

**Pinot Noir &
The
PinotFile... .A
Perfect Match**

PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinot Noir

Volume 5, Issue #1

August 16, 2005

Inside this issue:

A Tchelistcheff History Lesson	2
Grape Sorting School	2
First Pinot Noir from Burt William's Ranch	3
Wine Books	3
Kudos to Prince	4

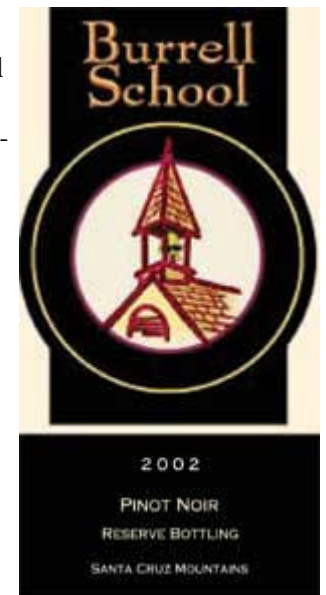
I Promise to Sip My Pinot Noir

There are a few legendary and well-known wineries in the Santa Cruz Mountains AVA such as Bonny Doon, David Bruce, Mount Eden, and Ridge, but it is several of the other 64 members of the Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association (SCMWA) that have recently moved this reclusive wine region into prominence. At this year's prestigious San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, Bargetto Winery, Burrell School, Muccigrosso Vineyards, Soquel Vineyards, Storrs Winery, Thomas Fogerty, Trout Gulch Vineyards and Windy Oaks Estate all won medals for Pinot Noir.

The mountainous area only contains about 1,350 acres of vines, many of which are planted in very small vineyards owned by families. Because of this, many of the region's wineries source grapes from outside the appellation. The quality of the fruit here has not gone unnoticed by outsiders, however, and has led neighboring wineries such as Testerosa and Clos La Chance to source Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from this rugged appellation. Many of the newer vineyards have been planted by Silicon Valley escapees lured by the romantic wine lifestyle.

The origins of Burrell School go back to 1854 when Lyman J. Burrell settled here. The bell tower silhouette on the label honors the historic 1890 Burrell School. Dave and Anne Moulton purchased 20 acres here in 1973, planting grapes in 1976 and then replanting after the 1989 earthquake (the property sits in close proximity to the San Andreas Fault). Moulton continued his day job as an engineer for years, sold off most of his grapes and made wine as a hobby until 1992 when the winery was bonded and a facility was built two years later. The vineyard sits at 1,600 feet above the Monterey Bay which brings warm days and cool nights, resulting in a long growing season ideal for cool climate grapes.

2002 Burrell School Reserve Bottling Santa Cruz Mtns Pinot Noir \$30, 725 cases. This lovely, medium-bodied Pinot Noir features dark fruits, earth, toast, and graham crackers. It reminds of a teacher I had in 6th grade: smells great, has plenty of body, offers plenty of sass, and makes you sit up straight in your seat.



Windy Oaks Estate is one of the newer Pinot players in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Jim and Judy Schultze have 15 acres, mostly planted to Pinot Noir at 1,000 feet in the Corralitos area, located in the far south of the appellation called Pleasant Valley. They have built their own small winery. The 2001 Estate Reserve Pinot Noir (\$33) won a gold medal at the 2005 San Francisco Chronicle Competition. The Estate Pinot Noir Blend (\$16) is a lighter style and a good value. 831-786-9463.

Give this wine 30-45 minutes to expose itself. If you are really good, teacher may prescribe a full ounce of detention!

The winery is located at 24060 Summit Rd, Los Gatos, CA 95033. The phone number is 408-353-6290 and the website is www.burrellschool.com. The winery is open weekends for tasting in the Teacher's Carriage House located on the property. The view of the canyons and ridges of the Santa Cruz Mountains vineyards is spectacular.

For further information on the Santa Cruz Mountains Wineries, consult www.scmwa.com. Historian Charles Sullivan wrote a definitive book on the region in 1982 titled, "*Like Modern Edens: Winegrowing in Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains, 1798-1981.*" A more updated book on the region is "*Mountain Vines, Mountain Wines,*" written by Casey Young and Ken Dawes.



History Lesson

When Andre Tchelistcheff arrived in the Napa Valley at age 37 he found the post-Prohibition California wine industry in shambles. His skilled winemaking and technological innovations soon led to a leap in quality. He has become a vinous legend and every credible wine authority must not only know how to spell his name (not an easy feat), but also recite some of the many famous stories about him.



Dan Berger wrote several years ago about one of these stories. Berger was judging Pinot Noirs at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair Wine Competition in 1981 and sitting next to him as part of a five-person panel was Andre Tchelistcheff. Andre voted for a Gold Medal for wine No. 8 as did Dan, but the other panelists did not vote the wine an award. At a subsequent break, Andre said "Wine No. 8 was excellent. Whoever made it, he knows Pinot Noir." Tchelistcheff's influence as a respected judge was huge, so when Berger told the competition director about wine No. 8, the director re-entered the wine, Tchelistcheff made a few favorable comments about the wine and it was awarded a Silver Medal. The wine turned out to be the 1978 Davis Bynum Pinot Noir made by Gary Farrell. That was the first wine made by Farrell who went on to become one of Russian River Valley's greatest winemakers.

Grape Sorting School

Ambullneo Vineyards has openings for select volunteers during the 2005 fall crush, 8/21 to 10/31. Candidates must enjoy working in a winemaker's world and sorting grapes. Work as many days as you like, but only choose days you can be sure you can be there.

Benefits include free lunch (including wine) and physical and spiritual enrichment. No salary, no medical benefits, and 0% tuition reimbursement.

Contact Greg Linn by e-mail.

First Pinot Noir from Burt William's Ranch

Chris Whitcraft of Whitcraft Winery is releasing the **2004 Whitcraft Winery Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** (\$50) this Fall. Whitcraft has had a long-standing friendship with Burt Williams. Williams has planted his vineyard to the Rochioli and Romanee Conti clones five years ago.

My association with Chris Whitcraft started when I tasted his Pinot Noirs he was proudly pouring at the Santa Barbara County Celebration of Harvest back in the early 1990s. Through the years I have enjoyed his individualistic wines which are produced in very small quantities. He prides himself on no FF & P (fining, filtration, and pumping), minimal sulfur, natural yeasts, and minimal to no use of electricity. The wines are truly hand-crafted. His 1994 Bien Nacido Pinot Noir was chosen the top Pinot Noir in 1995 by the *Wine Spectator* and Whitcraft Winery was listed by that publication as one of the top new wineries in California. After that press release, the demand for his wine was staggering, but with time the wines have ceased being press darlings, although the quality has always been there. He sells most of his wines to a mailing list. His yearly newsletter is very quirky and personal and I have been able to follow his ups and downs through the years via this annual one page letter. The most recent newsletters are posted on the website.

The Morning Dew Ranch Pinot Noir is described by Chris as "Dark cherry, more red than purple with a spicy strawberry nose and...loads of perfume! Rich, full, lush (like a few people involved in it!) while still smelling like fresh grapes with a bright creamy finish that begs for another taste." Other wines available in the latest offering include the **2004 Whitcraft Winery Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir** (\$30), a blend of Melville and Bien Nacido Q and N Blocks, and the **2004 Whitcraft Winery Aubaine Vineyard Pinot Noir** (\$50), a young vineyard located in Nipomo in San Luis Obispo County overlooking Pismo Beach and planted to Dijon clones 667 and 777. On the website, some of his older Pinot Noir releases are available. Interestingly, he will be releasing a **2000 Whitcraft Winery Hirsch Vineyard Sparkling Wine** (\$ unknown) in the Fall.

Whitcraft Winery

805-965-0956

www.whitcraftwinery.com

You may remember a bottle of Whitcraft 2001 Q Block Pinot Noir in the movie *Sideways*. In the 1990s, Whitcraft lived in a camper during harvest behind the Hitching Post II Restaurant and spent a number of evenings in the bar watching sports and drinking wine with Frank Ostini. He talked to Rex Pickett, the author of *Sideways* on a number of occasions. In late 1990, he got a call from Michael London, the producer, asking if he would read the script and send him two bottles of a wine that was mentioned in the book. He was told they would start filming in 2000 and asked if he would consult. Apparently they lost interest, for the next thing he knew the movie had begun filming in the fall of 2003. Subsequently, at a tasting fundraiser for Mike Bonaccorsi at Wally's in Santa Monica in 2004, director Alexander Payne came up and introduced himself and told Whitcraft that he had put a nice lingering shot of the Whitcraft label in the movie.



Margie Brogan (daughter of Burt Williams) of Brogan Cellars will be releasing a Pinot Noir from her father's vineyard next year. The 2004 release of "My Father's Vineyard Pinot Noir" will be offered on Brogan Cellar's Spring 2006 mailer which will come out late November. To join the mailing list, call Margie at 707-473-0211 or visit her at 3222B Dry Creek Rd, Healdsburg (you can even stay overnight next door at the Irish Rose Inn, 707-431-2801).

A Harvest of Wine Books

The number of books published on wine has increased at an astonishing rate in recent years. James Gabler's *Wine into Words* listed 3,200 titles in the first edition published in 1985. The second edition, published in 2004 lists nearly 8,000 titles. Today, there is practically a new book released to the market every week and the quality is extremely high. Below is a summary of recent entries to the wine library that are must reading for any serious wine professional and pinophile.

A History of Wine in America, From Prohibition to the Present, Thomas Pinney, University of California Press, 2005, \$45, www.ucpress.edu., hardcover. A definitive reference book.

The Botanist and the Vintner (How Wine was saved for the World), Christy Campbell, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 320 pages, \$25, hardcover. A recounting of the phylloxera epidemic and how the eventual discovery of an American resistant rootstock saved the French wine industry. The subsequent phylloxera invasion of California is also recounted and the continuing battles with this aphid are told.

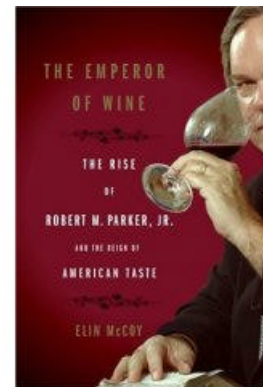
The Emperor of Wine: The Rise of Robert M. Parker, Jr. and the Reign of American Taste, Elin McCoy, Ecco, 2005, 352 pages, \$18, hardcover. Love him or hate him, Robert Parker, Jr. is one of the most influential wine writers and wine critics of this generation. Regardless of whether you are on the blockbuster or elegant side of the fence with regard to wine preferences, this biography is absorbing reading. The story may not be complete, since when Elin McCoy traveled to France to research this book most of the wine people there would not speak to her.

Wine Investment for Portfolio Diversification: How Collecting Fine Wines can Yield Greater Returns than Stocks and Bonds, Mahesh Kumar, Wine Appreciation Guild, to be released September 2, 2005, 178 pages (many charts and graphs), hardcover, \$45. The author creates a Fine Wine 50 Index, which shows that fine wine has higher expected returns related to its overall contribution to portfolio risk than do stocks and bonds. A history of wine markets dating back to the 12th century is included and a complete discussion of what constitutes a good investment portfolio. www.wineappreciation.com.

A Wine Journey Along the Russian River, Steve Heimoff, University of California Press, \$25. Heimoff is a *Wine Enthusiast* editor who explores the history, culture, winegrowers, and producers of the Russian River Valley. Perhaps the best feature of this book is the description of the colorful characters that personify this region.

My First Crush, Misadventures in Wine Country, Linda Kaplan, Lyons Press, 2005, \$23, hardcover. This is a personal account about life in the Oregon wine industry. The Kaplans purchased Panther Creek Cellars in 1994. The book chronicles her midlife switch from a Midwest newspaper writer and full-time mom to a winery owner.

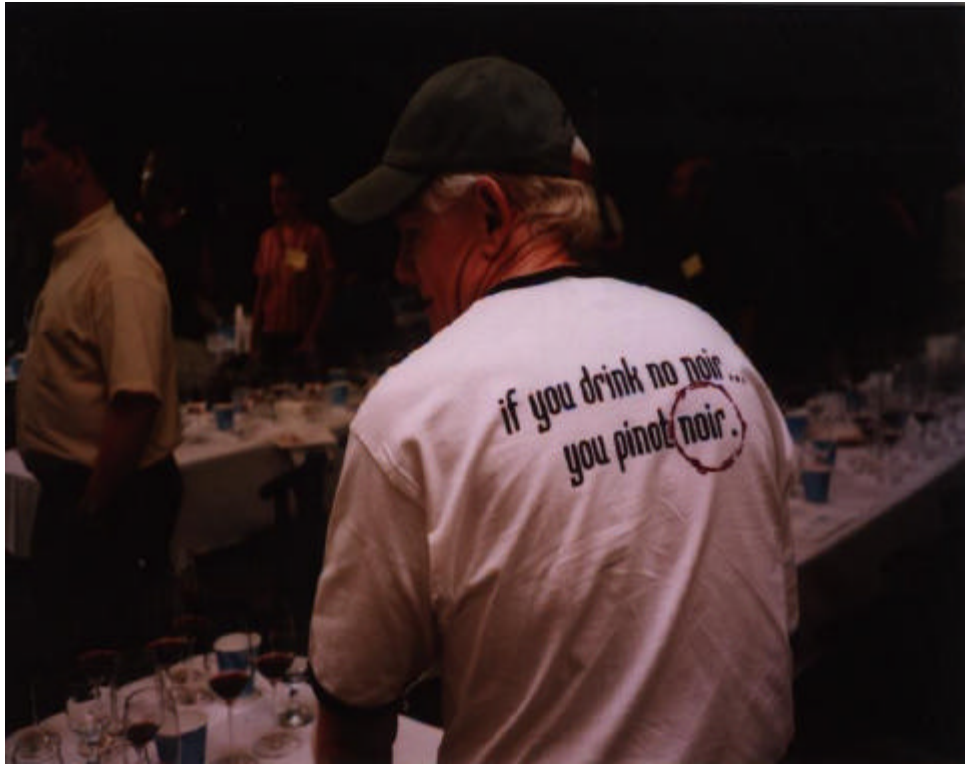
Vineyard Memoirs, or "So this is what it's like to plant a vineyard?", Kerry McDaniel Boenisch, CKMB, PO Box 512, Dundee, Oregon, 97115, 2004, 112 pages, \$15, softbound. A personal recollection of the author's 15 years living and working in the Red Hills above Dundee. The story captures the spirit of the pioneers of the Oregon wine industry who planted vineyards in the Red Hills in the 1970s.




PrinceofPinot.com

**Pinot Noir & The
PinotFile... .A Perfect Match**

© 2005
PinotFile is a registered
trademark



“Your Wonderful Newsletter”

Dear Prince:

I cannot tell you how much I enjoy your newsletter. The information you provide in the PinotFile is invaluable. I have enjoyed reading about and searching out and tasting more small and quality producers than I would have ever guessed existed. In the late 1970s I was trying to learn all I could about wine. I read books, pulled corks, and searched out wines that if I could find them, I couldn't afford them. Just as I thought I was beginning to know a little something about wine, my main wine merchant (an older gentleman named Jay Kirkpatrick) kept steering me to those hard to know and harder still to understand Burgundies. A little \$4.99 Aloxe-Corton, an \$8.99 Chambolle-Musigny, etc. Then one day I found an Alexis Lachine Chambertin Clos de Beze at \$12.99 and I was hooked. I could never go back to claret. Cabernets and Chateau Whatever just languished in my cellar. Old Jay is gone now and may God rest his soul, but he did succeed in converting another pinotophile. I went to the Willamette Valley a few years ago and thought I had found the Promised Land. But now after reading your newsletter for sometime, I'm going to make a pilgrimage to the Russian River Valley. Hey, and I'm excited too. I have already contacted some of the small producers I've read about in your newsletter and it amazes me how friendly they are and willing to let you taste their wines. Just a little side note. I was still young when I noticed the scores in most publications and wine magazines had a direct correlation to the amount of advertising done in the same journal. It still holds true today. I can think of a case in point I came across the other day. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon warns to be careful and not to peer (or drink) too deep into that red wine lest she bite like a snake. He must have been drinking Pinot Noir. Old Solomon probably knew a little about both.

Thanks again and keep up the good work. I raise my glass to the Prince. SALUD!

Richey Owen, Dallas, Texas.