

PinotFile[®]

The FIRST Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinot Noir

Chalone's Ambitious Pinot Program

Chalone Vineyard, founded in the Gavilan Mountain Range by Dick Graff, was one of only a few California wineries produce small quantities of world-class Pinot Noir in the late 60's and 70's. While other California wineries were floundering with Pinot Noir, Graff was employing traditional Burgundian methods such as barrel aging and malolactic fermentation. The limestone soils at Chalone helped to make the Chalone Vineyard Pinot Noir a wine people loved. The grapes were sourced from 2.2 acres of the lower vineyard that were planted in 1946. The source of these vines remains unknown. Some early admirers of the scarce Chalone Pinot Noir feel that the 1969 Chalone Vineyard Pinot Noir was the greatest Pinot Noir ever made in California bar none. In 2001 the 1969 was tasted by the *Houston Chronicle's* Michael Lonsford and Master of Wine Roger Bohnrich. They said of the 1969 that it "was managing to hold its own, with the fruit fairly bright and the wine showing only modest volatile acidity. A truly interesting wine."

I became intrigued by Chalone Pinot Noir after drinking some wines from the early 80's. Graff had planted 30 acres with a clone reportedly from David Bruce's vineyard in Santa Cruz, and although he did not directly make the wines his influence was apparent. Eventually I became a Chalone shareholder and enthusiastically attended the yearly bacchanal shareholder's meeting at the Chalone property. In the 90's, however, the quality seemed to fade, the other Chalone properties like Acacia and Edna Valley produced forgettable Pinots and I sold my shares.

Now Chalone has an ambitious Pinot Noir program underway. Additional Pinot Noir was planted at Chalone in 1998 and 1999. The program at Acacia in Carneros has been upgraded, and Orogeny from Grass Valley released its first vintage in 2002. Additional land has been purchased in Marin County and the Sonoma Coast.

The following wines are excellent and worth adding to your cellar: **2003 Acacia Carneros** (\$19), **2002 Acacia Beckstoffer Las Amigas Vineyard** (\$45), **2002 Acacia St. Clair Vineyard** (\$36), **2002 Acacia Field-Blend Estate Vineyard** (\$45), **2002 Chalone Vineyard** (\$20), **2001 Chalone Vineyard Vista Block Pinot Noir** (\$34), and **2002 Orogeny Green Valley** (\$19).

You can order the Pinots through Chalone at 707-254-4250.

The only way to deal with your passion for Pinot is to yield to it.

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To read more about Chalone: *Chalone: A Journey on the Wine Frontier*, author Gregory S Walter, Carneros Press, \$20 or *A Vision for the Millenium*, author Dick Graff.

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Pinot Newcomers

A.P. Vin is the dream of Andrew Vingiello, a hopeless Pinot fanatic who developed the crazy idea that he could produce Pinot Noir. Inspired by Brian Loring (Loring Wine Company), Adam Lee (Siduri), Peter Cargasacchi (Cargasacchi Vineyard) and others, he began a quest that has culminated in his first release, the **2003 A.P. Vin Garys' Vineyard Pinot Noir**. This wine is 100% Pisoni clone from the Santa Lucia Highlands, unfinned and unfiltered, alcohol 14.9%. A very humorous web site details Vingiello's story and wine can be ordered here— apvin.com.

Inman Family Wines is the result of a marriage of Simon Inman and Kathleen Inman. Simon was on a holiday from England and visited the Napa Creek Winery. Kathleen, on the first day of her summer job at Napa Creek, met Simon in the tasting room. Two years later they were married and made England their home for 15 years. During this time they drank their share of good Burgundy and developed a love for Pinot Noir. In 1998 they left their careers behind and their beloved home in England, to settle in California and make Pinot Noir. They purchased a small farm on Olivet Lane Road and named the estate Olivet Grange Vineyard, a title that reflects the farm's location and the family's English country home, The Grange at Elvington. In



2000, they planted 13,000 Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris grapevines on their 10 acre property. The Pinot Noir clones are 777, 667, 115, and 114. The **2003 Inman Family Olivet Grange Vineyard Pinot Noir** will be released in October, 2004. It is an elegant and feminine style of Pinot Noir from young vines, 13.65% alcohol, 525 cases. The farmhouse on the property has been lovingly restored and may be rented as a vacation home. Visit the website to purchase wine or reserve the vacation hideaway— inmanfamilywines.com.



Wine & Health is Big News

The health benefits of wine are reviewed and updated almost weekly in every major news magazine and newspaper. The latest *Wine Spectator* has an excellent review article written by a physician on the effects of alcohol and wine on health.

A new Swedish study finds that postmenopausal women who consume high amounts of alcohol, especially wine, are at a higher risk of breast cancer. Moderate drinkers, however, were found to have a 12 percent lower risk of breast cancer. An incidental finding was that women who consumed the highest amounts of fat in their diet saw the risk of getting breast cancer increase by 34 percent. Cindy Moore, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, says woman should limit their alcohol intake to one drink per day to reduce their cancer risk and reduce total fat (particularly omega-6 oils such as in sunflower and corn oils) to recommended levels.

A new study conducted by researchers of University College, London, suggests that drinking half a bottle of wine a day can make your brain work better, especially if you are a woman. Those having one glass of wine a week scored significantly higher than teetotalers and the benefits were most marked among women. Those who had half a bottle of wine a day scored even better. Unfortunately, the benefits of alcohol can be outweighed by the increased risk of cancer and cirrhosis.

In a study of 46 pairs of female twins, scientists found that if one twin drank moderately and the other twin drank rarely, the moderately drinking twin had significantly denser bones both at the spine and hip. Woman with osteoporosis may be told in the future by their doctor that a glass of wine a day is healthy.

Becky Wasserman

Becky Wasserman was the first American wine broker to live and work in Burgundy. She was one of the first to deal primarily with grower-producers who bottle their own wine (estate bottlers). She began in 1976 as a broker of oak barrels and formed Le Serbet corporation to broker wine and barrels in 1979. Starting with Jean Francois, her first order was from Mayacamas in California. Tonnellerie Francois Freres is now the largest single tonnellerie in Burgundy— Wasserman put Francois Freres on the international market. Early in her career, while traveling in the United States on barrel business, she was asked to look for good Burgundy from small producers-suppliers. She discovered that most growers in Burgundy did not ship their wine beyond France. There had never been an American wine broker who dealt with the small estate bottler, who encouraged growers and worked with them, and who at the same time, lived permanently in Burgundy, only minutes from most growers, never more than an hour away from any of them. There were other brokers in Burgundy, but she was the only American— an anomaly. Eventually she left the barrel business to concentrate on importing fine Burgundy from producers like Philippe Rossignol and Alain Burguet, both in Gevrey Chambertin, Daniel Rion & Fils in Vosne Romanee, Andre Mussy in Pommard and Michel Lafarge in Volnay. She continues to run her business today from an old farm in an isolated little village in the heart of Burgundy

Belles Soeurs Rose of Pinot Noir

When it's hot you can reach for a beer, but a cool glass of Pinot Noir Rose can be equally crisp and refreshing. At Belles Soeurs they decided not to make a rose by the saignee method, but to find a small plot of grapes that could be picked slightly early so that they still had the refreshing acid, yet mature enough to have red fruit characteristics. Some fruit from the Ana vineyard was de-stemmed, then given a light foot stomping and allowed to rest on the skins for 35 hours. Then it was gently pressed into stainless steel barrels and cold fermented until dry. The wine did not undergo malolactic fermentation. To give the wine a bit more richness, it was allowed to rest on the lees until it was bottled in June of 2004. The wine has a wonderful note of citrus and strawberry on the nose, following through on the palate with lots of ripe red fruit. This is an exclusive to west coast mailing customers. The unique tailgate party label for the wine is way cool (prints are available). A perfect Thanksgiving day wine. Only 50 cases made— offered in six packs. \$108/6 bottles. 503-537-1137.

Wine 101 and 102

Burrell School Winery, a Santa Cruz Mountains winery on Summit Road in Los Gatos, is offering a Wine School for those interested in learning how to make wine. Classes are held in the historic 1890 Schoolhouse, restored by winemaker/owner Dave Moulton and his wife, Anne Dave. These classes offer a first-hand look at all of the decision paths that must be made from vine to wine.

Wine 101: Crush and Fermentation— topics include harvest, crush, choice of yeast, extraction methods used during and after fermentation. 9/18 5:30-7:30 and 9/25 5:30-7:00.

Wine 102: Barrel Aging and Cellaring— topics cover barrel selection for each variety, spectrum of flavors available to the winemaker, influences of oak types and toast levels. 10/15 5:30-7:30 and 10/23 5:30-7:30.

Cost is \$50 per class (\$75 for both classes). Tuition includes lecture, lab, wine tasting, diploma, logo'd glass, and a lot of quotable facts from winemaker Dave Moulton. Register at 408-393-6290 or burrellschool.com.



“The definition of a fine Pinot Noir will be debated long after the last cow has trundled home in the twilight of civilization, swaying down the path along a hillside where two wine geeks sit, glasses in hand, arguing passionately about the relative merits of two Pinots. But one point will remain indisputable: Above a certain threshold of sensual appeal and character, Pinot Noir is liquid magic. And a good proportion of the magic derives from the definitive characteristics of a given site. It’s axiomatic among Pinot Noir fans that a fine Pinot expresses every little element of terroir, notwithstanding viticulture and winemaking.”

... .Rod Smith, *Wine & Spirits*, February 2002


PrinceofPinot.com

2003 Beaujolais: The Vintage of the Sun

Most wine lovers forget that Beaujolais is part of Burgundy. The grape is different, Gamay Noir instead of Pinot Noir, but the wine in great vintages like 2003 can be equally suave. Interestingly, with aging, many Cru Beaujolais taste almost identical to older Burgundy.

Georges Duboeuf, who has vast experience with Beaujolais, says that “2003 is the greatest vintage for Beaujolais in my lifetime, better than 2000, 1995, and 1990. 1976 was great, but harder and drier. 1947 was stunning, but we know how to do things better now and have superb equipment that did not exist then. More great 2003’s were produced than 1947’s. Only 10% of the 1947’s were exceptional. 2003 may be the best ever.” Robert Parker stated that “the 2003 reds of Beaujolais are the greatest I’ve experienced, let me stress that... .bottled sun.”

Basic Beaujolais is a bit lightweight and hard to take seriously, but Crus Beaujolais from the region’s top 10 villages is several notches above that of a Beaujolais Village. Look for wines from Brouilly, Fleurie, Julienas, Morgon, and Moulin-A-Vent. Even the best wines of the vintage top off at only \$16.

Georges Duboeuf is one of the most reliable producers. Look for the following 2003 wines: **2003 Georges Duboeuf Julianas Cuvee Prestige**, **2003 Georges Duboeuf Julienas**, **2003 Georges Duboeuf Fleurie Domaine des Quatres Vents** (\$14), **2003 Moulin-A-Vent Domaine des Rosiers** (\$15), **2003 Georges Duboeuf Moulin-A-Vent Domaine de la Tour de Bief** (\$15), **2002 Georges Duboeuf Chiroubles Domaine Desmurs** (\$12), and **2003 Georges Duboeuf Regnie Domaine des Buyats** (\$10). Do it. Other producers to look for include Louis Jadot, Nicolas Potel, and Joseph Drouhin.