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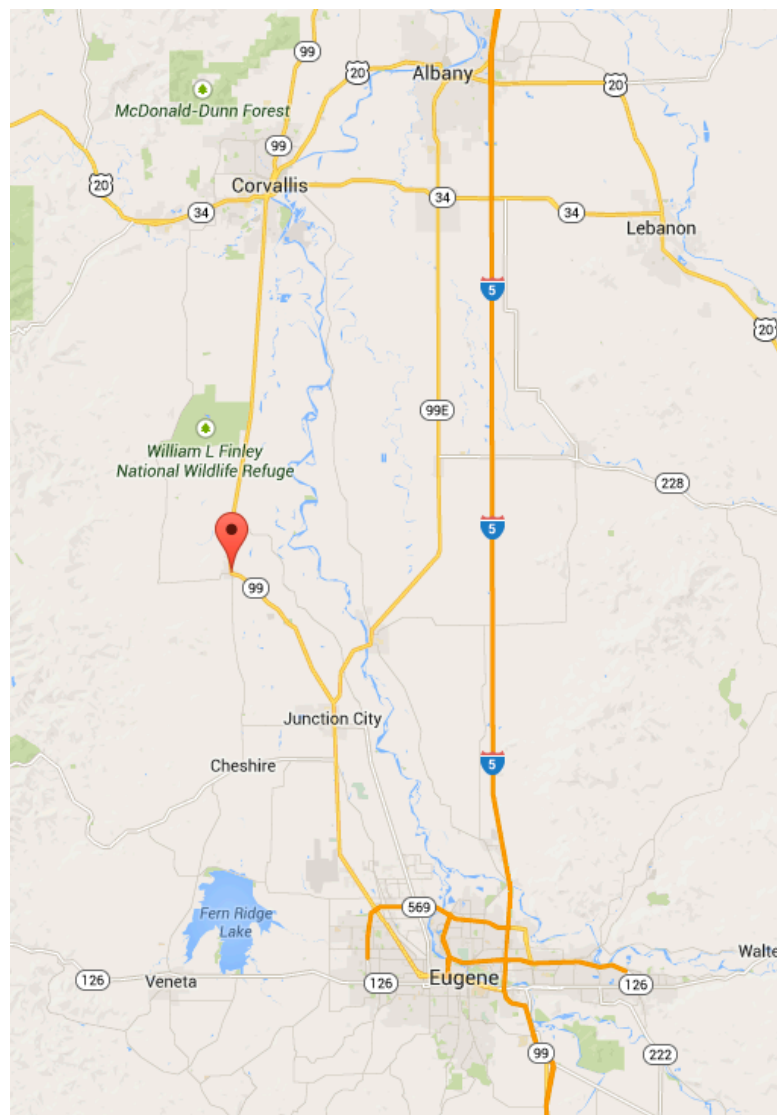
The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

Broadley Vineyards Scores Big in 2012

Broadley Vineyards is a family owned winery established over 30 years in the hills west of the town of Monroe, Oregon, producing distinguished wines since 1986. Technically, Broadley Vineyards is in the Willamette Valley, but lies on Highway 99 halfway between Corvallis and Eugene, outside of the more publicized sub-appellations of the Willamette Valley which are located in the northern Willamette Valley.



Craig and Claudia Broadley launched the winery in 1982, and are now joined by son Morgan, daughter-in-law Jessica, and two grandchildren Olivia and Savanna. Like so many Oregon vintners, they were from California, and had developed a liking for Pinot Noir. California vineyard land was too expensive, and Oregon seemed like the right place to grow Pinot Noir...cheaper. They found a unique site on a hillside in Monroe, established vines, and by 1994 had earned a reputation for ultrapremium estate Pinot Noir.



Morgan, Jessica, Claudia & Craig

Broadley Vineyards is a relatively warm site known as the “banana belt” within a cool climate. The 30 planted acres offer many different exposures, elevations and soil types leading to different flavor characteristics in the wines from the different blocks. The grapevines are planted in an unusual eastern and northeastern aspect to protect the vines from storms that traditionally arrive from the Southwest, and to prevent overripeness of fruit. Soils are volcanic with good drainage without excessive vigor. Another unique aspect of the vineyard is the use of the lyre trellis system, splitting the canopy into two walls of grapes.

The planted clones are diverse. Pommard and Wädenswil were first planted in the early 1980s, but over time a number of Dijon clones were added.



Maximizing the Quality of Each Block

At the winery, Morgan Broadley's winemaking is distinguished by partial whole cluster fermentation, significant fermentation in wood containers, and the absence of rigid fermentation temperature control. The wines are aged in new and one to two-year-old used French oak barrels and always unfinned and unfiltered.

The winery's 2012 harvest report describes the growing season as dry and a nearly perfect harvest. The crop was small, but produced wines similar to those from the 2008 vintage in size and depth of flavor.

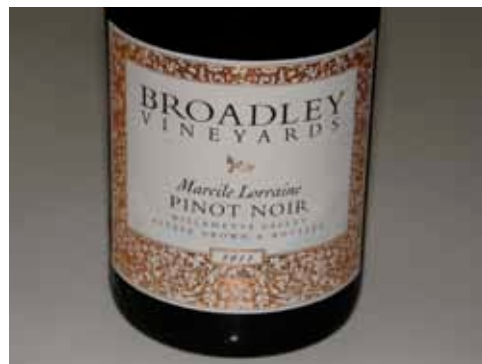
I have never visited Broadley Vineyards, but based on my tasting of the remarkable 2012 Pinot Noirs, I am going to make a beeline to the winery on my next Willamette Valley visit. The winery's tasting room is open Thanksgiving weekend and a late April open house, otherwise by appointment at 265 S. 5th Street in Monroe. The website is www.broadleyvineyards.com.

Beyond the wines sampled here, there is a 2012 Jessica Pinot Noir (clones 667 and 115 from a protected northeastern mid slope of the estate vineyard, \$50), and a 2012 Claudia's Choice Pinot Noir (from the oldest vines in the estate vineyard, \$50).



2012 Broadley Vineyards Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 800 cases, \$30. A blend of Pommard, Wädenswil, 115, 667 and 777 clones. 100% de-stemmed. Wild yeast fermentation, 12-18 days in stainless steel fermenters, aged 12 months in 15% new and 85% 1 to 2-year-old Francois Frères barrels. Previously reviewed March 29, 2014 with consistent and even better results. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Scintillating aromas of black raspberry, blackberry, boysenberry, spice, violets, oak and a hint of roseate scent. Intensely flavored and plush on the palate with a full-on charge of sweet boysenberry and red and black raspberry fruits complimented by oak highlights. Very seamless, with soft tannins and plenty of energy, finishing with good intensity. Much more expressive now than when previously tasted 5 months ago. 91.*

2012 Broadley Vineyards Marcile Lorraine Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 150 cases, \$50. A blend of primarily Wädenswil and some Pommard from a distinct block of the estate vineyard. 30% whole cluster, wild yeast fermentation in open top oak fermenter for 14-21 days. Aged 14-18 months 40% new and 60% neutral Taransaud barrels (tighter-grained, low toast). *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Similar aromatic and flavor profile as the Estate bottling but with more structure, more sophistication and a longer finish. Highly enjoyable now, with impressive mid palate intensity, defining tannins, juicy acidity, the slightest oak overlay, and a very long finish filled with plenty of Pinot goodness. 93.*



2012 Broadley Vineyards Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 50 cases, \$59. A barrel selection consisting of a 50/50 blend of Zenith and Shea vineyards. 30% whole cluster, aged in 30% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of dark berries, spice and floral perfume. A full-bodied charmer that floods the mouth with well-ripened black cherry and dark berry fruit accented with spice, and supported by firm, balanced tannins. Despite its fruit load, the wine is bright and refreshing and has the structure to age. A big boy wine that is flat-out delicious. 94.*

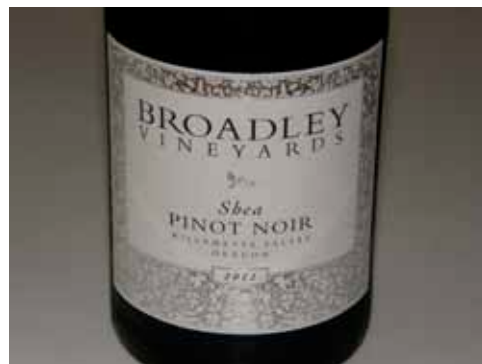


2012 Broadley Vineyards Zenith Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 150 cases, \$30. A blend of Pommard and Wädenswil clones. Sourced from 2 acres of the vineyard custom planted for the Broadley Winery on "Block One" of this historic site which dates back to 1982. 30% whole cluster, fermented in open-top oak fermenter for 14-21 days. Aged 12 months in 30% new and 70% neutral Francois Frères barrels. *Dark reddish purple hue in the glass. Plenty to like about this wine that has both aromatic and flavor appeal. Scents of dark cherries, spice and floral goodness lead to a middleweight core of sweet dark cherry and berry fruits complimented by a hint of cedary oak. Admirable balance and some finishing length complete the picture. 91.*



2012 Broadley Vineyards Shea Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc. 250 cases, \$50 (sold out at winery). Clones 777 and Wädenswil from blocks 11 and 19. 100% de-stemmed, wild yeast fermentation in 3-ton open-top Taransaud wood fermenter for 14-21 days. Aged 12 months in 30% new and 70% neutral Francois Frères barrels. *Superlatives*

can't do this wine justice. Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Alluring aromas of black cherry, plum and exotic spice. Intense and mouth filling with layers of amazingly pure red and purple fruits, well-spiced, and matched with fine, mouth coating tannins. Sturdy on the palate, yet bright, succulent and juicy. The haunting finish is remarkably long, returning with waves of pleasure. Even better when tasted several hours later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating long-term potential. Heaven sent. 95.



Russian River Valley

Rod Berglund, the proprietor and winemaker at Joseph Swan Vineyards in the Russian River Valley, always includes some informative and even provocative writing in his email newsletters. The Spring Newsletter spoke to the different Russian River Valley “Neighborhoods.” I would like to paraphrase his commentary since it is so enlightening.

In recent years, there has been talk of defining the wines from the different subregions of the Russian River Valley, and the Russian River Valley Winegrowers Association has started a conversation about defining the character of the various neighborhoods. Rod points out that the wines from each subregion carry an overall defining character of the Russian River Valley AVA as a whole, but seem to represent variations on the theme. The Pinot Noirs from the Middle Reach are generally riper, richer and more powerful fruit-driven wines, those from the Laguna Ridge are earthy, spicy and red-fruited, while those from the Green Valley have higher acidity and crisp, bright red fruit.

The boundaries of the specific subregions have not been clearly delineated, except Green Valley, which is its own appellation within the Russian River Valley. As many as seven subregions have been identified, including Middle Reach, Windsor Hills, Laguna Ridge, Santa Rosa Plains, Sebastopol Hills, Green Valley and Freestone. The Russian River Valley AVA is defined by the coastal fog influence in varying degrees depending upon elevation and distance from the Pacific Ocean.



Currently, a large panel of winemakers is being assembled who are skilled in tasting young, unfinished wines and discerning the attributes that are directly attributable to the characteristics of the fruit from which they were made. The information will be recorded into a searchable data base and will be tied to vineyard and harvest data. Over a period of many years, patterns should emerge that define the various neighborhoods or even lead to the discovery of more neighborhoods.

Rod's winery and estate vineyard lie in the Laguna Ridge area, a north-south ridge of low-lying hills west of the Laguna de Santa Rosa and the Santa Rosa Plains area. The Laguna Ridge tends to have earlier bud break, spring temperatures are higher, summer temperatures are often cooler than the valley floor, and the fog often hangs later as well. These differences manifest themselves in the wines made from the Laguna Ridge. The Pinot Noirs tend to have bright, deep red fruit, great acidity, usually some spice and earthy components, as well as the typical Russian River Valley lush mouthfeel. The wine from the Santa Rosa Plains, in contrast, seems to be prettier with brighter red fruit and less spice. The Green Valley wines tend to have more acidity and often more tannin. Rod emphasizes that these are generalities.

In summary, Rod points out, "Perhaps the voyage of discovery that the winegrowers of the Russian River Valley are about to embark on will give some real weight to defining this and the other neighborhoods on the similarities expressed in the wines. Or, perhaps there is no there there and the differences are just in our collective imaginations! Only time will tell. Let the voyage of discovery begin!"

I have reviewed a number of Russian River Valley wines lately, some of which are from newer producers, and some represent inaugural releases (Della).

2010 Bewitched Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$50 (discounted to \$22). Uniquely packaged with a paper enclosure or wine wrap. From Truett-Hurst Vineyards & Winery. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose offers a strong oak scent which overwhelms any fruit. Light to mid weight black cherry and black raspberry flavor with a very strong tug of oak and tannin, most evident on the short finish. The packaging is much more impressive than the wine. 85.*

Bluxome Street Winery SF

The original California winemaking boom began not in Napa or Sonoma, but in San Francisco - SOMA, or South of Market, to be exact. At one time, no less than 120 wineries and commercial cellars called San Francisco home, but the 1906 earthquake ended many of the dreams of wine producers, and whatever spark remained was eliminated by Prohibition. Until now.

Bluxome Street Winery is open "South of the Slot" in San Francisco as both a working winery and a place to relax and enjoy a drink or two. Before SOMA, the area was called "South of the Slot," a term coined by Jack London referencing the iron fissure running along Market Street upon which the San Francisco cable cars traveled (and still do).

Bluxome Street Winery produces Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay from Russian River Valley vineyards. The wines are sold by the flight, glass, bottle or barrel. The winery, at 53 Bluxome Street, welcomes visitors from noon until 7:00 PM Tuesday through Sunday.

2012 Bluxome Street Winery South of the Slot Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 175 cases, \$45. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Very flowery nose initially, becoming more serious over time with scents of black cherry and wood spice. Intriguingly silky on the mid weight palate, featuring fresh flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with undertones of spice, stem and oak, finishing with modest intensity. 89.*



2012 Bluxome Street Winery Teac-Mor Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., 175 cases, \$38. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. This wine really sings with appealing aromas of lemon curd and apple and bright lemon flavor accented with notes of pear, peach, herbs and very subtle oak. Very clean and crisp and thoroughly enjoyable, even exceptional. 94.*

2012 Cobden Wini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 100 cases, pH 3.69, TA 0.58, \$36. Name of label pays homage to the middle names of the winemaker's parents. Label says, "Dog ate tasting notes." Fruit sourced from 3 vineyards. Clones 777 and Pommard. Maco-bin fermented, barrel aged sur lie with monthly

batonage for 10 months in 33% new French oak. Unfined and unfiltered. Vinified by Mark Davis, assistant winemaker at O'Brien Estate Winery (Oak Knoll AVA) with previous experience at Twomey Cellars. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy and mysterious upon opening featuring aromas of dark red and purple fruits. Earthy and well oaked on the palate with mid weight flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with a hint of tobacco and spice. Very smoothly textured with a modest finish. Better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle showing very ripe fruit aromas and flavors, and notes of oak-driven char, dark chocolate and spice. 88.*

2012 Della Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.62, 200 cases, \$60. Aged 15 months in 47% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Plenty of black cherry and raspberry aromas are matched with smoky, toasted oak. Impressive attack and finish, with a plethora of well-ripened black cherry, raspberry and plum fruits that demand attention. The tannins are nicely integrated and the wine drinks easily now. For my taste, there is far too much oak at play, but some will find this enviable and it may ameliorate over time in the bottle. 89-90.*

2012 Fogline Vineyards Floodgate Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.65, 295 cases, \$42. Floodgate Vineyard is in the Middle Reach and organically farmed. Clones 667, 777, 115 and Pommard. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very aromatic with hi-tone scents of dark cherries, baking spices and dark caramel. Elegant, soft and smooth on the palate featuring a core of fresh cherry fruit augmented with flavors of spice and oak. Very delicate, although the wine picks up some intensity over time in the glass. Supple tannins make for easy drinking. 89.*

Gracianna Winery

Gracianna Winery is located in the Middle Reach of the Russian River Valley. Its Mercedes Riverblock Vineyard, named after a family matriarch, grandmother Mercedes Sordia, is located on the "Miracle Mile" of Westside Road in Healdsburg. The winery was founded in 2005 by the Amador family of Sonoma County who have been farming and ranching for generations.

The name of the winery comes from the matriarch of the family, their French Basque gret-great-grandmother, Gracianna Lasaga. A book about her life titled *Gracianna* was published by Trini Amador in 2013.

The 2012 Estate Pinot Noir is the inaugural release from the Mercedes Riverblock Vineyard. The release coincides with the completion of the Gracianna family estate home, a John Pflueger design that is inspired by the architecture of the Renaissance and the Tuscany region of Italy. Gracianna's owners, Trini and Lisi Amador, have built a tasting room and special spaces for entertaining on the winery grounds as well. The tasting room, located at 6914 Westside Road, is open daily except Wednesday from 11:00 to 5:00. The website is www.gracianna.com.

Gracianna has medaled in every wine competition entered over the past five years since their first entry in 2007. The winemaker is Trini Amador.

2012 Gracianna Estate Mercedes River Block Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 25 cases, \$58. Calera clone. Harvest Brix 24.8°. Aged 11 months in French oak. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing aromas of strawberry, red cherry, iron, sandalwood and cedary oak. Light to mid weight flavors of dark red cherry with hints of oak-driven cola, anise and spice. Soft and lush, with supple tannins. There is a sense of alcohol on the finish. Unchanged the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 88.*

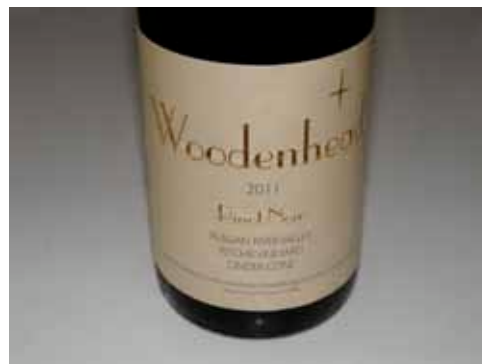
2012 Gracianna Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc. label (15.9% tech sheet), 309 cases, \$48. Harvest Brix 25.6°. Aged 11 months in French oak. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Shy aromas of Bing cherry, herbs and stem with noticeable volatile acidity. Mid weight core of dark cherry pie filling with hints of nutmeg, oak and dried herbs. Better integration of alcohol but a slight bit of heat is still evident. When tasted later in the day, the volatile acidity had largely blown off, but more oak sheen was evident, and the dry finish was somewhat astringent. The previous three vintages have been more cohesive. 86.*

2012 Pali Wine Co. Windsor Oaks Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 460 cases, \$56. A large, 250-acre vineyard in the Windsor Hills subregion. Aged 15 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of red cherry, strawberry, sandalwood and black tea. Middleweight flavors of luscious black cherry accented with cola and oak lead to a modest cherry-driven finish. Plenty of finesse with a slight sense of alcoholic warmth.* **88.**

2011 Woodenhead Wet Kiss Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$52. Unfined and unfiltered. Ritchie Vineyard Martini clone, Cameron Vineyard Martini clone, and River South Vineyard Swan clone. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A lighter wine with aromas of cherry and oak, and flavors of cherry, marzipan and brown spice. The tannins are soft and suave, and there is a prominent kick of acid on the mouthwatering finish. This is one juicy cherry kiss!* **88.**

2011 Woodenhead Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., \$42. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of Bing cherry, wood spice and tobacco. A lighter weight wine that is elegant and forward drinking. Flavors of cherry and blueberry fruits are accented with notes of herbs and tobacco. Nicely balanced, with an appealing cherry and cranberry fueled finish.* **88.**

2011 Woodenhead Ritchie Vineyard Cinder Cove Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$65. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, raspberry and subtle oak lead to a tasty palate of cherry fruit with a slight floral accent. This middleweight wine has accommodating finesse, with balanced tannins and some finishing length.* **89.**



2012 Woodenhead Wes Cameron Ranch “Halfshell White” Russian River Valley French Colombard 11.6% alc., 245 cases, \$22. French Colombard was once widely planted in the Russian River Valley, but very little acreage remains. *Pale golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Lively aromas of lemon pie, crème brûlée, banana and tropical fruits including mango hold up nicely over time in the glass. Light weight flavors of tropical citrus, lemon and grapefruit drive this refreshing wine, which is crisp and slightly tart due to hi-strung acidity. A little hollow in the mid palate, but overall a pleasant wine that would be an excellent accompaniment for shellfish.* **88.**

2009 Woodenhead Méthode Champenoise Russian River Valley Sparkling Wine 212 cases, \$46. This is a rarity: a sparkling wine made from French Colombard grapes. Disgorged March 12, 2012. *Pale yellow color in the glass. The aromas is leesy, with notes of yellow stone fruits and almonds. Very dry with biting acidity, this citrus driven wine has subtle notes of pear and tropical fruits. Drinks like a very good blanc de blanc Champagne at half the price.* **89.**

Recent Sips of California Pinot Noir & Chardonnay

2012 Belle Glos Oeil De Perdrix Pinot Noir Blanc 12.6% alc., \$20. Sourced from Brugioni Vineyard in the Sonoma Coast. The name is French for “eye of the partridge,” a term for this wine’s color. Whole cluster pressed, brief exposure to French oak during and after fermentation. A portion of the sales go towards breast cancer research. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of strawberry, dried herbs, blood orange and cherry. Soft in the mouth with pleasing flavors of cherry, strawberry, lime and blood orange. Best chilled. 87.*



2012 Carr Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 333 cases, \$35. Released March 2014. Sourced from vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills and Santa Maria Valley. Clones 115, 667, 777, Pommard and Wädenswil. Aged 12 months in 15% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Fruit-dominated nose featuring black cherry and raspberry with a subtle oak note. Intensely flavored and fruit-driven, with plenty of dark cherry and raspberry swagger. A bit of citrus in the background contributes a high note, and a touch of oak adds interest. The tannins are nicely balanced and the mouthfeel has considerable suavity. Even better several hours later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 90.*

2012 Carr Turner Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 195 cases, \$50. Released March 2014. From a 21-acre organically farmed vineyard planted by Ryan Carr in 2000. Clones 113, 777 and Pommard. Aged 12 months in 15% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Both earthy and fruity, this wine features mid to full-bodied dark red and black stone fruits that were picked at the peak of ripeness. The inviting mid palate attack is attention-grabbing, the tannins are firm but nicely tucked in, and the finish is very intense, long, and expansive. The oak contributes seasoning without being imposing. Thoroughly enjoyable. 92.*

2012 Della Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.61, 150 cases, \$60. Wente selection sourced from Charles Ranch. Aged 15 months in 40% new French oak. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Minty and herbal upon opening with toasty oak evident and very little fruit. The fruit aromas never arrive over time in the glass and the nose remains nondescript. Moderately rich and plush on the palate with a creamy mouthfeel. The core of citrus fruits is buried in oak-driven notes of caramel, vanilla and toast. The heavy oak burden is just not to my taste. 86.*

2012 Fogline Vineyards Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.65, 195 cases, \$42. Released October 2013. The 40-acre Sun Chase Vineyard is located where the Petaluma Wind Gap meets Sonoma Mountain on a southwestern facing hillside. This wine is sourced from hillside blocks above the fog line at 1200 to 1400 feet. Clones 667, 777. Aged in 33% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of forest floor, black cherry and sweet oak. Full-bodied, with broad flavors of black cherry and blackberry pulled into line with fine acidity and stout tannins. The fruit is very expressive, even sassy, and captivates all the way through a finish sporting plenty of drive and persistence. 92.*

2012 Fogline Vineyards Hillside Block Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.58, 95 cases, \$65. Released October 2013. The first single vineyard Pinot Noir from the estate Fogline Vineyard located in the Petaluma Gap region on a ridge on Sonoma Mountain. Elevation is 850 feet and fog runs up to the boundary of the lowest elevation blocks. Clones 115, Pommard, Swan and Mt. Eden. Aged in 33% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Delicate aromas of Bing cherry, spice and rose petal. Plenty of grip and intensity on the palate that features ripe cherry fruit accented with spice and subtle oak. Very satisfying, with a smooth texture, good tannic sinew, and a generous finish. 91.*

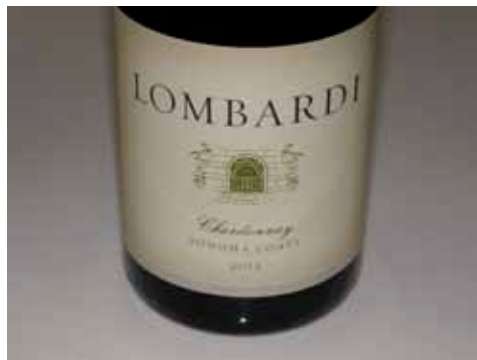
2012 Fogline Vineyards Fogline Neighbors Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.60, 72 cases, \$65. Released April 2014. A blend of the Sun Chase Vineyard and Fogline Vineyard, both on western face of Sonoma Mountain. Clones 667, 777, 115, Pommard, Mt. Eden and Swan. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. An array of aromas fill the glass including forest floor, black cherry and spicy oak. Vivid and juicy on the palate with great harmony and presence. The bold flavors of raspberry, cherry, and boysenberry are accented with a touch of spice and earthbound flora. The toothsome tannins are well integrated and the finish is long and lush. 92.*

2013 Fogline Vineyards Zephyr's Block Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.3% alc., pH 3.23, TA 0.66, 145 cases, \$38. Grapes are from the oldest plantings in Fogline's Estate Vineyard. Old Wente and Dijon 76 clones. Aged up to 10 months in French oak. *Moderately light golden yellow and clear in the glass. A California styled Chardonnay with plenty of aromatic and flavor richness. Scents of baked apple, lemon, honey and sea breeze, lead to a discreetly concentrated palate of apple, pear, lemon and caramelized banana flavors. Plenty of juicy acidity balances the fruit load. An enjoyable wine, especially for those who prefer generous oak input.* **89.**

2012 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.59, 24 cases, \$38. Sourced from Terra de Promissio Vineyard. Clone 777. Aged 16 months in neutral French oak barrel. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Hi-tone perfume of wild berries, plum, cedary oak and floral blossoms. The middleweight core of black cherry, dark berry and black currant fruits are nicely integrated with seamless tannins. Very polished on the palate, with vivid fruit presence. This wine is ready to drink now.* **90.**



2012 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.61, 24 cases, \$36. Sourced from Charles Ranch. Wente selection. 100% barrel fermented for 15 months in neutral French oak. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Plenty to like in this wine with an array of aromas including lemon zest, nectarine, white grape, straw bale and saline minerality, and flavors of lemon, kumquat, pear and honey. Very pleasing with a slightly creamy texture.* **90.**



2012 Owl Ridge Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 903 cases, \$24. 92% Pinot Noir, 5% Sangiovese, and 3% Syrah. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of strawberry, red cherry, baking spices, sandalwood and forest floor. The light to mid weight fruit flavors echo the aromas with added hints of mocha and tobacco. There is an underlying tangy, citrusy acidity which adds verve, and modest tannins add structure. A forward drinking and juicy wine that only lacks a bit of finishing intensity.* **89.**



2012 Pali Wine Co. "Riviera" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 8,005 cases, \$21, screwcap. Sourced from Collins Ranch, Arrowhead, and Champlain Creek vineyards. Vinified and blended to have consistency from year to year. Aged 10 months in 25% new French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Rather bold and dense with a meaty core of black raspberry, pomegranate and black currant fruit accented with earth-kissed herbs. Fruit-driven and proud of it, this wine still has enough verve for pleasant drinking. Bigger, bolder and riper than the 2011 version, but in the same vein.* **89.**

2012 Pali Wine Co. Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 113 cases, \$56. Clones 115, 667 and Pommard 5. Aged 15 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Opens over time in the glass to reveal stellar aromas of cherry, strawberry and complimentary oak. Modest in weight, with a core of earthy dark red and black berry fruits overlain with a prominent oak sheen. There are notes of stem and savory herbs that might be oak-driven. The finish is a bit sharp and angular. Tasted the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine showed a prominent oak overlay.* **88.**

2012 Pali Wine Co. Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., \$50. Aged 16 months in 50% new French oak. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Attractive scents of apple, lemon pie, peach, and tropical fruits including pineapple. Citrus-driven flavors on the palate, with a hint of caramel, roasted nuts and buttery oak. Some fullness on the palate with decent acidity. A California-styled Chardonnay that leaves a good impression with a delightful finishing grip.* **90.**



2013 Pali Wine Co. Charm Acres Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.0% alc., 4,360 cases, \$21, screwcap. Sourced from Windsor Oaks, Collins Ranch, Champlain Creek and Sangiacomo Family vineyards. No malolactic fermentation. Barrel fermented and aged 10 months in 25% new French oak. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Pleasant aromas of nutty lemon, peach, tropical fruits and toasty oak. Crisp and bright, and quite enjoyable, with flavors of lemon-lime, pear and white peach with a slight oak overlay, finishing with a burst of citrus-driven refreshment.* **89.**

2012 Pali Wine Co. Cargasacchi Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 40 cases, \$56. Clone 115 from a 16-acre vineyard. Aged 15 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. The aromas pick up interest over time in the glass, revealing blackberry, Hoison sauce and subtle tobacco notes. The sleek texture is dreamy in this wine but the black fruit core is rather drab, linear and closed with a beefy, animale, unami character that can be typical of this vineyard. Should benefit from more time in the cellar.* **89.**

2012 Pali Wine Co. Fiddlestix Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 210 cases, \$56. From a 140-acre vineyard planted in 1998. Clones 667, 777, 115 and Pommard. Aged 15 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Seductively perfumed with scents of black cherry coulis, rose petal and wood cask. Mid to full-bodied array of spicy purple and black fruits with corralled tannins and lively acidity. Luscious, but vivid and soft in the mouth. This wine is very pretty for a Fiddlestix Pinot Noir. The finish is memorable for its length. Tasted the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, this wine still had the most class of the 2012 Pail Pinot Noir lineup.* **92.**



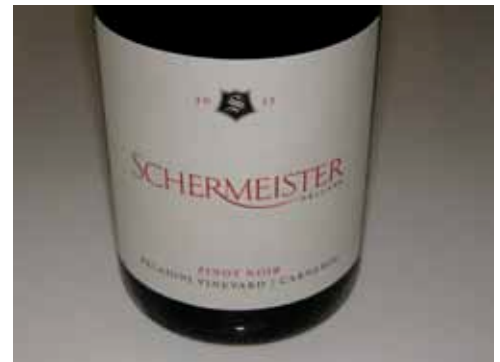
2012 Pali Wine Co. Rancho La Viña Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 279 cases, \$56. Clone 115. Aged 15 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. I was really attracted to the nose which offered seductive aromas of black cherry, black raspberry, anise and vanilla. Very open and satisfying with a smooth, suave texture and a juicy finish. Tasty flavors of purple fruits are featured brought to life by generous acidity. Finishes with a good kick of acid and a modest tug of oak.* **90.**



2011 Peter Michael Le Caprice Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$110 (secondary market). Vineyard is located in the Ft. Ross-Seaview AVA. Winemaker Nicolas Morlet. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. This is a sophisticated, polished offering that hits all the right notes. The nose picks up interest over time in the glass exhibiting aromas of black cherry, purple berries, spice, rose petal and vanilla. Delicious mid palate attack of fresh black cherry, black raspberry fruits with a hint of spice and anise-laced oak. There is a nervy minerality in the background which is very appealing. Silky in the mouth, with modest chalky tannins, this elegant wine finishes with an enjoyable nutty cherry note that lingers. This harmonious and almost ephemeral wine drinks so effortlessly, one could easily polish off a bottle without realizing it.* **94.**



2012 Schermeister Cellars Paladini Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.60, 120 cases, \$47. Inaugural release from winemaker Robert Schermeister who previously worked as an assistant to Mark Aubert. Clones 115 and 777. 100% de-stemmed. Native fermentation, extended maceration after primary fermentation (28 days on skins), light press, aged 15 months in 20% new, 40% 1-year-old, and 40% neutral French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate ruby red color in the glass. A refined offering that has intrigue. Aromas of cherry, wooded forest, baby's breath and mint. Delicious mid to full-bodied core of dark cherry fruit with enticing hints of tea, oak, spice, earth and mushroom. Admirable harmony with good brightness, balanced tannins and a juicy finish. Holds up nicely over time in the glass.* **92.**





2012 The Winery SF North Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$30. From a San Francisco urban winery located on San Francisco's historic Treasure island. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Bright aromas of cherry, strawberry, rose petal and briar initially, fading somewhat over time in the glass. A cherry jubilee with hints of black raspberry, spice, and savory herbs. The texture is satiny, the wine is open and giving, the tannins are soft, and the clinging finish satisfies.* **89.**



2013 The Wonderland Project "The White Queen" Sonoma County Chardonnay 13.2% alc., 2,650 cases, RS 0.02 mg, \$26. Robert Young and Wente clones. Harvest Brix 22.5°. Vinified with native yeast fermentation in stainless steel. Aged 7 months in 1/3 new French oak, 1/3 stainless steel and 1/3 neutral French oak. *Pale yellow color and clear in the glass. Inviting aromas of grapefruit, pear and white peach are replicated in the flavors which add some hints of nuts, brioche and honey. A very pleasant sipper and excellent food wine with some discreet richness, bright acidity and appealing edginess. Reminds me of Pinot Blanc. Better than the very good 2012 vintage of this wine. A very solid daily table wine.* **90.**



2011 Willowbrook Kaufman Sunnyslope Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 168 cases, \$42. Released July 2013. From JCO Limited Wine by Joseph C. Otos. Grapes are from a 7-acre high-altitude vineyard. A mix of Dijon and Mariafeld clones. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is savory with predominant aromas of dried herbs, bark and tea leaf. Some red cherry and spice shows up over time in the glass. Juicy and bright, offering light to mid weight flavors of red cherries and berries with an herbal and oak (tobacco and mocha) underpinning, finishing a bit shallow.* **87.**

2011 Woodenhead Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$N/A. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is spicy and smoky with plenty of black cherry and black raspberry fruit aromas. Very tasty mid weight core of darker stone and berry fruits with a spice overlay. The wine is juicy and refreshing, with suave tannins and a good cut of underlying acidity. The finish is crisp and satisfying.* **90.**

Recent Sips of Oregon Pinot Noir & Chardonnay

2012 Beckham Estate Vineyard Dow's Chehalem Mountains

Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 70 cases, \$45-\$50.

September or October 2014 release. Since 1857, more than 20 sons in the Beckham family have carried the name Dow. The wine honors Andrew Beckham's father, grandfather and son. From the Beckham Estate Vineyard, a dry-farmed site with rocky volcanic soils at 412 to 568 feet elevation. Clones are 777 and Pommard. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 15 months in 40% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of dark cherry, raspberry and earthy flora with a hint of peppery spice. The rich fruit of the 2012 vintage is on full display buffered by well-integrated tannins. A mix of ripe cherry and berry flavors is accented with notes of dark chocolate, a hint of confection, and an iron-driven minerality. The finish is robust and lingering.* **92.**



Beckham Estate Amphora Raised Wines

I wrote recently about the experimental work Andrew Beckham is doing using upwards of thirty-five different terra cotta vessels of varying size and shape from egg to round, as well as variable firing of the pottery to vinify and age wines. It is a natural extension of his expertise as a potter and his winemaking skills. The vinification of wine in amphorae dates back to ancient times, but has engaged the curiosity of both Old and New World vintners over the last two decades.

It is well known that the traditional oak barrel imparts tastes and tannins to wine. Amphorae are thought to be rather inert, but wines raised in these vessels are definitely different and may exhibit more “minerality” among other qualities. Considerable trial and error looms ahead for those interested in this new approach to discover whether this is a novelty or has real benefits.

When I visited Beckham Estate most recently and tasted with Annedria Beckham, I briefly sampled the 2013 AD Beckham Pinot Noir and the 2013 AD Beckham Pinot Gris. The Pinot Noir was a barrel sample made with purchased fruit (1 barrel total production). Clones 777 and 115 were cold soaked and fermented in an amphora for 21 days, then pressed to neutral oak. The wine will be bottled in September unfiltered and unfiltered. The Pinot Gris, also 1 barrel, spent 30 days in an amphora on the stems and then aged in second fill acacia barrel. The wines are definitely unique.

The Pinot Noir was highly aromatic with bright scents of fresh, juicy cherries, baking spices and sandalwood. With swirling there was a hint of clay or terra cotta. On the palate, the wine displayed light to mid weight cherry, raspberry and pomegranate flavors backed by fine grain tannins and zippy acidity. There was a slight earthy, gamey undertone and a slightly tart finish.

The Pinot Gris was light pink in color with aromas of cherry and strawberry and baking spices. The palate offered more white stone fruits, floral notes, and an iron minerality. The finish was tart with electric acidity.

The AD Beckham amphorae wines will be offered first to the winery's Wine Club members.

2012 Pali Wine Co. Shea Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 110 cases, \$56. Wädenswil clone. Aged 15 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly perfumed, featuring bright aromas of violets, black raspberries, ollaliberries and oak-driven notes of tobacco and vanillin. The full-flavored dark red and black fruits are long and expansive, and wrapped in gritty, husky tannins and bright acidity. The wine is a bit of a puzzle that has not been put together, but the pedigree of the fruit and the huge, racy finish indicate superb potential with further cellaring.* **90-92.**

2012 Stoller Family Estate Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.60, 7,050 cases, \$25, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Plenty of oak (wood spice and toast) is*

evident in this Bing cherry-themed wine. Pleasant and forward drinking, with a seductively soft mouthfeel, lively acidity, and some finishing intensity and length. **88.**

2011 Stoller Family Estate Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.54, 1,300 cases, \$45. Clones are Pommard, Wädenswil, 114, 115, 667 and 777 planted on the 373-acre estate. Barrel aged in French oak for 10 months. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Forward aromas of cherry, strawberry, herbs and baking spice. The flavorful mid weight core of cherry, raspberry and strawberry is supported by modest tannins and generous oak treatment. The finish stands out for its handsome display of lasting cherry and raspberry fruit aromas. This wine should improve over time.* **89-90.**



2012 Stoller Family Estate Reserve Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.18, TA 0.79, 1,218 cases, \$35. Grapes are from the oldest plantings in the estate vineyard. Aged up to 10 months. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A little reduction upon opening resolves over time revealing aromas of lemon zest, pear and peach cobbler. Rather reserved and graceful, but with nuanced flavors of lemon, pear, white peach and almond. Smooth in the mouth with a good cut of underlying lemony acidity.* **91.**

2012 TREOS Estate Founder's Choice Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 15.5% alc., 195 cases, \$48. Clones 667 and 777. Yields 0.8 tons per acre. Intention to create the richest, boldest expression of Pinot Noir that can make. Aged in Sirugue French oak barrels. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The winemaker has achieved his objective for this is a BIG, weighty, lush wine playing in the realm of Syrah. The aromatics are muted with demure scents of raw beef, dark berry, vanilla and spearmint. Soft and velvety on the palate, the sap is intense, brooding and earthy with flavors of purple and black berries, spice and vanilla. The palate is much more interesting than the nose at this stage. There is plenty of backbone to back up the fruit. The alcohol is well hidden but still peaks out a skosh on the finish.* **88,**

2012 TREOS Estate Elegant Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 15.0% alc., 170 cases, \$48. Yields 0.75 tons per acre. Five Dijon clones. Aged in Sirugue French oak barrels. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of red cherry, cherry tart and cutting board. Plenty of spring in its step, this wine trends toward the darker red fruit spectrum. A big wine that is well-structured with good integration of oak and alcohol. Finishes lively and upbeat with generous fruit.* **89.**

2013 Jezebel Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 2,300 cases, \$18, screwcap. Second label of Willful Wine Co.. Sourced from several vineyards in the Willamette Valley and Umpqua Valley. Fruit was cropped to one and a half to three tons per acre and fermented in small lots with a variety of yeasts. *Light reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas and flavors of red and blue berries with hints of spice, tar and oak. Light and elegant, with modest tannins, and bright, citrus-infused berries on the tangy finish. A solid, easy drinker for everyday enjoyment.* **87.**



2012 Willful Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 411 cases, \$35. From a 7-acre densely planted estate vineyard that includes 12 different clones of Pinot Noir. A blend of Pommard and Dijon clones. Native yeast fermentation. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A suave, mid weight wine with pleasurable aromas and flavors of black cherry, red berry, and plum fruits, and complimentary oak seasoning. Easy to like, with lively acidity, mildly firm tannins and some finishing length.* **89.**

2012 Willful Winemaker's Cuvée Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 200 cases, \$45. A blend of eight select barrels. 100% Pommard clone with 95% from the estate vineyard in the Dundee Hills and 5% from Northridge Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills. Native yeast fermentation. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose satisfies with bright aromas of berry pie filling, rose petals and toasty oak. Very tasty on the structured palate featuring an array of dark red, pomegranate, and purple berry flavors enhanced with subtle oak. Very harmonious and smoothly textured with a racy finish of good intensity. Even better the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle when the finish was filled with plenty of sweet cherry goodness.* **91.**

Longplay

I recently visited Todd Hansen, proprietor and grower of Longplay Wine, at his quaint Newberg, Oregon tasting room. Todd developed an interest in wine while serving in the American diplomatic corps in France, Chile and South Africa.

In 2005, Todd bought the 54-acre Lia's Vineyard (re-named after his daughter Lia) that had formerly been part of Rex Hill's Jacob-Hart Vineyard. Rex Hill changed ownership and parts of the Jacob-Hart Vineyard in the Chehalem Mountains was sold to Todd and Olenik Vineyards, with Rex Hill retaining ownership of some of the vineyard. Neighboring vineyards include J. Christopher's Appassionata Vineyard and Adelsheim's Quarter Mile Lane Vineyard. The vineyard is about four miles northwest of Newberg.

Lia's Vineyard plantings originally date to 1990, with subsequent plantings in 1993, 1999-2002 and 2009. The dry-farmed vines include 25 acres of Pinot Noir (eight clones of Pinot Noir: 114, 115, 667, 777, "828," Pommard, Wädenswil and Mariafeld), and a little over 2 acres of Wente clone Chardonnay. The original (1990 & 1993) Pommard, Wädenswil and Wente Chardonnay are own-rooted and subsequent plantings of these clones and selections were propagated from own-rooted cuttings. Soils are primarily Jory with a transition to sedimentary around the 400 foot contour. Elevation ranges from 380 to 560 feet.

Longplay is a three-man operation, with Todd doing the marketing, sales, compliance and farming, Javier Marin, owner of JM Vinegrower LLC, (the long time ex vineyard manager at Shea Vineyard) managing the vineyard, and winemaker Jay Somers of J. Christopher wines crafting the Longplay wines at his facility across the street from Lia's Vineyard. Aron Hess was the winemaker from the inaugural vintage in 2007 until 2010, replaced by Jay Somers with the 2011 vintage. Somers shepherds the Longplay wines with Todd's decision making input, and as such, Longplay wines are distinct from J. Christopher wines.



Todd is a vinyl LP fan and a graphic of a record on a turntable is displayed on his labels. Todd's philosophy and analogy between wine and music is explained in detail on his website and reveals the insight into the label's name. He emphasizes that his wines take an old school approach, meaning "analog wine for a digital world."


All Longplay wines are estate grown. Commercial yeasts are avoided with Pinot Noir but used with Chardonnay, and there are no additives used. Sugar and acid adjustments are employed when necessary. Chardonnay is fermented in neutral oak barrels and Pinot Noir in 25% or less, usually 15%, new French oak barrels. 80% of the estate vineyard fruit is sold to other vintners, including White Rose Estate, Seven of Hearts, J. Christopher and Patricia Green.

Todd staffs the Longplay Tasting Room himself Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 to 5:00. Other days and times can be arranged by appointment. Special openings and events are listed on the website at www.longplaywine.com. The wines can also be acquired online through the winery's website store.



I tasted a number of Longplay wines with Todd from the 2011 and 2012 vintages, two markedly different growing seasons that resulted in contrasting wines. The Longplay wines are quintessential Willamette Valley in character, with modest alcohols and extraction, bright acidities, and subtle nuances. The winemaking at least gives the vineyard a chance to express itself. The wines are modestly priced and are particularly suitable for accompanying food. The 2012 wines will be released in early 2015.

2011 Longplay “Jory Slope” Lia’s Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.0% alc., 69 cases, \$28. Very late harvest on November 2. 20-year-old Wente selection. Yield 1.04 tons per acre. Aged in neutral oak. One of three barrels underwent malolactic fermentation. *Pale yellow color and clear in the glass. Bright aromas of lemon, lemongrass and almond. Light, reserved and crisp, with flavors of lemon, grapefruit and pear. A high-voltage wine with a soprano, grapefruit-fueled finish accented with slate-driven minerality. Needs food. 88.*

 **2012 Longplay “Jory Slope” Lia’s Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Chardonnay** 13.5% alc., 49 cases, \$28. Lower yields in this vintage than 2011. Aged in neutral oak barrels. *Light yellow color and clear in the glass. This wine is much more accommodating than the 2011 vintage, with less emphasis on lemon, and more floral, stone fruit and tropical fruit nuances. Some richness, and slightly creamy in texture, with a round, satisfying finish driven by peach and lemon curd aromatic goodness. 92.*



2011 Longplay Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 268 cases, \$27. From 3 to 21-year-old vines yielding 1.2 tons per acre. Newest plantings of clones "828," 23, 114, 777, Wädenswil and Pommard 5. Harvest October 25 and November 1. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromatically alive with scents of cherry, cranberry, spice and subtle oak. Light and pleasant on the palate with flavors of red cherries and berries and a vein of dried herbs. Ripeness was clearly an issue with this wine, but it is an affable drink.* 87.

2011 Longplay "Jory Bench Reserve" Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 154 cases, \$38. Own-rooted Pommard 5 (75% of this wine), Wädenswil (19%) and 23 (6%). Yield 1.8 tons per acre. Harvest November 1. Aged 10 months in 16% new French oak. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry and forest floor lead to a palate filled with juicy cherry charm. A vein of herbs runs through the background. Crisp and bright, with smooth tannins and well integrated acidity. On the lean side, but satisfying.* 88.

2011 Longplay "Hi-Tone" Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 72 cases, \$45. 21-year-old Wädenswil clone. Yield 1.7 tons per acre. Aged 10 months in neutral oak. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromatically alive as Wädenswil tends to be with scents of dark red cherries and berries, spice, rose petal and subtle stem. The most concentrated and flavorful of the 2011 Pinot Noir lineup, with impeccably balanced tannins and acidity. Plenty to like, including the spice-charged finish.* 90.



2012 Longplay Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$27. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Quite aromatic with scents of purple grape, plum, and boysenberry fanning out in the glass. Light to mid weight flavors of purple fruits with a touch of spice and savory herbs in the background. Soft in the mouth, showing good fruit intensity on the finish which leaves a trace of heat in its wake.* 88-89.

2012 Longplay "Jory Bench Reserve" Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$TBD. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. High tone aromas of fresh dark red and purple stone fruits and berries. Light to mid weight dark red cherry and blueberry flavors which carry over on the graceful and pleasing finish. Nicely balanced, bright and juicy.* 89-90.

2012 Longplay "Experience" Lia's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$69. A 3 barrel selection: 1 barrel of 115, 1 barrel of 23, and 1 barrel of both clones together. Aged in 83% new oak, quite atypical for Todd's wines. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is exotic and sexy featuring aromas of blueberry, pomegranate and spice. Plenty of ripe fruit sap in the mouth featuring flavors of black raspberry and pomegranate. The tannins are fine-grain and sturdy, and the finish is replete with hi-tone acidity. The high percentage of new oak never comes to the front. A special and unique wine.* 91-92.



Recent Sips of Central Otago Pinot Noir

Although 2013 is being called a “vintage of a lifetime” in New Zealand, the 2012 Pinot Noirs should not be ignored. Aubert de Villaine from Domaine de la Romanée-Conti recently visited New Zealand for the 10th annual Central Otago Pinot Noir Celebration. Nick Stock wrote about some of de Villaine’s insights in *NZ Dirt - The Inside Story of New Zealand Wines*, an e-newsletter featuring news updates for the United States market. De Villaine said, “New Zealand is on a latitude that is very similar to Burgundy, but in the southern hemisphere. It is a climate that is not entirely different and that ‘seed’ of Burgundy has taken hold in New Zealand, it is a very interesting proposition.”

DeVillaine went on to point out, “New Zealand is a very young country, the wine industry is very young, but with this idea of making wines of terroir which took in the minds of many vigneron in New Zealand, things will go much more quickly than they did in Burgundy.” He was impressed by the progress New Zealand has made, commenting, “There are today a lot of good wines, certainly more than a few years ago. Great progress has been made, but my general impression is that besides these good wines, there are only a few great wines.” Perhaps the remarkable 2013 vintage will be able to deliver more great wines.

Periodically, I dip into New Zealand Pinot Noir to sample wines from prominent producers. Here are my latest reviews.

2012 Burn Cottage Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., \$55. Estate grown and bottled. Winemaker consultant is Ted Lemon of Littorai. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas build over time in the glass, offering notes of cherry reduction sauce, black raspberry, forest floor, clay and smoky oak. Ingratating sweet cherry, dark berry and plum flavors really satisfy, complimented by well-integrated oak highlights, tucked in tannins, and a satiny mouthfeel. The generous dark cherry finish has impressive staying power. 92.*



2012 Felton Road Cornish Point Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$50, screwcap. Biodynamic. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Effusive aromas of fresh black raspberry and boysenberry with a compliment of toasty oak. A suave wine with a silky smooth mouthfeel and very likable dark red berry flavor. The sweet berry fruit builds in intensity on the palate, finishing with a burst of goodness. Oak plays a favorable seasoning role. 91.*

2012 Felton Road Calvert Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$50, screwcap. Biodynamic. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The aromatics are very reserved, even with extensive swirling, revealing demure aromas of dark red cherries and berries with a touch of oak. Much more pleasurable on the palate, with a charge of fresh and juicy black raspberry and black cherry fruits, showing impressive persistence on the finish. The rather muscular tannins need more time to integrate, and the aromas have not arrived, but this wine has superb potential. 90-92.*



2012 Quartz Reef Central Otago New Zealand Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$30, screwcap. Estate grown, Demeter Biodynamic®, Bendigo Vineyard. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of dark red cherry and berry accented with oak are pleasant but not distinctive. The core of mid weight dark cherry and dark red berry fruit is straightforward, and pinned down by copious, very dry tannin. 88.*

Demystifying Whole Cluster

Eric Hickey, the winemaker at Laetitia Vineyard & Winery in California's Central Coast has employed whole cluster fermentation for about a decade and has crafted some impressive whole cluster fermented Pinot Noirs. Recently, Hickey discussed the use of stems in winemaking in a release that I thought should be passed along.

As most readers know, whole cluster fermentation involves the use of the entire bunch or cluster of grapes, including the stem, in alcoholic fermentation. The winemaker can vary the amount of whole clusters included in the fermenter. The goal is to tone down fruit characteristics and add another dimension to the wine.



In Burgundy, whole cluster fermentation has been used for centuries, at least in part due to the convenience of tossing entire bunches into fermenting vessels and the lack of de-stemmers. The hallmark of whole cluster wines, a signature burnt tobacco note entwined with fruit aromas and flavors, became synonymous with Pinot Noir from the Old World.

New World winemakers have used this method for many years, but fruit-driven and de-stemmed Pinot Noir became popular in the 1980s and 1990s. Today, many winemakers are moving away from “pure-fruit” Pinot Noir by fermenting clusters whole to impart complexity, tannic grip, and a lift on the palate.

Hickey currently uses anywhere from 30% to 70% whole clusters in a given batch with the remainder made up of de-stemmed grapes. The use of whole cluster fermentation began as an experiment for Hickey, and he found through trials over the years, that specific clones and sites do best with whole cluster fermentation. In the 2012 vintage, Hickey used clones 115 and 2A for a 100% whole cluster Pinot Noir. He notes that there is an extra layer of structure in whole cluster fermented Pinot Noir wines, and “when it’s at its best, there is a dusty chalkiness to the mid palate.”

Hickey leaves the intact bunches to rest in the fermenter rather than crushing them immediately. This anaerobic environment allows fermentation to begin within each individual berry as yeast penetrates the skin wall under the pressure of carbon dioxide, a process called carbonic maceration. “When fermentation takes place inside the berry, you tend to get very high levels of delicate red fruit and floral aromas,” said Hickey. “In the case of the whole cluster technique, the high fruit tone is a good counter balance to the earthy tobacco characters the stems provide.”

Consumers have been enamored by whole cluster fermented Pinot Noir. Hickey says, “It usually appeals to those who prefer a Pinot Noir with more power, structure and less pure red fruit on the nose.”

The 2012 Laetitia Whole Cluster Pinot Noir is currently offered at \$40. Visit www.laetitiawine.com.

2011 Laetitia Estate Whole Cluster Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 330 cases, \$40. 45% whole cluster during maceration and fermentation. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A captivating nose alive with scents of rose petals, red plums, cherries, peppery spice and slight stem. The flavors are echoed on the mid weight palate with hints of conifer, stem and oak vanillin in the background. The fruit is nicely married to soft tannins and the wine finishes with good generosity. 90.*



2012 Laetitia Estate Whole Cluster Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.78, TA 0.59, 420 cases, \$40. 45% whole cluster maceration and fermentation. Aged 11 months in 50% new French oak barrels. Previously reviewed April 19, 2014 and notes are from that review. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. You better be sitting down when you drink this knock out wine. Copious aromas of black cherry, spice, rose petal and other exotic flower scents. Reminds me of a classy woman's perfume. Seamless and sensual on the palate, offering a festival of spice black cherries and black raspberries with perfectly integrated tannins and acidity, and a long, supple finish that leaves an impression. Everything good about whole cluster is exemplified in this beauty that has that magical je ne sais quoi that makes people go ga-ga over some red Burgundies. 95.*



Pinot Briefs

MacPhail Opens Tasting Lounge at The Barlow in Sebastopol The opening coincided with the recent West of West Festival held at The Barlow in Sebastopol. The tasteful design incorporates all reclaimed woods and steel, in keeping with the theme of The Barlow which once was an apple processing plant. The interior focal point is artist Richard Von Saal's 30-foot tall sculpture of welded wagons, his interpretation of MacPhail wine being poured from a bottle. The Tasting Lounge is open daily from 11:00 to 6:00, and will stay open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays until 8:00 offering wines by the glass for The Barlow's weekly street fairs. Reservations are suggested (707-824-8400) for the various tasting options. Food pairing options will be offered soon.



One For All Gabriel-Glas Wine glass producers, namely Riedel, urge consumers to have a different glass for each varietal. Since I drink almost solely Pinot Noir, sparkling wine and Chardonnay, my preference is a single glass: the Zalto Burgundy glass. Swiss German wine critic René Gabriel, the man behind the new “universal” wine glass from the Austrian company Gavriel-Glas, has created a wine glass that is compatible with every wine, be it white, red, sparkling or dessert wine. Some sommeliers swear by it, saying that it works with every wine. The Gabriel-Glas is designed with a broader base at the bottom of the glass, giving the wine more surface to air contact permitting the aromas and flavors to emerge, and a conical shape at the top of the glass acting as a “bouquet driver.” The Gabriel-Glas is sturdy and dishwasher safe and should be attractive to restaurants. The lead-free crystal wine glass was first introduced into the United States at the end of 2012. There are two options: the mouth-blown “Gold Edition” glass that retails for \$55 and the molded “StandArt” glass that retails for \$29. The Gabriel-Glas is sold at many retail stores in the United States. I personally have not tried the wine glass.



Fogline Vineyards Opens New Winery and Tasting Room Proprietor Evan Pontoriero announced that his winery, Fogline Vineyards, has leased a property at 875 River Road in Fulton, CA, that was Saralee Knude’s farmery building that had sat empty for 13 years. It was originally built for Fulton Valley Cellars in 1984 where Rod Berglund was the first winemaker. George Davis of Porter Creek and Bob Mueller of Mueller Winery made wines there as well. Robert Mondavi eventually acquired the facility but was unable to get the permits needed to expand the site into a large winery. The new owners, Spring Hill Church, agreed to lease the property for its original use. Evan said they have renovated the building to incorporate a tasting room and will have a Bocce court and picnic table out front. The wine production facility will be ready for the 2014 harvest. Fogline Vineyards produces Pinot Noir from the Fogline Estate Vineyard located on Sonoma Mountain in the Petaluma Gap region of the Sonoma Coast as well as neighboring vineyards in that region. The 2012 wines are reviewed in this issue and are superb. Visit www.foglinevineyards.com.

Williams Selyem in the News At the recent Central Coast Wine Classic, Blake Brown & Roelanda Genn of Santa Barbara, who are consummate wine aficionados, and Burt Williams & Rebecca Aff of Montecito, along with San Ysidro Ranch, offered an auction item that included a four course dinner for six people in the private dining room at the Old Adobe of the San Ysidro Ranch featuring wines that Burt Williams Crafted at Williams Selyem. Burt agreed to attend. The wines included 2008 Williams Selyem Blanc de Noir Drake Estate Vineyard, 1992 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Chardonnay (magnum), 1992 Williams Selyem Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir, 1992 Williams Selyem Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, 1994 Williams Selyem Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir, 1995 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Pinot Noir, 1996 Williams Selyem Precious Mountain Pinot Noir, 1997 Williams Selyem Ferrington Vineyard Pinot Noir, and 1991 Williams Selyem Mendocino County Zinfandel. After feverish bidding, the lot sold for \$16,000!

On June 19, 2014, at the Kanpai Lounge in the Hotel Nikko in San Francisco, five judges from the San Francisco International Wine Competition convened to taste a vertical of 8 vintages of Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Pinot Noir. Howard Allen, who died in 2013, owned the property on which Williams Selyem made their wines after their start in a garage in Fulton. Allen Vineyard was planted to Pommard, Dijon 115, and Wente clones. The vineyard was farmed and managed by Joe Rochioli, Jr.. All bottles were obtained directly from the Williams Selyem winery. The tasters were Fred Dame, Marcus Garcia, Gregory Walter, Dr. Rowald

Hepp, and Anthony Dias Blue. The results were posted in *The SOMM Journal* (August/September 2014). The tasting panel concluded the 2004 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Pinot Noir was a “classic.” The wines: **1995**, score 93, Drink now-2017; **1996**, score 92, Drink now-2019; **1999**, score 88, Drink now-2017, **2002**, score 94, Drink now-2024; **2004**, score 97, Drink 2016-2026; **2007**, score 91, Drink now-2018; **2009**, score 98, Drink now-2030; **2010**, score 95, Drink now-2024. New releases are about \$80, with prices on the secondary market about \$150 or more.

Eric Kent Wine Cellars Celebrates 10 Years of Wine & Art You may not read this notice before the event, and it is too late to RSVP, but you can continue to drink the wines and obtain the book. 2014 marks the release of the 10th vintage of Eric Kent, founded by Kent and Colleen Humphrey. I have known and followed Kent Humphrey and his Eric Kent Wine Cellars wines since shortly after his first release, and I am very happy to see him achieve his much-deserved success. His wines are in great demand and loved by critics, and he is now a consulting winemaker for several other small labels as well. On August 16, Kent Humphrey is hosting a wine tasting and 10-year retrospective art show featuring over 70 pieces of original art or prints that have graced the Eric Kent labels over the past 10 years. The event is open to trade and media from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM, and then Eric Kent mailing list members, artists and other VIP guests from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Kent has published a beautiful new coffee table book, *Eric Kent: Celebrating 10 Years of Wine and Art*, which contains not only all of the original art featured on the Eric Kent labels, but the milestones reached at each vintage set against photographs that tells the story of Eric Kent Wines.



Jason Kesner Appointed New Winemaker at Kistler Vineyards Jason started out as vineyard manager for Hudson Vineyards where he caught the eye of Steve Kistler, a winemaking legend who sources fruit from Hudson Vineyards. In 2008, Jason became assistant winemaker at Kistler, and recently was anointed winemaker there. Jason has made his own wines in tiny quantities for years under the Kesner label.

Erin Miller new Twomey Pinot Noir Winemaker The Duncan family of Silver Oak Cellars and Twomey Cellars announced in June the appointment of Nate Weis as Winemaker for Silver Oak and Erin Miller as Pinot Noir Winemaker for Twomey Cellars. Erin, formerly of Evening Land Vineyards, will report to longtime Silver Oak and Twomey Director of Winemaking Daniel Baron. Erin previously worked for Hartford Family Winery and Kendall-Jackson’s Vinwood Cellars. She earned her MS from UC Davis. She has a passion for vineyard-driven winemaking and a reputation for crafting site-specific Pinot Noirs.

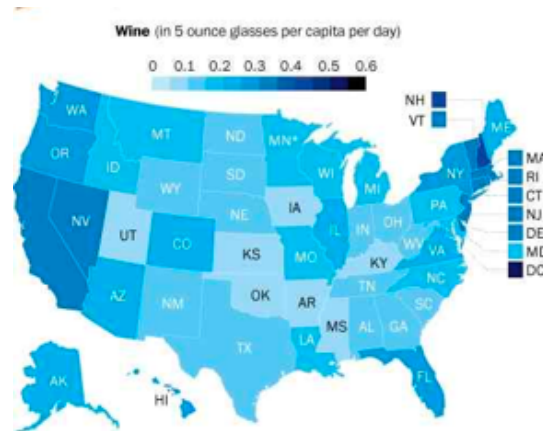
Willamette Valley Wineries Pinot in the City. 66 Willamette Valley wineries are on the road from Oregon to Seattle, Washington September 11, 2014. The wines will be served with hors d’oeuvres from Herban Feast at their unique Sodo Park venue just south of downtown Seattle. For tickets (\$65), visit www.eventbrite.com.

24th Annual Oregon Grape Stomp Championship & Harvest Celebration Visitors from all over the country come to compete in teams of two (stomper and swabbie) for the title and earn a trip to Santa Rosa, California for the World Championship Grape Stomp. The event will be held Saturday and Sunday, September 20 and 21, from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM at the Willamette Valley Vineyards Estate Vineyard. The founder of Willamette Valley Vineyards, Jim Bernau, will be competing with Mrs. Oregon on Sunday at 3:30 PM. Kids are invited to participate. Admission is \$10 and includes wine tasting and live music. There is also a \$10 fee per team to stomp. Reserve a stomping time at 1-800-344-9463.



Wally’s Offers Many Cult Pinot Noirs If you are not on the mailing list for cult and highly desirable Pinot Noirs, you have to turn to the auction or secondary market. Wally’s Wine & Spirits, one of Los Angeles’ top wine retailers, has recent entered the auction market and limited their Pinot Noir wine selection to the hard-to-get labels. You pay dearly to buy them, but it is impossible to find another retailer with such a broad selection of these special wines. Burgundies too. Consider the labels among the 326 domestic Pinot Noir offerings: Aubert, Barden, Donum Estate, Eric Kent, DuMOL, GoGi, George, Kistler, Kosta Browne, Littorai, Marcassin, Morlet, Paul Lato, Peter Michael, Rivers-Marie, Rochioli, Rhys, Sea Smoke, Skywalker Vineyards, Williams Selyem. Visit www.wallywine.com.

Which States Drink the Most Wine? *The Drinks Business* (July 30, 2014) reported statistics released by the Beer Institute and reported by *The Washington Post*, that indicated New Hampshire consumes more alcoholic beverages than any other state. This may due to the absence of sales tax and the fact that about half the state’s alcohol is sold to residents of other states. North Carolina, Montana, Nevada and Vermont were next in that order considering per capita consumption of booze. Washington D.C. consumes the most wine with each person drinking an average of over a half of glass of wine per day. New Hampshire again took second place with Massachusetts and Vermont fighting it out for third and fourth. Utah comes up last in all categories of alcohol consumption.



King Estate Pushes For Expansion of Willamette Valley AVA King Estate, Oregon's largest winery, is located just south of Eugene outside the Willamette Valley AVA boundaries established in 1982. Understandably, King Estate wants to use Willamette Valley in its promotion and marketing materials rather than simply "Oregon." The winery is but 50 feet outside the AVA. The new proposal would expand the Willamette Valley AVA southern boundary by about 5 miles.

Oregon Wine, the App, Version 2.0 Katherine Cole, the wine columnist for *The Oregonian* newspaper and *MIX*, Portland's Magazine of Food + Drink, has published this app in partnership with Sutro Media. Designed for both iPhone and iPad, it is available from iTunes for \$3.99. The app includes touring and travel tips, places to sleep and eat in wine country, Cole's personal impressions of wineries, and her wine recommendations for bottles to try. The app links to each winery's web, Facebook and Twitter pages when available and offers hours and tasting fee information. The latest edition has a number of new iOS bug fixes.



Jackson Family Wines' Virtual Vintner According to *Shanken News Daily*, the La Crema brand has launched an interactive digital program that will allow consumers to participate in a wine development. The Virtual Vintner allows consumers to vote on winemaking decisions such as varietal, appellation, vineyard source, barrel management, wine name and label design. The resulting wine is expected to be released in the fall 2015. This is a clever way to market the brand and attract social media devotees. Sign up at www.lacrema.com.



Winemaker Up Close & Personal

I thought it would be interesting to readers to personally get to know Pinot Noir winemakers. After all, they are a fascinating group of people. We all know their stylistic preferences and vinification techniques, but what kind of persons are they? Do you see any of their character traits in their wines?

Theresa Heredia, Winemaker, Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery

What Pinot Noir made by someone else I am drinking now: 2011 Beaux Frères Vineyard.

My desert island wine would be: Drouhin-Vaudon Chablis. I recently had a 2008 Drouhin-Vaudon Grand Crus Chablis and I imagine it will change delightfully over the course of many years on a desert island.

My talent that few know about: Hyper concentration. There could be a nuclear war beginning and I may not notice if I am really focused on something.

The thing I do religiously in my winery: I have to smell the cap, taste the must/wine and feel the temperature of each fermenter at least twice a day. It helps me to get to know each wine intimately which is why I'll never forget any of them.

The clothing item I wear most in my winery: My beloved Asolo boots with Montrail inserts. Best boots ever!

The wine region other than my own where I would like to make Pinot Noir: Oregon (and of course Burgundy).

The music I am listening to: Amy Winehouse's version of Valerie and Bob Marley's Trenchtown.

I like to relax by: The beach, the pool, in the river, or any body of water.

If money were no object, I would: Travel the entire world, learn all the languages, and all about the different cultures.

If I wasn't a winemaker, I would be: A chemistry professor or a medical doctor.