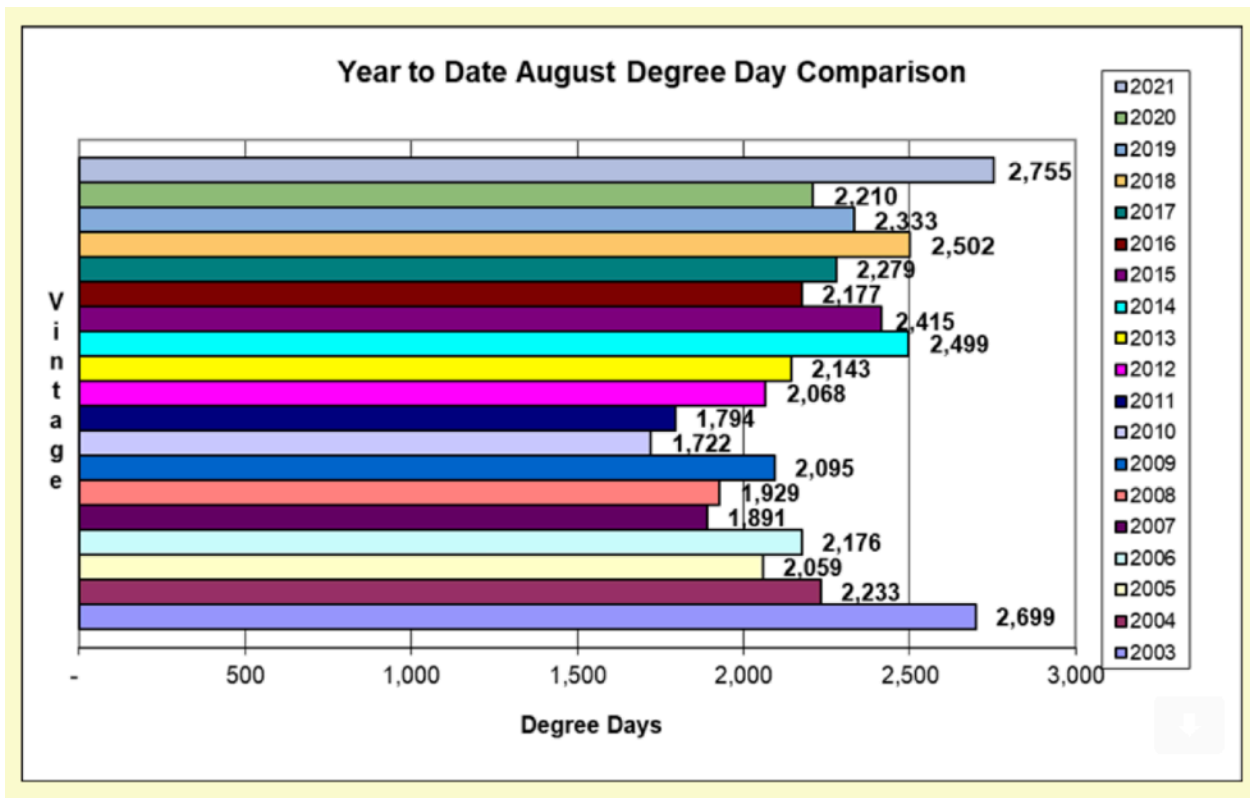
**Genomes of *Vitis vinifera* Reveal Origins of European Wine Grapes** A recent article in Nature Communications at [www.nature.com](http://www.nature.com) reports an analysis of 204 genomes of *Vitis vinifera* that show that all analyses support a single domestication event that occurred in Western Asia and was followed by numerous introgressions from European wild populations. This admixture generated international wine grapes that have stemmed from Alpine countries worldwide.

**Oregon’s Willamette Valley Had Wide Climatic Changes In 2021** Ernie Pink, co-owner and winemaker for Amalie Robert Estate in the Willamette Valley keeps track each year of degree days during the growing season and reports his results in his Farming bLOG or FLOG. Visit [www.amalierobert.com](http://www.amalierobert.com) to sign up for the FLOG. You won’t find a more entertaining read about viticulture!

The Year to Date August Degree Day Comparison shows that 2021 has been the warmest growing season dating back to 2003.

Contrast this with the photo of Nicholas Estate Vineyard in the Chehalem Mountains during the many days of rain, cold and snow in the latter part of December. Sheila Nicholas, co-owner of Anam Cara Cellars sent me this photo.





**Wine Suitcase Ideal for Traveling** The VinGardeValise by FlyWith Wine is a line of tough suitcases that are gentle on glass due to their dense foam inserts that cradle wine bottles. The VinGardeValise Piccolo doubles as an airline carry-on piece of luggage or as a check wine travel case that can travel safely with up to 5 bottles of wine and room for clothes and belongings on the other side. Available at [www.flywithwine.com/](http://www.flywithwine.com/) or Amazon, \$249.

**2022 Oregon Chardonnay Celebration** “The Secret Life of Chardonnay: Oregon Blanc De Blancs” will be the theme of the upcoming 11th Annual Oregon Chardonnay Celebration to be held on February 25-26 at Argyle Winery Friday night and the Allison Inn & Spa on Saturday. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.oregonchardonnaycelebration.org](http://www.oregonchardonnaycelebration.org).

**Lower Long Tom Oregon's Newest Oregon AVA** The Lower Long Tom, approved by the federal government in November 2021, is the 10th AVA within the Willamette Valley and 22nd within Oregon. It consists of 25,000 acres in portions of Lane and Benton counties. The AVA takes its name from the Long Tom River that forms one of its borders. This AVA has 12 wineries and 24 vineyards within its borders in the Lower Long Tom watershed northwest of Eugene. Notable wineries include Benton Lane and Brigadoon. The Bellpine soils are said to be fast-draining and nutrient-poor and the resultant Pinot Noir wines derive from small berries with concentrated flavors and notable tannins. For more detailed information: [www.winewitandwisdom.com](http://www.winewitandwisdom.com).

**Auld Lang Syne** The song's title can be literally translated as "days gone by" and appropriately describes my nostalgia for Pinot Noir from Privé Vineyard. I found this very small producer of Pinot Noir in 2006 (about 950 cases annually from a 2-acre Pommard clone vineyard), and through the years I have tasted practically every Pinot Noir produced by owners Mark and Tina Hammond. On this year's New Year's Eve, I opened the last bottle of Privé Vineyard Pinot Noir in my cellar: the **2018 Privé Vineyard Joie de Vivre Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir**: etched bottle #38 out of 288 signed by winemaker Tina Hammond). It was a glorious drinking experience. This extraordinary wine rivaled any domestic Pinot Noir I have ever drunk. Although Pinot Noir is known as a finicky grape that likes to play hard-to-get, this wine was beguiling upon opening and evolved into an orgasmic experience when I finished the bottle the following day to kick off the New Year. **99**

