



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

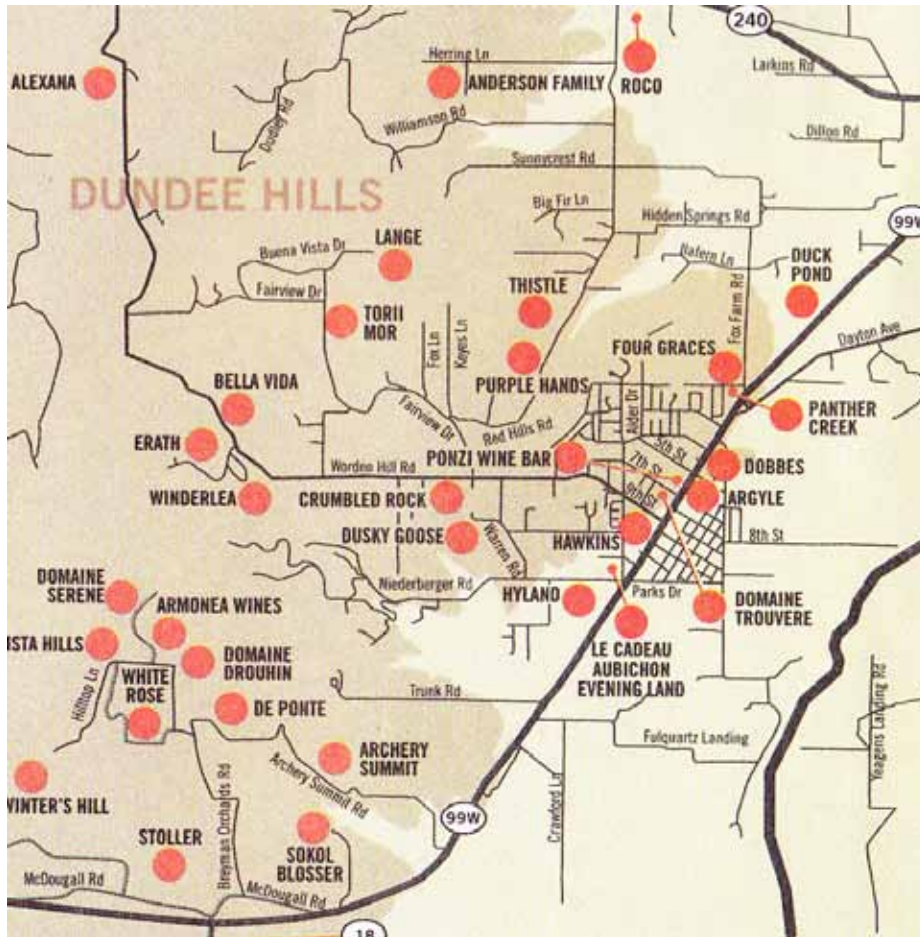
Volume 10, Issue 6 March 15, 2015

*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

De Ponte Cellars: Burgundy-bred Winemaker Finds Solace in Dundee Hills

Like so many Californians who have traveled north to Oregon to establish a winery, Scott and Rae Ellen Baldwin had owned a walnut orchard in the Central Valley of California and lived in Carmel Valley. They bought a hazelnut orchard near Forest Grove and planted a vineyard, but once they acquired the future De Ponte (“duh pawnt”) Cellars site in 1999, they sold the Forest Grove property to Apolloni Vineyards.

DePonte Cellars is a small winery located on Archery Summit Road in Dayton, Oregon, in the heart of the Dundee Hills, with Domaine Drouhin Oregon, White Rose Estate and Archery Summit wineries nearby. The estate has 20 acres of Pinot Noir (Dijon clones) and 2 acres of Melon de Bourgogne. The winery was named after Shirley Baldwin, the matriarch of the Baldwin family, whose father, Manuel de Ponte, grew wine grapes and made his own wine in California’s San Joaquin Valley.



In 2007, the Baldwins bought 80 acres with an existing 6-acre Pinot Noir vineyard on Meadow Lake Road located just west of the western edge of the Yamhill-Carlton AVA. Named Lonesome Rock Ranch, a herd of

steers happily roam free-range on the property, delighting in the pomace they are fed from De Ponte's winemaking process. Another 2 acres of Pinot Noir was planted here in 2010.



Parisian-born Isabelle Dutartre has been the head winemaker at De Ponte Cellars since the first Pinot Noir release in 2001. She has an impressive resume, having studied at the University of Dijon in Burgundy, and subsequently worked at Maison Joseph Drouhin under Laurence Jobard before she moved to Oregon in 1993 to assist the Drouhin family with the establishment of Domaine Drouhin Oregon. For five years, she flew to Oregon for harvests while working for a Burgundian cooperage firm in the south of France. With a family to raise, the travel became too much and she decided to stay in France where she found herself making wine in Bordeaux. De Ponte Cellars called a few years later and five years after joining De Ponte Cellars, she relocated along with her family permanently to the Yamhill Valley.

Dutartre also has a small boutique label, 1789 Wines, producing about 150 cases of Pinot Noir annually since 2007.

De Ponte Cellars has been under the radar for many wine enthusiasts, lacking mention in two popular books on Pinot Noir, *Essential Wines and Wineries of the Pacific Northwest* by Cole Danehower and *Pacific Pinot Noir* by John Haeger. Isabelle Dutartre is featured in *Winemakers of the Willamette Valley* by Vivian Perry and John Vincent

Production is 2,000 cases annually of De Ponte Cellars Pinot Noir. Melon (identical to France's Muscadet produced in the Loire Valley) is also offered, a varietal that is rarely produced in Oregon. The original growers thought they were planting Pinot Blanc grapes, but were mistaken, and De Ponte has developed a loyal following for this unique wine.

Visit the website at www.depontecellars.com for more information and a listing of the wines available. All wines are produced exclusively from the De Ponte Estate Vineyard and Lonesome Rock Ranch Vineyard.

The winery has two tasting rooms. The tasting room at the winery in the Dundee Hills is open daily from 11:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.. A newer tasting room opened in the summer of 2013 in Carlton inside the town's historic fire station building which dates to 1943. Named the Lonesome Rock Firehouse, the facility has an outdoor patio and seating, and hosts special events. The Firehouse tasting room is open Friday through Sunday, 12:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.. The Baldwin's grass-fed beef sourced from the couple's cattle ranch known as Lonesome Rock Cattle Company is sold in the Firehouse tasting room to wine club members.




De Ponte Cellars offers for rent a three bedroom, three-and-a-half bath Vineyard Retreat with expansive views of the Dundee Hills AVA and the Cascade Mountains. Guests are offered private tastings in the De Ponte cellar and have access to a 2,000 bottle wine list of De Ponte library wines and international choices. Check it out at www.visiting360.com/client/pdx/de-ponte-cellar-estate-house/.

The 2012 vintage De Ponte Cellars Pinot Noirs reflect the vintage that offered a summer filled with sunshine and warmth. The wines are ripe and well-structured, but still have the typical finesse that De Ponte wines exhibit.

2012 De Ponte Cellars Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 1,401 cases, (142 cases 375ml and 250 magnums), \$44. Sourced from De Ponte Cellars Estate Vineyard. Aged 12 months in 20% new French oak barrels with the remainder in 2-5-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is highly appealing with many nuances including aromas of plum, black raspberry, clove, cardamom, Asian 5-spice and complimentary toasty oak. The mid weight purple stone and berry fruits have a noticeable attack and finish. The cardamom spice carries over on the palate along with an earthy note. The tannins are well-integrated and the oak overlay is modest. 90.*

2012 De Ponte Cellars Estate Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 298 cases, 150 magnums, \$60. A limited barrel selection of the estate's most prized blocks. Aged 12 months in 50% new French oak barrels and the remainder in 2-5-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas are demure upon opening, but pick up intensity over time in the glass, offering intoxicating scents of boysenberry, spice and dark rose petal. The wine is soft and silky on the palate with generous flavors of purple stone and berry fruits accentuated with spice, and framed by perfectly melded tannins. The slightest oak adds interest. Very elegantly styled, with plenty of fruit goodness on the finish. 93.*

 **2012 De Ponte Cellars Baldwin Family Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 223 cases, 150 magnums, \$75. Sourced from the De Ponte Cellars Estate Vineyard. Aged 12 months in 80% new French oak barrels and the remainder in 2-5-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, cassis, spice and oak leap from the glass. The mid weight plus flavors of well-ripened purple and black fruits attack with mouth filling richness, yet the wine is supple and light on its feet. This is a connoisseur's wine with admirable balance and sophistication with a finish that lingers for what seems like a minute. Cellar worthy. 95.*





2012 De Ponte Cellars Lonesome Rock Ranch Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 502 cases, 102 magnums, \$44.

This vineyard is among the small number of vineyards located closer to the Pacific Ocean in the Willamette Valley. Aged 10 months in 20% new French oak barrels and 80% in 2-5-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas are enticingly fresh featuring black cherry, spice, peppercorn, rose petal and a hint of anise-laced oak. Stunning elegance with very suave, structured tannins supporting the mid weight flavors of fresh black cherry and black raspberry. Highly seductive, with a subtle earthy vein in the background. Easy to like now. 94.*



Screen Door Cellars

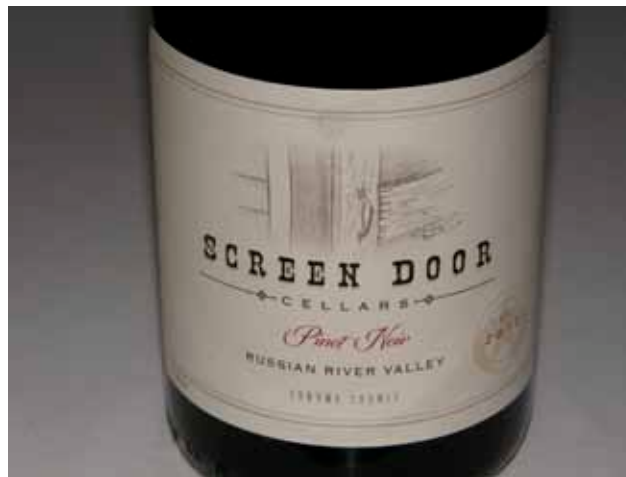
Sometimes great wine just drops in your lap. This past Christmas I rented a house in Sebastopol and spent the Christmas holiday there with my family. Upon my arrival, the property manager gave me a bottle of 2012 Screen Door Cellars Russian River Valley Pinot Noir as a welcoming gift. Her neighbors were the owners of this winery. I was very impressed by the wine and previously reviewed it in the *PinotFile*. The latest 2013 vintage release is even better.

Screen Door Cellars is the dream of wine industry veterans Bobby and Shannon Donnell. Bobby left his work in the Texas restaurant business and moved to Northern California, where he planned to sail with a friend for the summer. He quickly fell in love with the area and a beautiful California blonde named Shannon. Since he had a longtime passion for wine and fermentation science, Bobby decided to stay and work a harvest. After his first vintage at St. Clement, he was hooked, and over the past twelve years he has worked in all aspects of winery production with some of Napa's most celebrated vintners. In 2008, while at Provenance Vineyard, Bobby completed the University of California at Davis Winemaking Certificate Program and now works as winemaker at Amici Cellars. Shannon is an experienced viticulturist who previously worked for Duckhorn Vineyards and is now at Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards.

The first vintage of Screen Door Cellars Pinot Noir amounted to 100 cases. The second, 2013 vintage, produced 180 cases.



2013 Screen Door Cellars Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 180 cases, \$50. Sourced from Leras Family Vineyard. Primarily Pommard clone, with a small portion of "828" and 115 co-fermented. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light cherry color in the glass. Soaring aromas of Bing cherry, baking spice and toast set the stage. On entry, the mouthful of cherry goodness really opens your eyes, and accent flavors of cola, cardamom and oak add interest. The wine is beautifully composed, with balanced tannins and an expansive black cherry finish that will bring you to your knees. Quintessential Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. I loved it! 94.*



Email Shannon at shannon@screendoorcellars.com to obtain the wine. The website, www.screendoorcellars.com, is in development.

The Donum Estate: 2012 Gifts From the Land

Donum means “gift of the land,” and the wines from this estate are truly that. The Donum Ranch’s 147 acres covers three hills in the Sonoma Carneros region just north of San Pablo Bay. Nestled amid these hills is a 50-acre vineyard planted to a diverse collection of heirloom selections and Dijon clones of Pinot Noir.

In the 2012 vintage, besides the Donum Carneros Estate Pinot Noir, a Carneros West Slope and Carneros East Slope bottling were released. West Slope comes from the middle portion of a west-sloping block at the Donum Ranch. Beginning in 2007, as the block’s vines developed considerable depth and complexity with age, a stand-alone West Slope bottling was born. The 2012 vintage marks the third release of the East Slope Pinot Noir. This block is on an east slope at the Donum Ranch planted to the Calera heritage selection.

A third bottling from the Donum Ranch is named 1870, taking its name from the stone ruins of a stagecoach stop built in 1870 which remain in the center of the Ranch today. The 2012 vintage marks the first release of this wine, which represents the best blend the Estate vineyard has to offer. This wine is the spiritual heir to the Tenth Anniversary bottling below.



Donum also has an estate vineyard in the Russian River Valley known as The Winside Vineyard (previously the Nugent Vineyard). The first 11 acres were planted in 1997 by Donum’s owner and viticulturist Anne Moller-Racke and winegrower Joe Nugent to Dijon clones 115 and 667. In 2008, 5 more acres were planted to the Pommard clone on an adjacent plot. The Pommard block was named “Ten Oaks” after the ten majestic trees that border it on two sides. Both a Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and Russian River Valley Reserve Pinot Noir are produced from this vineyard along with a Ten Oaks Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, first released from the 2012 vintage.

Donum has also reached out to the Anderson Valley and farms the Angel Camp Vineyard. 2012 marks the second release of two wines from this vineyard located in the “deep end” of the Anderson Valley north of Philo. This vineyard is planted to seven different clones of Pinot Noir in volcanic, sandy soil, at about 500’ elevation on a knoll with several different aspects. The Anderson Valley bottling is a barrel-selected blend from all blocks in the vineyard and the Angel Camp Vineyard bottling represents the top barrels from this young vineyard.

Dan Fishman has been an integral part of the winemaking team since 2007 when he worked as an intern under consulting winemaker Kenneth Juhasz who began producing the Donum and Stemmler wines in 2005. Dan took over the winemaking helm for both labels in June 2012.

The 2012 vintage was event-free with normal budbreak and moderate temperatures at flowering. The summer months continued with mild weather, causing less stress on the vines and resulting in slightly larger berry size than normal and a bountiful harvest. Harvest was conducted leisurely over the course of weeks, allowing picking at peak maturity. 2012 was a wonderful gift considering the challenges of the preceding year. All fruit was harvested before the first fall rains in mid-October.

Donum Pinot Noir is a bold but polished expression of the Pinot Noir grape with plush fruit that offers striking intensity, backed by firm but well-mannered tannins, reflective of the long pre- and post-fermentation maceration.

Donum Pinot Noir is sold primarily through a mailing list. Private tastings are available by appointment at the Donum Estate: contact Shannon Muracchioli at 707-939-2290 or shannon@thedonumestate.com. Contact Shannon also to purchase wines.

2012 Donum Estate Grown Carneros Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.79, TA 0.60, 766 cases, \$72. 84% Donum clone and 16% Dijon 667 clone from the Donum Estate. 6 to 10-day cold soak, punch downs three or four times per day to ensure proper extraction. The fermented wine was left on the skins for two to twelve days. The free run wine underwent malolactic fermentation in barrel and the wine was aged 11 months, at which point the best barrels were selected for the Donum Carneros wine. These barrels were then aged an additional four months, before bottling in February 2014. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Generous aromas of earth-kissed blackberry, black raspberry and cassis with a lovely hint of spice and sassafras. Glamorous and stylish on the palate with mid weight flavors of blackberry, blueberry, black cherry and spice, offering an intense attack and a lifted finish. The wine's firm, but balanced tannic backbone and complimentary oak make for easy approachability. I liked the wine more each time I returned to the glass. 92.*



2012 Donum Estate Grown West Slope Carneros Pinot Noir

14.7% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.61, 273 cases, \$90. 100% Donum clone. Long cold soak, extended maceration, native yeast fermentation. Free run juice was aged a year in a mix of 75% new and 25% used French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Complex aromatic profile including scents of strawberry, cherry and raspberry with earthy compliments of mushroom, fern and balsam. The following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose had evolved and became intoxicating with a flourish of berry and cherry fruit and spice. Mid weight plus in structure with darker fruit flavors on the palate including dark red berries and cherries with a touch of spice. Very plush, with substantial but not intrusive tannins, and an astounding and enduring finish offering a festival of fruit that makes this wine stand out from the pack. A superb cellar candidate. 94.*



2012 Donum Estate Grown East Slope Carneros Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.68, 132 cases, \$90. 100% Calera selection. 100% de-stemmed, cold soak, two long pump overs with very few punch downs, pressed just after dryness with no extended maceration to highlight its delicacy. The free run juice was aged in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A brawny and sappy young wine with vibrant aromas of black cherry and blackberry, bramble and grilled mushroom. Generously endowed with boysenberry and cherry flavors framed by muscular tannins that are most evident on the slightly astringent finish. Oak plays a supportive role in the background. The wine was more appealing the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle showing more extravagant fruit aromas and flavors. Still a little rough around the edges, this wine will benefit from more cellaring. 92.*



2012 Donum Estate Grown 1870 Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.63, 73 cases, \$120. 100% Donum clone from the three finest blocks in the Donum Estate Vineyard. The finest blend from the Estate Vineyard and bottled only in exceptional vintages. The juice spent 17 to 33 days on the skins, before being drained to French oak barrels, 75% new, and aged 14 months without racking. The favorite four barrel blend was then determined and blended and bottled as the first 1870 Pinot Noir.

Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of dark strawberry, raspberry and enchanting sous-bois. Very refined and polished with impeccable balance. Vivid flavors of blackberry, black raspberry, pomegranate and spice, framed by structured but tucked in tannins, and finishing with uncommon drive and persistence. This wine takes the best features of the Donum Carneros Pinot Noir wines and blends them into one glorious package. Wow! 95.



2012 Donum Estate Grown Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.61, 731 cases, \$72. Dijon 667 and 115 from the Winside Estate Vineyard. 15 to 25 days on the skins, punched down up to four times a day, with occasional pump overs. Free run juice was sent to 100% French oak barrels, 64% new. The best barrels were selected to assemble the blend which was bottled on February 5, 2014. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Intensely fragrant over time in the glass, with aromas of the blackest cherry and cola. Full-bodied core of Bing cherry fruit with a hint of cola and spiced raspberry. Soft and gracious on the palate, with balanced tannins, and impressive fruit-dominated length on the finish which leaves a slight trail of warmth. 91.*

2012 Donum Estate Grown Russian River Valley Reserve Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.61, 326 cases, \$90. 43% Pommard and 57% Dijon 667. This bottling is the first Russian River Valley Reserve to feature both Dijon and Pommard clones. 100% de-stemmed, cold soak for 8 days, cap punched down up to four times a day with occasional pump overs, modest extended maceration before barreling down into 100% French oak barrels, 70% new. 7 barrels of Dijon 667 and 5 barrels of Pommard made the final blend which was bottled in February 2014. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Extravagant aromas of ripe, dark berries and black cherries, tilled soil, and mocha java. The charge of full-bodied black cherry and blackberry fruit engulfs the palate, holding court through an intensely fruited finish. Imposing and structured, yet offering a deft touch of oak and admirable harmony. This wine has an extra wow factor. 93.*

2012 Donum Estate Grown Ten Oaks Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.59, 160 cases, \$72. 100% Pommard clone from the Ten Oaks block at Winside Vineyard. 80% de-stemmed with 20% whole cluster. 9-day cold soak, indigenous yeast fermentation, one or two pump overs or punch downs during fermentation. The wine was sent to barrel after 17 days on the skins. The best barrel blend was assembled in January 2014 and bottled the following month. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of oak-kissed cherry and raspberry lead to mid weight flavors of slightly confected cherry, raspberry and red grape with a hint of baking spice and sandalwood in the background. The tannins are reigned in and there is modest finishing length. Unchanged the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 89.*

2012 Donum Single Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.79, TA 0.60, 348 cases, \$72. Dijon 115, 777 and 667, Martini, David Bruce and Swan. Heirloom selections and Dijon clones were fermented separately with different regimens. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 53% new from several coopers. The final blend was about 30% heirloom and 70% Dijon. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting complexity in this wine that offers scents of blackberry, pomegranate, spice, mocha and espresso. Mid weight plus attack of sappy purple and black berry fruits with contributions from pomegranate, spice and oak. The mouthfeel is velvety, the vigorous tannins are folded in, and the wine finishes with plenty of juicy goodness. 91.*

2012 Donum Single Vineyard Angel Camp Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.61, 126 cases, \$90. Swan, David Bruce, Pommard and Dijon "828." Heirloom selections and Dijon clones vinified separately with different regimens. The wine is meant to be the best blend that can be made from this vineyard each year. In 2012, the blend contained only heirloom selections. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of black cherry, sous-bois and herbs. Plenty of ripe blackberry, cassis and beefy flavors backed by substantial tannic sinew. Soft and velvety on the palate with some finishing drive. Somewhat ripe and rugged now with noticeable oak overlay. Best to stash this in the cellar for a couple of years. 90.*

Sips of Recently Tasted Pinot Noir

brick & mortar, Napa Valley, California

Matt Iaconis, a graduate of University of California at Davis, launched his label in 2011 featuring Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Napa Valley. The previously reviewed 2011 Pinot Noir and 2012 Chardonnay were impressive. Visit www.brickandmortarwines.com.

2014 brick & mortar Napa Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 55 cases, \$22. Released February 14, 2015. Sourced from Cougar Rock Vineyard (80%) and La Perla Vineyard (20%), both in Napa Valley. A *saignée* at the crusher, transferred into 50% stainless steel and 50% neutral oak barrels for native fermentation. Occasional *bâtonnage*. *Demure pinkish orange color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of strawberry, cranberry and flowery herbs. Good richness for a rosé, with a moderately intense attack of red berry and pear flavors with a hint of savory herbs in the background. Bone dry, with bright acidity on the finish that offers plenty of berry fruit flavor with a hint of white pepper. An everyday-styled, unpretentious wine. 89.*

2012 brick & mortar Napa Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 110 cases, \$44. Released March 15, 2015. Sourced from Cougar Rock Vineyard located in the Atlas Peak sub-AVA of Napa Valley at 1450' to 1850' elevation. Clones 777, 115 and Pommard 4. Extended cold soak, native yeast fermentation, some whole cluster, aged 20 months in 100% once-used French oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is more savory than fruity, featuring aromas of cherry, iron and dried herbs. Soft in the mouth, with light to mid weight cherry, cranberry and raspberry flavors with an appealing herbal thread in the background. The fruit really pops. Much better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with additional nuances. The nose was more fruity and expressive, and the darker cherry, clove spice and peppercorn notes provided interest. Cellar for another 6 to 12 months. 92.*



Cellars 33, San Francisco, California



This was my first opportunity to taste the wines of Baltimore transplants, John and Katie Fones, who launched their urban San Francisco winery with the 2011 vintage. Katie played the major roll that led to establishing a winery, for when the couple met, she professed a preference for wine over beer that John was brewing in

Baltimore. An \$8 bottle of California Merlot clinched their relationship. After relocating, John acquired his winemaking acumen working internships at Freeman Vineyard & Winery in Sebastopol. The winery focuses on Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel (and whatever else Katie lets John make) from top vineyard sources. Annual production of slightly over 1,000 cases is sold to a loyal mailing list. Visit www.cellars33.com.

2013 Cellars 33 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.60, 120 cases, \$33. Released February 17, 2015. Sourced from Keefer Ranch (20%), Gloria Vineyard (40%) and Hummingbird Hill Vineyard (40%). *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Fruity aromas of cherry with added scents of bramble and oak lead to a mid weight cherry core touched by oak and herbs. A bit shallow on the attack and finish which is largely oak-driven. Easy to drink, with smooth tannins and a juicy finish with cut. More enjoyable over time in the glass. 88.*

2013 Cellars 33 Gloria Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, 120 cases, \$45. Release date August 25, 2015. The second vintage from the estate vineyard at Freeman Vineyard & Winery. Harvest Brix 24.4°. Pommard, 115, Calera and Martini clones. Aged 10 months in once-used Francois Frères oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of cherry and sous-bois dance from the glass. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry, raspberry and spice expand in the mouth to fill every nook and cranny. Highly appealing with very soft tannins, admirable finesse, and impeccable balance. The finish is loaded with cherry swagger, but this wine is more about personality than power. 92.*



2013 Cellars 33 Katie's Cuvee Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, 72 cases, \$45. Released February 17, 2015. Harvest Brix 23.9°. Calera and Swan clones planted in 2006 at Keefer Ranch. Katie's favorite barrels. Aged 10 months in once-used Francois Frères oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Appealing aromas of black cherry, dark rose and peat. Mid plus flavors of black cherry and raspberry with a hint of savory herbs in the background. Well-structured, with pleasant oak seasoning and some giving power and length on the finish. 91.*

2013 Cellars 33 Keefer Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.60, 120 cases, \$45. Release date August 25, 2015. Harvest Brix 24.2°. Older blocks of Swan clone planted in the late 1980s. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new Rousseau oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Elegant and expressive, this wine offers aromas of cherry, baking spice and mushroom. Relatively light in weight and feminine in style, with flavors of red cherry and red berry accented with spice, herbs and a hint of oak. Very supple tannins and easy accessibility. 88.*

2012 Cellars 33 Brousseau Vineyard Chalona AVA Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.50, 120 cases, \$42. Released August 26, 2014. Harvest Brix 23.8°. Soils of limestone and decomposed granite. Vineyard is certified organic. Mt. Eden clone planted in 1981 and more recently planted Pommard clone. 15% whole cluster, native yeast fermentation. Aged 16 months in 100% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine was tasted twice. The nose exhibited a range of aromas initially including earth, leaf, conifer, oak, and a pungent note of volatile acidity. Sampled several hours later, the nose was considerably more pleasing with resolution of the volatile acidity, and aromas of cherry, spicy black raspberry, herbs and earthy flora. The sweet core of earthy blackberry, black plum and cassis flavors displayed good richness. The tannins were modest in one bottle, but aggressive and astringent in a second bottle. 87.*

Cornerstone Cellars



2012 Cornerstone Stepping Stone Cuvée Artist Series Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 500 cases, \$30. Label features "Color of Life" painting by Oregon artist Janet Ekholm. Sourced from several vineyards in multiple appellations. Clones are Pommard, 115, 777 and Wädenswil. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 18% new. Intended to be drunk "young and cool." *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly fragrant initially with aromas of black cherry, raspberry, and dried rose petal. As warming occurred over time in the glass, fruity aromas were displaced by notes of forest floor and garden bouquet. The satisfying mid weight core of black cherry and black raspberry fruits was backed by firm, but tucked in tannins. The cherry-driven finish was very dry and appealing. Best enjoyed with a slight chill. 89.*

2012 Cornerstone Willamette Valley White Label Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 1,500 cases, \$50. Sourced from multiple vineyards in several appellations. Clones are Pommard, 115, 777, 114 and Wädenswil. Aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 56% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly in the glass to reveal inviting aromas of raspberry jam and cherry cobbler. Juicy, vibrant and beauty of flavor, offering middleweight tastes of black cherry and black raspberry with a pleasing touch of spice. Impressive grip and personality and highly enjoyable now, but with the tannic backbone to age. A very long and expansive finish seals the deal.* **93.**



Furthermore Wines, San Francisco, California

Since 2006, Furthermore has concentrated on single-vineyard Pinot Noirs from world-class growers of coastal-influenced vineyards. In 2011, the first estate vineyard, Nevina's, named after Chad's daughter, was added to the lineup. It is located on the Sonoma Coast in western Occidental just six miles from the Pacific Ocean. The winery, started by two lifelong friends, Bob Zeches and Chad Richards, got its name from the expression "...and furthermore," which a spouse used frequently. Bob is a materials science researcher at University of California at Berkeley and Chad is a senior director of marketing at Apple. The wines are crafted at an urban winery in San Francisco. Visit the website at www.furthermorewines.com.

2012 Furthermore Sierra Mar Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 15.0% alc., pH 3.73, 115 cases, \$40. Pommard and 23 clones. Harvest Brix 27.0°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 45% of which were new Remond. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. There is plenty of harmony in this wine which offers an array of aromas including cherry, raspberry, spice, vanilla, cola and forest floor, and a satisfying core of mid weight black cherry, plum and cassis flavors accented with spice. Impressive fruit presence on the palate with balanced tannins, a silky mouthfeel and an expansive finish.* **91.**

2012 Furthermore Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.62, 117 cases, \$50. DRC selection, Wädenswil 2A, and Rochioli selection. Harvest Brix 24.7°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 25% of which were new Cadus. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Scents of berry patch, strawberry and rainforest fern lead to an exotically flavored wine with mid weight black cherry and plum fruits at the core embellished with underlying notes of clove, anise and dark chocolate. Some noticeable dry and grippy tannins provide structure for aging and should ameliorate over time. This wine has admirable polish and swagger.* **91.**

2012 Furthermore Nevina's Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.73, 126 cases, \$50. Clone 777. Harvest Brix 24.2°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 25% of which were new Damy. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Delicate aromas of black cherry, blackberry, spice and toast pick up intensity over time in the glass. Delicious array of fruit flavors including black raspberry, blackberry and boysenberry with added notes of complimentary spice, cola and sweet oak. Nicely balanced, with impressive fruit intensity on the generous finish. This wine has a racy energy and a distinctly unique character that is hard to put into words. "I really like it" should suffice.* **93.**

2012 Furthermore Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.53, 75 cases, \$50. Clones 777 and "828." Harvest Brix 26.0°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 30% of which were new Damy. *Moderate red cherry color in the glass. Aromas of earthy flora and Bing cherries lead to a highly pleasurable entry of cherry, black raspberry, spice, cola and toasty oak flavors that persist through a fruit-driven finish. The fruit is complimented by balanced tannins and juicy acidity, and the mouthfeel is silky smooth. When tasted later in the day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine became more fragrant with some rose petal showing up to compliment the Bing cherry essence.* **92.**



2012 Furthermore Gloria Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.61, 164 cases, \$40. Inaugural wine from this vineyard. Calera, Swan and Pommard clones. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% of which were new Cadus. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Enticing aromas of red cherry pie glaze, cranberry, rose petal and conifer. Inviting, forward flavors of cherry, raspberry, sandalwood and baking spices including cinnamon. Lighter in weight, but packing a wallop of flavor that hangs on through a lengthy and silky finish. When re-tasted later in the day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had become an irresistible cherry bombast and my family couldn't keep their hands off it. 94.*

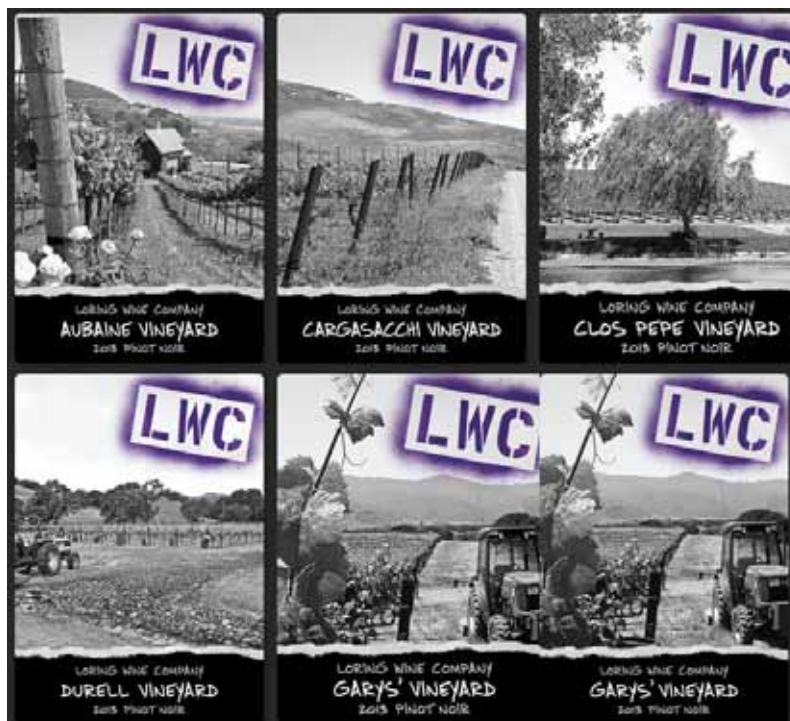


Loring Wine Company, Lompoc, California

It's hard to believe it has been sixteen years since Brian Loring released his first 150 cases of Loring Wine Company Pinot Noir. I first wrote about Brian in 2002 when his wines were receiving considerable press and interest. He was one of the early boutique Pinot Noir producers in California to leave a career (he was a software engineer) behind to pursue winemaking, and he inspired a number of other Pinot Noir lovers to follow the same track including Jamie Kutch (Kutch Wines) and Andrew Vingiello (A.P. Vin). His success was predicated on choosing first-rate vineyard sources. The importance of the vineyard is exemplified by the distinctive labels that prominently depict the vineyard sources of the wine in the bottle. The wines are now produced in Lompoc where visits are by appointment. A newer tasting room in collaboration with Cargassachi and Point Concepcion wineries is located at 420 East Hwy 246 in Buellton near the Hitching Post II restaurant. The tasting room is open Thursday through Monday from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. All Loring Wine Company wines have been closed with a Stelvin closure since the 2004 vintage. Total annual production is 9,000-10,000 cases. Brian's spouse, Kimberly, has been an important asset to the winery's success as well.

Brian says, "The 2013 wines are similar to 2012, but with a notch more depth and intensity - maybe a cross between 2009 and 2012. Almost all the barrels in the winery could probably qualify to be in the single vineyard wines, so the AVA blends are extra special. We look for power in the single vineyard wines versus softness and prettiness for the AVA wines. The AVA wines come from the vineyards that are also vineyard designates.

The Pinot Noirs are 100% de-stemmed and crushed. After a cold soak, inoculation continues with Assmanshausen yeast, and fermentation is carried out in small lots. Aging is carried out over 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 20% new. The wines are only occasionally fined, and bottled unfiltered.





2013 Loring Wine Company Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.65, 350 cases, \$36, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderately dark cherry color in the glass. Fragrant with aromas of cherry, spice, rose petal, oak, and earthy flora. Mid weight flavors of earth-kissed black cherry and dark raspberry with good intensity and lift. The tannins are balanced, oak plays a complimentary role, and the finish offers a generous beam of black cherry fruit. This wine grew on me over time in the glass. 90.*



2013 Loring Wine Company Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.72, 800 cases, \$32, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This is a black cherry themed wine with a thread of oak adding nuances. Discreetly concentrated, with an admirable attack and cherry-fueled finish lifted by juicy acidity. 90.*



2013 Loring Wine Company Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.75, 1,625 cases, \$27, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of fresh cherry tart and sous-bois. Elegantly styled and lighter weighted than the other 2013 AVA Pinots, with flavors of red cherry and red raspberry. The suave tannins make for easy drinking. An unpretentious, everyday style wine. 88.*



2013 Loring Wine Company San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.67, 825 cases, \$29, screwcap. Release September 2014. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Exuberant aromas of fresh cherry, raspberry and garden bouquet. Mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry backed by firm tannins. The fruit is vivid and expressive and quite enjoyable now. An early drinking, everyday wine. 89.*

2012 Loring Wine Company Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.68, 250 cases, \$36, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Very typical of its Russian River Valley origins, with aromas and flavors of Bing cherry and baking spice. Very suave and easy to like with a compliment of oak. A forward drinking wine with admirable balance and some finishing intensity. 89.*

2013 Loring Wine Company Graham Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, 200 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Soaring scents of red cherry and spice that keep giving over time in the glass. The attack of spice and cola enhanced red cherry fruit really draws your attention, and maintains a pleasing intensity through the finish of uncommon generosity. Quite charming and elegant with impressive balance. 92.*

2013 Loring Wine Company Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.75, 400 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of cherry, raspberry, spice and herbs. Flavors of red cherry, cranberry and pomegranate are featured with an overlay of oak. On the feminine side which is typical of Rosella's, with modest tannins and a sweet cherry finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the oak dominated the fruit. 89.*

2013 Loring Wine Company Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.71, 275 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy nose upon opening, slowly revealing fruity aromas of black cherry and black raspberry. More sap and structure than the Rosella's with a savory herb note complimenting the core of black cherry fruit. Silky smooth on the palate with balanced tannins and a finishing burst of fruit goodness. Much more appealing over time in the glass. This wine has a ways to go and would be best cellared for a year or more. 91.*

2013 Loring Wine Company Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.74, 250 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is not*

open for business, only offering aromas of bramble and mushroom. Much better on the palate, with a luscious core of black cherry and black raspberry fruit lifted by a lively cut of juicy acidity and a touch of oak enlarging the envelope. Highly satisfying, with a caressing finish. The aromas should arrive with short-term cellaring. **91.**



2013 Loring Wine Company Keefer Ranch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.61, 300 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Rather typical for Keefer Ranch, with fresh aromas of strawberry, red cherry and sandalwood.*

*Extravagant flavors of cherry, ripe strawberry, spice, and cocoa dust with the right touch of oak. Refined and sophisticated, with a huge, extremely long finish that nearly brings you to your knees. **94.***



2013 Loring Wine Company Aubaine Vineyard San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.55, 200 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released February 2015. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of black cherry, sarsaparilla, clove and other spices, and brewed tea leap from the glass. Delicious core of black cherry, black raspberry and cassis flavors wrapped in tame tannins. Plush and mouth filling*

*with a fruit-filled finish that is memorable for its length. This vineyard can produce wines that are rugged and tannic, but Brian has tamed the beast beautifully in this vintage. This is a stunning wine that really grabbed my attention. **94.***



2013 Loring Wine Company Russell Family Vineyard Paso Robles Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.59, 200 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released February 2015. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is rather shy, offering demure aromas of bramble, smoky oak and dark berry jam. Much more inviting on the palate, with mid weight plus flavors of black raspberry, blackberry and black plum, with a touch of anise and earthiness. A richly fruited wine with firm tannins, but easy to like, with a very long and fruit-driven finish. About the same the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, again showing impressive finishing intensity. **91.***

2013 Loring Wine Company Clos Pepe Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.59, 400 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released February 2015. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with red cherry pie glaze, spice and sandalwood. Soft and elegant, with a dreamy cherry flavor that carries over to a finish that leaves a lasting impression. Supple tannins, reigned-in oak, and pure enjoyment. Tres Pinot. **92.***

2013 Loring Wine Company Cargasacchi Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.64, 200 cases, \$50, screwcap. Released February 2015. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A darker fruited wine with admirable finesse. Aromas of earthy flora, black raspberry, spice and oak lead to mid weight flavors of black cherry and blackberry with an herbal vein in the background. Silky in the mouth with balanced tannins and some finishing goodness. A bit shallow and atypical for Cargasacchi Vineyard, but still quite satisfying. **90.***

Love & Squalor, McMinnville, Oregon

Owner and winemaker Matt Berson has been working in the Oregon wine industry since 2003. The home of Love & Squalor is The Portland Wine Company in Portland, Oregon, while the wine is vinified in McMinnville. The website, www.loveandsqualorwine.com, is under construction but wines are available for purchase on the website.



2011 Love & Squalor Antsy Pants Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.6% alc., 75 cases, \$36.

Antsy Pants is the name given to the vintner's barrel selection bottling of any given vintage, and is a reserve wine. Sourced from Temperance Hill Vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills (34%, Pommard clone), Winter's Hill Vineyard in Dundee Hills (33%, Pommard clone) and Saikkonen Vineyard in Ribbon Ridge (33%, clone 667). The grapes are de-stemmed and cold soaked for 7 to 8 days. Small-lot fermentations were not inoculated and punched down gently by hand or foot. Aged 18 months in neutral French oak barrels and racked twice before bottling on April 16, 2013. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of cherry, allspice, violet, bramble and dried herbs. Modest in weight and delicate, but flavorful, with a core of red berry and cherry fruits framed by supple, suede-like tannins. Very silky on the palate with some finish and admirable balance. This wine reflects the vintage nicely. 90*



2012 Love & Squalor Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.61, 900 cases, \$24.

A multi-vineyard and multi-appellation blend. Pommard, 777 and 667 clones. Grapes were mostly de-stemmed (10% whole cluster) and cold soaked for 7 to 8 days. Small-lot fermentations were not inoculated and punched down gently by hand or foot. Aged in mostly neutral French oak barrels for 18 months before bottling on May 22, 2014. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Tres Pinot, with aromas of black cherry, pomegranate, rose petal and herbs, and the mid weight flavor of black cherry. This wine reflects the ripeness of the vintage and offers easy drinking with suave tannins, complimentary oak, a silky mouthful and a pleasing burst of cherry fruit on the finish. 90.*

2012 Love & Squalor Antsy Pants Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.6% alc., pH 3.65, 150 cases, \$N/A. A reserve wine produced from selected barrels. Sourced from Saikkonen Vineyard in Ribbon Ridge (32%, clone 667), Cherry Grove Vineyard in Yamhill-Carlton (17%, clone 777), Cuddihy Vineyard in Yamhill-Carlton (17%, unknown clones), Winter's Hill Vineyard in Dundee Hills (17%, Pommard clone), and Methven Vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills (17%, clone 115). 27% whole cluster, cold soaked for 7 to 8 days. Small-lot fermentations not inoculated and punched down gently by hand or foot. Aged in 33% two-year-old and 67% neutral French oak barrels for 18 months before bottling on May 22, 2014. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of black cherry, black raspberry and flower garden. The perfectly ripened fruit makes a statement on the palate and holds on to a lasting, satisfying finish. The wine has shoulders but is still refined. A hint of spice from the whole cluster adds interest, the oak is beautifully integrated, and the overall impression is one of sheer beauty. Should be fine in the cellar long term. 92.*



Nuggucciet Cellars, Central Coast, California

2011 Nuggucciet Cellars Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., pH 3.79, 50 cases, \$26. It's "New Ga Shay." Sourced from Hyland Vineyard in the McMinnville AVA. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Scents of black cherry, spice and espresso lead to a middleweight wine with fresh black cherry and dark raspberry flavors, framed by modest tannins and dominated by an oak overlay. Oak plays too big a role in this wine for my taste, both on the nose and palate, as well as adding oak tannins. Your enjoyment will be predicated on your oak tolerance.* 87.



2012 Nuggucciet Cellars McKenna Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.60, 60cases, \$36. Martini clone from Riverbench Vineyard. Named after Ross and Nancy Briley's first grandchild. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of black cherry, cola and spice really pop. Very plush, full-bodied black cherry core balanced by fine-grain tannins that are well tucked in. Plenty of oak compliment in this wine but balanced by the prodigious fruit load. The finish has noticeable persistence and drive. This one really comes at you and demands your full attention.* 91.



Vincent Wine Co., Portland, Oregon

Owner and winemaker Vincent Fritsche launched Vincent Wine Company in 2009 after over ten years experience in making wine in Oregon. The popular urban winery is located in downtown Portland in the Southeast Wine Cooperative. Visit www.vincentwinecompany.com.

2012 Vincent Wine Co. Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$25. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas pick up intensity over time in the glass, offering notes of cherry, raspberry, spice and timber. A solid wine featuring dark cherry, raspberry and plum flavors with an earthy compliment. Drinks effortlessly, with modest tannins and a bright cut of acidity on the finish.* 88.

2012 Vincent Wine Co. Crowley Statica Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$35. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of pine, underbrush and dried herbs lead to a mid weight core of black cherry fruit accented with notes of pine and savory herbs. Good, rich attack, smooth on the palate, finishing with a tug of oak and tannin.* 87.

Waits-Mast Family Cellars, San Francisco, California

2012 Waits-Mast Mariah Vineyard Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 98 cases, \$42. Released October 2014. Vineyard planted by Dan Dooling and Vicki Tomola in the 1970s. Located at 2,400' elevation. Clones are 667 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 25.5°. 4-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Interesting aromas of cherry, sous-bois, iron and a hint of smoky oak. Light in weight with good finesse, offering flavors of cherry, boysenberry and spice. Nicely composed with good oak integration and echoes of cherry on the modest finish.* 89.

2012 Waits-Mast Oppenlander Vineyard Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 95 cases, \$44. Released October 2014. Vineyard is outside town of Comptche, about 8 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Harvest Brix 24.7°. Clones 114, 115 and Pommard. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged 16 months in once used, twice used and neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas never really come forth, even when checked the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The mid weight black cherry and black raspberry flavors have a ripe but not over ripe profile. Highly enjoyable with a touch of oak seasoning and a subtle earthy, feral note typical of this vineyard. Nicely balanced tannins and some finishing intensity. Great potential here but will require some patience.* 90-91.

2012 Waits-Mast Deer Meadows Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 97 cases, \$55. Released May 2014. Rich Savoy's vineyard above Boonville at 1,600' elevation. Clones 115, 777 and Calera. Harvest Brix 25.0°. 100% de-stemmed, native fermentation, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of darker stone and berry fruits. Impressive attack of nicely ripened boysenberry and pomegranate fruit backed by firm tannins. The biggest, baddest, sappiest wine in the 2012 lineup but everything is in balance. The finish is especially noteworthy with plenty of spice and fruit to please. Should benefit from another year or two in bottle. 92.*



2012 Waits-Mast Wentzel Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 48 cases, \$45. Released October 2014. Vineyard is located at 900' elevation near Philo. The 10-acre property is organically farmed. Harvest Brix 23.5°. Clones 114, 115, 667 and 777. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate ruby red color in the glass. Shy aromas of cherry and raspberry replicated in the flavors. Laden with blueberry, raspberry and spice, framed by good acid tension, but tight and unexpressive. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was still closed with tannins somewhat more prominent than fruit. Cellar this one for a year or two. 88-89,*

2012 Waits-Mast Nash Mill Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 70 cases, \$40. Released May 2014. Vineyard owned by Zac and Krista Robinson, whose family also owns Husch Vineyards. It is located in the cool northern end of the Anderson Valley. Clone 115, 777 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 27.0°-28.0°. 100% de-stemmed, native and inoculated fermentation, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Like a walk in the forest, this wine smells of conifer and earthy spices. An intriguing palate featuring flavors of black cherry, baking spice, and mocha. Tricked out with a velvety mouthfeel and firm structural bones. Highly unique and interesting, and difficult to describe, but I really like it. Even better later the same day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Serious goodness. 93.*



Weatherborne Wine Corp., Lompoc, California

This was my first exposure to the wines of Weatherborne Wine Corp. and I was very impressed. Winemaker Chris Carter released his first Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir from the 2012 vintage. Carter attended University of California at Davis after detouring from a prospective career as a professional aviator, and worked in a number

of cellars in California, Oregon and New Zealand before returning home to Santa Barbara County. He says, "Through all my travels and countless hours slogging in others' cellar, only one grape has made me pause, and be truly thankful for the moment I had to appreciate it: Pinot Noir. Ethereal, fleeting, perhaps even taunting, good Pinot is hard to put your finger on." Visit the website at www.weatherborne.com.



2013 Weatherborne Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 450 cases, \$35, screwcap. Sourced from the John Sebastiano Vineyard. *Moderately light dark cherry color in the glass. Lovely aromas of dark red cherry, plum, raspberry coulis, fruit leather and spice. Juicy and fresh with bright flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with fine grain tannins and complimentary oak in the background. Admirable balance and easy approachability. Still satisfying the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*



2012 Weatherborne Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 225 cases, \$35, screwcap. Sourced from John Sebastiano and Melville vineyards. Inaugural release. *Moderately light cherry color in the glass. Well-spiced dark fruits are featured on the nose that also sports a touch of herbs and oak. Slightly richer than the 2013 bottling, featuring black cherry, black raspberry, anise and savory herb flavors with a noticeable oak overlay. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had become highly aromatic with scents of cherry, rose, spice, herbs and smoke with a flavorful cherry core overlaid with smoky oak. 90.*

More

2012 Chehalem Stoller Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.58, 426 cases, \$50. Harvest Brix 24.2°-24.5°. Aged 11 months in 100% new French oak barrels, 50% new and 445 1-year-old. Crossflow filtered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Extremely fragrant with hi-tone aromas of dark raspberries, cassis and toasty oak. Suave on the palate, with robust, flavors of black raspberry, black plum, tea, and spice framed by mildly grippy tannins. Somewhat earthy, with a tug of oak in the background. Impressive fruit intensity and finishing length. 91.*



2013 Drew Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$55. Fifth release from this vineyard in the deep end of the Anderson Valley owned by Burt Williams. Sourced from the Rochioli block situated on a south slope with lighter soil provides finesse and charm, while the La Tache block is on a gentler slope with more clay soil giving more power and richness to the fruit blend. 50% rochioli selection and 50% "828" (La

Tache selection). 50% whole cluster fermentation. Native fermentation and malolactic fermentation. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Almost a shame to open a bottle now, for this is built to cellar a few more years. Lovely aromas of black cherry, sous-bois, dried herbs and stem. Luscious mid palate flavors of dark cherries, black raspberries and pomegranate with firm tannins underneath, and a lengthy, lip-smacking finish driven by bright acidity. Much better over time in the glass and was still pumping out glorious flavors two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Very classy, even extraordinary. 94.*



2012 Gloria Ferrer Dijon Clone Selection Carneros Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.54, 100 cases, \$50. Gloria Ferrer has 16 clones of Pinot Noir in production on the winery's 333-acre estate. Almost 11 acres are planted to Dijon 115 and in this vintage was chosen for the winery's first single vineyard and single clone bottling. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very aromatic, with an intense perfume of black cherry, dark raspberry and spice with toasty oak. Very polished with bold flavors of black cherry and black*

raspberry complimented by notes of earth, anise and spice. Generous and welcoming now, but will easily age several years. **90.**

2013 Guillén Family Adrian Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

12.6% alc., 75 cases, \$40. Sourced from Block F at Vista Hills Vineyard in the Dundee Hills. Clone 667 planted in 2005. Native yeast fermentation, 100% whole cluster, aged sur lie 11 months in 100% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light red cherry color in the glass. Typical whole cluster goodness on the nose with highly fragrant aromas of rose petal, spice, and green tea. Light to mid weight flavors of well-spiced and juicy red cherry fruit. Quite forward, with the slightest oak in the background and well-integrated tannins. Not as ripe or sappy as the 2012 vintage bottling, but plenty of charm. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had picked up a little more flavor intensity and length indicating short-term cellaring is indicated.* **93.**



2012 Josh Cellars California Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$18. Blended and bottled by Joseph Carr. Common on supermarket shelves in Southern California. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, wood spice, nut oils and vitamin cabinet. Velvety on the palate with decent flavors of blackest cherry, black raspberry and blackberry backed by sweet oak, with notes of marzipan and green herbs in the background. The tannins are balanced and the wine finishes with a cut of acidity. Overall, the wine seems a bit weird but I can't put my finger on the reason(s).* **85.**

2012 McHenry Vineyard Swan Clone Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., <96 cases, \$25. From a 2-acre vineyard in Bonny Doon at 1800' elevation, five miles from the Pacific Ocean. Harvest Brix 24°. Aged 2 years in French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very sexy perfume of fresh cherries, red plum, rose petal, soy and sweet oak. Cherry and cranberry flavors explode on entry and persist through an expansive, citrus-infused cherry finish. Impressive balance and oak management, and highly accessible. The finish is exceptional.* **92.**

2013 Pfendler Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 350 cases, \$45. Clones include Swan, Calera and Pommard. Harvest Brix 24.0°. Winemaker Greg Bjornstad draws from four estate vineyards in the Petaluma Gap to produce this estate Pinot Noir. Grapes were de-stemmed, 7-day cold soak, 8 months sur lees aging, 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry puree and cola waft from the glass. Delightful ripe but not over ripe flavors of black cherry, boysenberry, plum and black raspberry. Highly enjoyable, with sleek oak integration, modest fine grain tannins, and a fat, intensely fruity finish. Easy to like now.* **92.**

2012 Penner-Ash Estate Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.56, 753 cases, \$65. Harvest Brix 25.7°. Aged 10 months in 32% new, 21% 1-year-old, 32% 2-year-old, and 15% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is fruity and fragrant, featuring aromas of dark berries, cassis forest floor and vanilla. Structured and sappy, with flavors of sweet blackberry, black raspberry, and pomegranate, with a hint of brewed tea, backed by a noticeable oak imprint. Unusually extracted for an Oregon Pinot Noir reflecting the 2012 vintage. The finish is fruity and racy with a good cut of acidity.* **90.**

2012 Ramey Platt Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$74. Very limited, not offered for sale on website. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is flush with aromas of rose petal, forest floor, conifer and dried herbs. Full-bodied flavors of ripe black cherry and black raspberry with a savory herbal thread in the background. A bit daunting at present with a finish that has a good cut of acidity and length, but is dry and taut with overwhelmingly astringent tannins. Probably best to cellar this wine to see if the tannins ameliorate or match the wine with hearty protein dishes if opened now.* **88.**

2013 Sante Arcangeli Family Wines Clone 32 “Selezine Susie” Split Rail Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.62, 97 cases, \$45. A wine club offering. Clone 32 is a traditional sparkling wine clone grown at 1700’ elevation in Corralitos. The dry farmed vines were planted in 1986 mistakenly when the owner ordered Chardonnay and receive a Champagne clone of Pinot Noir instead. This clone makes up the backbone of the winery’s Split Rail Vineyard Pinot Noir. In this vintage, the clone warranted its own bottling. Harvest Brix 23.5°. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 10 months sur lie in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas build in intensity over time in the glass, offering notes of black cherry, raspberry jam, conifer and toast. Vivid and vibrant on the attack, with a charge of black cherry fruit that is crisp and juicy. A touch of spice, dark chocolate, and earthiness add interest. The tannins are modest but have some grip, and a spark of acidity really elevates the fruit. The finish is extremely persistent, driven by bright cherry goodness.* **93**



2012 Wilde Farm Donnelly Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 12.7% alc., \$42. Vineyard planted by Mary Elke in 1991 at confluence of Donnelly and Anderson Creeks just outside of Boonville. Pommard, Dijon and Stang clones. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Delightful aromas of black raspberry, cherry, strawberry and rose petal. Mid weight flavors of black raspberry, plum sauce and spice with complimentary oak in the background. Surprisingly ripe flavors at this ABV. Well-structured with a firm tannic backbone, and a finish with weight and presence.* **91.**

Recent Sips of Chardonnay

2013 brick & mortar Napa Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., 260 cases, \$38. Released March 1, 2015. Sourced from Cougar Rock Vineyard. Harvest Brix 22.8°. Whole cluster pressed, native primary and secondary fermentations in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. Aged 10 months before a light fining and filtration. *Light golden yellow and clear in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon curd, lime zest, Granny Smith apple and buttery brioche. Very clean, crisp and juicy on the palate, with pleasing flavors of lemon, pear, honey and caramel. Nicely composed, with a lip-smacking, acid-driven finish.* **92.**

2013 Cellar 33 Keefer Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.0% alc., pH 3.30, TA 0.70, 120 cases, \$39. Wente clone 4 planted in 1996. Harvest Brix 23.2°. Aged 10 months in 100% neutral French oak barrels. Filtered. *Light golden straw color and clear in the glass. Inviting aromatic profile with scents of preserved lemon, baked pear, and marzipan. Crisp flavors of lemon, lime and green apple, with a touch of nutty oak. Largely acid-driven with a tight vibrancy and a cleansing finish.* **90.**



2012 Chanin Los Alamos Vineyard Santa Barbara County Chardonnay 14.21%, \$37. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A marvelous wine with aromas of lemon curd, pear, tropical fruits, walnut and crushed sea shells. Impressive transparency with vibrant flavors of golden apple, pear, and pineapple. Oak seasoning is very subtle. Slightly creamy, with very good energy and cut. A complete wine deserving of accolades.* **94.**



2012 Cornerstone Willamette Valley White Label Chardonnay 13.5% alc., 300 cases, \$40, screwcap. Sourced from Carabella Vineyard (Chehalem Mountains), and Gran Moraine and Willakia (Yamhill-Carlton). Dijon clones 76 and 95. Barrel fermented in French oak for 15 months, and 100% malolactic fermentation. *Moderately light golden straw color in the glass. Aromas of white-fleshed fruits, mango and a hint of gardenia. Bright, crisp and clean on the palate, with tasty flavors of lemon cake, pear, and apple backed by sound acidity. A note of mineral-driven flint and salinity is evident. Very easy to like, with appealing roundness. An excellent food wine. A good example of how far Oregon has come in producing world-class Chardonnay.* **91.**

2012 Liquid Farm White Hill Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 13.8% alc., 988 cases, \$40. 63% Bentrack, 16% Zotovich, 8% Rita's Crown, 6% Huber, 4% Clos Pepe, 3% Radian, and 1% Kessler-Haak vineyards. A homage to Chablis-styled Old World Chardonnay. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of white peach, apple, citrus peel, nut oils and smoky oak. Slightly creamy, with an array of flavors including lemon pie, apple, pear, toffee and fleur-de-sel. Less boisterous than many California Chardonnays, but very pleasing, with a good riff of underlying acidity, and a satisfying lemon drop finish.* **92.**



All Loring Wine Company Chardonnays are whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented in a 50/50 mix of French and American oak barrels (30% new). 100% malolactic fermentation.

2013 Loring Wine Company Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay 14.8% alc., pH 3.55, 225 cases, \$24, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Slight reduction upon opening that dissipates. Aromas of baked apple, lemon oil, and tropical fruits. Discreet richness of flavor with notes of lemon, pear, apple, brioche and spice. Mildly creamy with some spiced fruit persistence on the finish.* **88.**

2013 Loring Wine Company Sierra Mar Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay 14.9% alc., pH 3.59, 100 cases, \$40, screwcap. Released February 2015. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The nose is vibrant with aromas of lemon zest, apple and marzipan. Very refined with impressive harmony, offering flavors of lemon, pear, spice and subtle nutty oak. Slightly creamy, with a bright, lemon-driven finish.* **90.**

2013 Loring Wine Company Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay 14.7% alc., pH 3.42, 150 cases, \$40, screwcap. Released September 2014. *Light golden yellow color and clear. Aromas and flavors of lemon tart, white-fleshed fruit, and oak-driven brioche, baking spice, and toast. Creamy and slightly lush, with a dry, thirst-quenching finish.* **89.**

2013 Loring Wine Company Paramelee Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.8% alc., pH 3.91, 150 cases, \$40, screwcap. Released February 2015. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Shy but pleasant aromas of sea breeze, toast and citrus blossom. Somewhat richer in flavor with an array of tastes including lemon custard, baked apple, nutmeg, toffee, toast and spice. Velvety with a dry, slick finish.* **89.**

2013 Sante Arcangeli Family Wines Bald Mountain Vineyard Ben Lomond Mountain Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay 13.2% alc., pH 3.28, 119 cases, \$32. Grown at 1100' elevation on a sandstone bench. Harvest Brix 22.5°. Native fermentation, aged 9 months sur lie in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new, 40% 1-year-old, and 20% neutral. *Moderately light golden straw color and clear in the glass. The yellow peach aromas are accented with notes of butter brickle, toasty oak and salinity. Good fullness on the palate with fresh yellow apple, peach and creme brûlée flavors. Slightly creamy, with a riff of quenching acidity on the clean, refreshing finish.* **91.**



2013 Ser Coastview Vineyard Monterey County Chardonnay 14.0%, 65 cases, screwcap. Vineyard is at 2300' elevation in the Gabilan Mountains of Monterey County. Granite and limestone soils. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A mineral-driven Chardonnay with aromas of lime, fresh green apple, pear, sea breeze and nutty oak. A bit austere upon opening, picking up considerable intensity and interest over time in the glass, offering flavors of peach, pear, apple and lime, framed by bracing steely acidity. A Chablis impostor!* **91.**



Pigs & Pinot Orange County

A mini Pigs & Pinot event was held recently at Charlie Palmer's at Bloomingdales in Costa Mesa, California, fashioned after the annual Pigs & Pinot event held at Charlie Palmer's Dry Creek Kitchen in Healdsburg. Dan Prescott, the general manager at Charlie Palmer's at Bloomingdales and formerly held the same position at Dry Creek Kitchen, organized the dinner.

The evening started with 32 Pinot Noirs and some sparkling Pinot Noirs from the restaurant's wine list available for sampling along with hors d'oeuvres. The wines included offerings by Benovia, Failla, Flowers, Gary Farrell, George, Hartford Court, Inman, MacRostie, Maggy Hawk, Merry Edwards, Papapietro Perry, Skewis, Soliste, Twomey, V.M.L., Williams Selyem and Woodenhead. The group of 140 pinot enthusiasts in attendance than moved on to a five-course dinner. The 2012 Benovia Tilton Hill Pinot Noir and the 2012 Papapietro Perry Peters Vineyard Pinot Noir were standouts for me.



⟨ First Course ⟩

Beeler's Pork Terrine & Asparagus

cornichon, pistachio, crispy pig ear, pinot noir reduction, mustard vinaigrette

Benovia - Pinot Noir, Tilton Hill, Sonoma Coast 2012

Benovia - Pinot Noir, Martaella, R.R.V. 2012

⟨ Second Course ⟩

Chorizo Crusted Diver Scallop

mussels, saffron aioli, chervil, romesco sauce

George Wine Comp. - Pinot Noir, Leras, R.R.V. 2011

George Wine Comp. - Pinot Noir, Buena Tierra, R.R.V. 2012

⟨ Third Course ⟩

Beeler's Pork Shank Tortellini

french onion soup consommé, button mushrooms, gruyère cheese chips

V.M.L. - Pinot Noir, Moon Celestial Series, R.R.V. 2012

V.M.L. - Pinot Noir, Stars Celestial Series, R.R.V. 2012

⟨ Fourth Course ⟩

Duo of Beeler's Pork

tenderloin, cheek, banana parsnip purée, baby bell pepper, beluga lentils, truffle pork jus

Papapietro Perry - Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast 2012

Papapietro Perry - Pinot Noir, Peters, R.R.V. 2012

⟨ Dessert ⟩

Dark Chocolate Mousse

Candied bacon, blueberries, bourbon maple ice cream

Soliste - Syrah, Out of the Shadows, Bennett Valley 2009

Yolando Papapietro sent me some photos of the evening:

Here's George Levkoff of George Wines in his signature shorts relishing the attention:



The mini pastrami sandwiches were to die for:



My wife, Patti, is very picky about Pinot Noir:



Winemaker Mike Sullivan of Benovia Winery cleaned up and in a jacket. It was a shock to see that!



Duo of Beeler's Pork Tenderloin and Pork Cheek with truffle pork jus:



The Dinner Pinot Noirs:



Find the Prince:



Pinot Briefs

Bouchaine Announces Retirement of Michael Richmond & New Winemaker

Michael Richmond has retired after a 45-year career, including 13 years as Winemaker and General Manager at Bouchaine Vineyards. Chris Kajani has been appointed the winery's new Winemaker and General Manager. During his illustrious career, Richmond, who co-founded Acacia Winery, has been a long time champion of Carneros Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Kajani, has been with Saintsbury Winery since 2006 and was promoted to winemaker there in 2013.

Russian River Valley Winegrowers 2015 New Events An expanded events calendar has been announced for 2015 which includes the following four events.

Inaugural Sonoma County Barrel Auction, April 30-May 2. The first annual auction created for members of the wine trade, licensed wine sellers, restaurateurs, retailers and premium collectors. The occasion will feature a live auction of wine futures from Sonoma County's top winegrowers and winemakers as well as auxiliary events throughout the weekend. Never before, never again wines will be auctioned. Tickets can be requested for this invitation-only event online at www.Sonomawine.com/BarrelAuction.

Annual Paulée Dinner, May 2. Held at Kosta Browne Winery, this event is a modern take on the traditional Burgundian celebration. The communal style dinner brings winemakers and winegrowers together with top collectors to share their favorite bottles from their personal collections and cellars. A limited number of tickets will be available by lottery for this event. To be included on the lottery list, submit your information on RRVW Paulée website at www.rrvw.org/russian-river-valley-paulee-dinner.

Russian River Valley Passport (formerly Passport to Pinot), June 27-28. More than 30 wineries throughout the Russian River Valley will participate in this annual event. Guests will have access to many limited or early release wines. A Saturday night VIP barbecue will allow a limited number of ticket holders to mingle with the winemakers and growers over fresh, local summer fare. Tickets are available at www.rrvw.org/passport-to-pinot-2.

Single Vineyard Night, November 5 and 12. This event is held in San Francisco the first night and Sacramento the second night. The evening includes appetizers and tastings of rare, small-lot wines poured by more than 35 participating wineries and growers. Tickets are available at various levels and go on sale in July at www.rrvw.org/single-vineyard-night-2.

For a full listing of Russian River Valley Winegrowers events, visit www.rrvw.org.

In Pursuit of Balance New York Seminars Available Online Videos of the In Pursuit of Balance seminars held in New York City February 23, 2015, are available at www.inpursuitofbalance.com/#!/conversations/. Noted winemakers Ted Lemon, Josh Jensen and Jeffrey Patterson discuss "Acidity, Alcohol and Aging." The second seminar is titled, "Getting It Right: Triumphs and Failures in the Pursuit of Balance." Past conversations from previous years are also available on the website.

Sparkling Wine Movement in Oregon It is interesting that there is a resurgence in the number of producers in Oregon that are currently making sparkling wine. Through the years, a number of Oregon wineries abandoned sparkling wine production, with Argyle Winery remaining one of the mainstays. An interesting article in the online wine magazine, *Palate Press*, explores the new sparkling wine movement: www.palatepress.com/2015/01/wine/sparkling-wine-movement-pacific-northwest/. Oregon's Willamette Valley would seem like a perfect fit for sparkling wine production. According to Rollin Soles, who fashioned the superb sparkling wines at Argyle for many years said, "Oregon is, for my money, the best place outside of Champagne to grow grapes to make sparkling wine. The reason is that we are a true cool climate." The challenges have been that it is expensive to make sparkling wine, the wines have to be stored for two or four or more years before release, and sparkling wine is more difficult to vinify, requiring a special skills set. The Radiant Sparkling Wine Company was established in 2012 in Oregon to provide a mobile sparkling wine business and already has fifteen clients that include Ponzi, Raptor Ridge, Stoller, Sokol Blosser, ROCO, Anne Amie Vineyards, and Trisaetum. The Radiant Sparkling Wine Company can handle consulting, blending, bottling, storage and everything else necessary to produce sparkling wine. The future for Oregon sparkling wine is bright.

Pinot in the City New York City 50 Willamette Valley winegrowers, winemakers and winery owners will be pouring their cool climate varieties including Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and Riesling at this year's event on Tuesday, April 14, at City Winery. This is a chance to meet the faces behind the labels and help celebrate 50 years of winegrowing in the Willamette Valley. A trade and media tasting will precede the evening's consumer tasting. For details and tickets, visit www.willamettewines.com/event/pinot-in-the-city/.



SE Wine Collective Wine Club The 10 urban winemakers in Portland belonging to the SE Wine Collective offer members two shipments each year of an ever-changing list of about twenty varietals including Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Gamay Noir, Chenin Blanc and Arneis. Membership also includes discounts on the SE Wine Collective's entire wine list which features over 60 imported and local Oregon wines. For other benefits and details of membership, visit www.sewinecollective.com.

'A Year in Champagne' Film Released David Kennard presents this documentary film starring Martine Saunier who also appeared in the film, 'A Year in Burgundy.' Saunier guides the viewer through six Champagne houses in this delightful romp through this famous wine region. Watch a trailer and link to the iTunes page where the film may be obtained: www.facebook.com/ayearinchampagne?ref=hl. The official release was March 6.



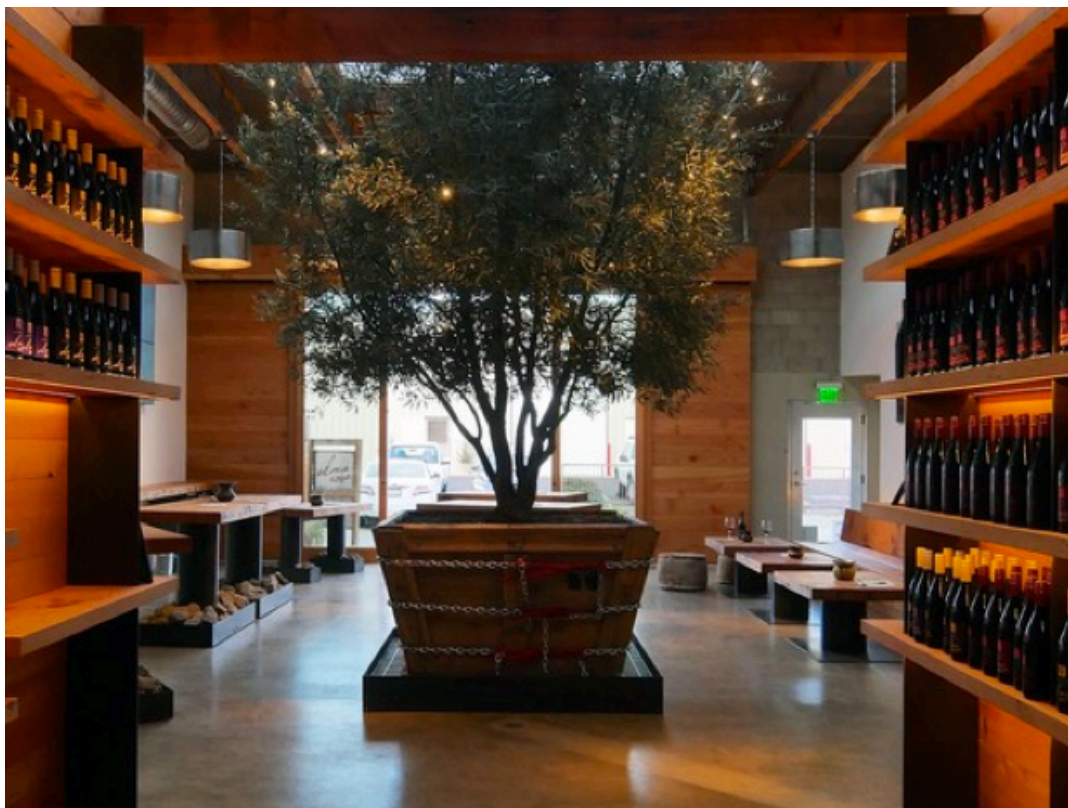
Fountaingrove District AVA Sonoma County's 17th AVA Steve Heimoff first reported in July 2014 that the Fountaingrove District AVA was coming and it is now approved. Fountaingrove is a name given to this part of eastern Sonoma County as well as the name given to a commune founded here in 1985. A winery of the same name soon followed. Fountaingrove runs from just northeast of Santa Rosa almost to the Napa County line, touching the appellations of Chalk Hill, Diamond Mountain, Sonoma Valley, Calistoga and Russian River Valley. It is classified as a Region II on the Winkler scale. Elevations range from 400' to 2,200'. Soils are primarily Franciscan bedrock under volcanic residue. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most successful variety in this region but Chardonnay and even Pinot Noir are planted.

Petaluma Gap AVA Close to Approval The day Fountain Grove District became an AVA, the Petaluma Gap Winegrowers Alliance announced that they had officially submitted a petition for AVA status. At the recent World of Pinot Noir, I was told by regional growers that the petition is on a fast track and the Petaluma Gap AVA should be approved soon.

Boonville Still Trying to Quite Vineyard Fans Last May when I was the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival, there was quite a buzz in the local paper about the noisy fans used in vineyards to temper the effects of frost. I saw recently in the *Ukiah Daily Journal* that Anderson Valley residents are still complaining that the loud fans are robbing them of sleep. Residents claim “it rivals a helicopter’s landing” in decibels, well above the 40-decibel limit that Mendocino County allows at night. A Petition for Writ of Mandate and Complaint for Declaratory or Injunctive Relief was filed by a resident in Mendocino County Superior Court, asking for the noise ordinance to be enforced. Growers claim that the county’s noise ordinance does not trump the county’s Right to Farm law. Stay tuned while residents try to tune out.

Brewer-Clifton Founders Sell Majority Share *Wine Spectator* reported recently that a group of investors led by master sommelier and wine wholesaler Ken Fredrickson has purchased a 70 percent stake in this winery located in Lompoc. Founders Greg Brewer and Steve Clifton and Crystal Clifton each now own 10 percent of the winery. Brewer-Clifton has enjoyed a steady rise in popularity as it approaches its 20th anniversary and now produces 10,000 cases annually. Brewer and Steve Clifton share the winemaking duties and Crystal Clifton directs sales and marketing.

New Alma Rosa Tasting Room Opens As most readers know, Richard Sanford’s winery had to endure some tough financial challenges in recent years and the original Sanford/Alma Rosa tasting room on Santa Rosa Road was sold. Bob Zorich came to the rescue, buying Alma Rosa Winery & Vineyards in 2014 and kept Richard and Thekla Sanford at the helm. The new Alma Rosa Tasting Room opened this year in Buellton just off California Highway 101, appropriately situated at the gateway to the Sta. Rita Hills. The tasting room has a striking architecture, a testament to Sanford’s sense of design, with a rustic but modern design that features reused and natural materials. The entrance patio and the commanding Rumford fireplace at the rear are the bookends of the Tasting Room, both finished with Lompoc sandstone. At the center reigns a 15 foot tall olive tree with a skylight overhead that floods the room with natural light. The Tasting Room at 181-C Industrial Way in Buellton is open daily. The 2012 Pinot Noir releases I tasted at World of Pinot Noir recently were superb. Visit www.almarosawinery.com.



Noted Chef Turned Down Proposed Winery in Santa Rosa Celebrity chef Guy Fieri had proposed a 10,000-case winery on two-lane Willowside Road in Santa Rosa, but the Sonoma County Board of Zoning Adjustments turned down the proposal in January 2015. Residents are concerned about traffic and noise resulting from the project which would be located in a rural, residential area.

Dramatic Growth in Oregon Wine Industry *Wines & Vines* (January 20, 2015) reported that the state's grape crop rose in value from \$63.2 million in 2010 to \$128 million in 2013, with production volume increasing from 1.75 million cases in 2010 to 2.8 million cases in 2013, an increase of 58.6%. In 2013, 52,589 tons of wine grapes were processed (3,313,000 cases), of which 30,315 tons were Pinot Noir, far ahead of the second variety, Pinot Gris, at 8,754 tons. As of 2013, there were 605 wineries (up from 418 in 2010, an increase of 44.7%) and 950 growers (up from 848 in 2010). A more recent report in *Wines & Vines* (March 2015), put the number of Oregon wineries currently at 632, ranking them third behind California (3,913) and Washington (704). The total impact of Oregon wine was \$3.35 billion in 2013.

2011 California Pinot Noir Survey Vineyard Financial Associates provides systematic and quantitative tools for independent winegrowers. They provided an interesting report on the relationship (or lack thereof) between scores, prices and appellations in January 2015. The survey restricted its focus to Pinot Noir from California that was grown during the 2011 vintage and data pulled from all Pinot Noirs reviewed by the *Wine Spectator*. The conclusions of the survey were that price does not predict scores at a statistically significant level and vice-versa. Sub-appellations produce higher scores and prices than do the California, Carneros or county-based appellations. The highest average points per dollar for 2011 Pinot Noir went to the Santa Lucia Highlands, followed by the Central Coast, and the worst average points per dollar went to the Sonoma Coast. The results do not stand up to high levels of statistical significance. See the survey at www.vineyardfinancialassociates/#!/The-relationship-or-lack-thereof.

Three Sticks Has Stunning Hospitality Venue The oldest home in the town of Sonoma received a makeover by noted San Francisco designer Ken Fulk. Called "The Adobe," this building is the longest-occupied residential home in Sonoma. It was originally built by Salvador Vallejo (General Mariano Vallejo's brother) in 1842 and first occupied by Don Juan Castenada according to *Sonoma Magazine* (March/April 2015). Three Sticks owners Bill and Eva Price bought the building in 2012. Three Sticks, a producer focusing on Pinot Noir from Durell Vineyard, was founded in 2004. Winemakers Bob Cabral and Don Van Staaveren produce premium wines with most of it allocated to a mailing list and high-end restaurants. Previously, Three Sticks had no tasting room. The new hospitality venue is located at 143 W. Spain St., and is open only by appointment. 707-996-3328.

Women for WineSense Celebrates 25 Years Women for WineSense was founded 25 years ago in the Napa Valley. The goal was to promote wine consumption in moderation, promote wine's health benefits, and counter the anti-wine sentiment of the time. The organization quickly became a noted wine education and networking organization for wine industry professionals and wine enthusiasts. Chapters in Portland, New York City, Seattle and Rochester, New York sprung up, and more chapters are opening across the US. Once Morley Safer's '60 Minutes' show aired in 2001, the Neo-Prohibition movement receded, and the focus of Women for WineSense turned to the promotion of the responsible enjoyment of wine as part of a healthy lifestyle, support for the success of women in wine, and creating networking opportunities to wine enthusiasts and industry professionals. Women for WineSense's 25th Anniversary Celebration and National Conference will be held April 30-May 2, 2015 in Napa Valley. Yes, men are invited as well. Visit www.womenforwinesense.org for information on joining the organization or attending the Celebration.



Oregon Wine Industry Honors the Pioneering Viticultural Family At the recent Awards Dinner in Portland, the Mareshes received the Founders Award. Maresh Red Hills Vineyard is the fifth oldest in Oregon. Encouraged by Dick Erath, and knowing very little about farming, Jim and Loie Maresh planted Pinot Noir on their farm 45 years ago and some of those original vines remain. Today, the vineyard has expanded to 140 acres planted to Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc. A tasting room still operates on the farm in a distinctive red barn, first opened in 1979. A year later, the Mareshes daughter, Martha, married winemaker Fred Arterberry whose Arterberry label was well known. The winery closed in 1990 after Arterberry's tragic death. Ten years later, Loie Maresh passed away. Jim Arterberry Maresh, Fred and Martha's son, started his own label, Arterberry Maresh and he also makes wines for Powell Hill, a label owned by his mother and stepfather, Steven Mikami. Jim has opened his tasting room in the red barn also.



South African Winery Using Tea to Produce Preservative-free Wine Researchers at the Department of Viticulture and Oenology at Stellenbosch University found that powerful antioxidants in Rooibos (a native tea) and honeybush can preserve wine naturally without the need for sulfur dioxide and other preservatives. Audacia Winery is using Rooibos wood chips in the winemaking process instead of traditional oak. Rooibos and honeybush have no caffeine and low tannin levels making them ideal for winemaking. The Rooibos brand is internationally patented, so it will be a unique South African product. The original article appeared in Reuters, copyright 2015.