



PinotFile

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*Pinot Noir is as
inviting as
silk sheets*

Anam Cara Cellars Heather's Vineyard Vertical

As I sit at my computer buckets of rain are pouring down in Orange County, California, reminding me of my early December trip to the Willamette Valley when rain persisted throughout my four day trip. The bright spot was that I had journeyed to Oregon for a special vertical tasting of Anam Cara Cellars Heather's Vineyard Pinot Noir Vertical Seminar & Tasting held at Anam Cara Cellars' Tasting Room in Newberg on December 6, 2015. Owners Nick and Sheila Nicholas have quite a following, and well over sixty people showed up for the seminar.

Anam Cara Cellars is a small family estate vineyard and winery founded in 2001 focused on Pinot Noir from estate grapes, with smaller production of estate Chardonnay and Riesling. The 33-acre vineyard is located on the southeastern slopes of the Chehalem Mountains, just north of the town of Newberg, and was originally an overgrown walnut, hazelnut and plum orchard with a neglected Christmas tree forest and a quaint farmhouse dating to 1902.

Initial plantings of the Nicholas Estate Vineyard began in 2001 consisting of 27 acres and including 5 5-acre blocks of Pinot Noir clones 114, 115, 667, 777 and Pommard, along with one acre each of Chardonnay and Riesling. Later, six more acres were planted in 2-acre blocks each of Wädenswil clone Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling. The site lies between 350 and 650 feet elevation with well-drained soils of primarily the Loess (wind blown ice age sediment) series with outcroppings of volcanic Jory soils. Farming until recently has been done by Nick and Sheila assisted by their son Mark and daughter Heather using both organic and biodynamic practices (the vineyard is both certified L.I.V.E and Salmon Safe and the winemaking facility joined the L.I.V.E program allowing the wines to qualify for Oregon Certified Sustainable Wine status.



Anam Cara is Celtic for “friend of my soul” and represents rare friendships that transcend time and distance and symbolizing the long journey the owners have taken to make wine. Sheila hails from Scotland and Nick from Lodi, California. They met in London while both were working and in 1981 returned to the United States where they married and opened a small chain of pizza parlors in Northern California.

The Pinot Noir lineup includes the following bottlings: Estate, Estate Reserve, Heather’s Vineyard and Mark (Wädenswil clone bottling was offered in addition in 2011). Heather’s Vineyard, named after the Nicholas’ daughter, is intended to be the most elegant expression of the vineyard (the Mark bottling is the most masculine expression of the vineyard). Once-used French oak barrels are used for aging. Grapes are selected from Reserve rows, cropped to less than 1.5 tons-per-acre.

The photo taken at the seminar below L to R: Nick, Heather, Rusty, Sheila



In vintages 2005, 2006 and 2007, Heather’s was made with 100% clone 114. Clone 114 is rarely used as a stand-alone clone since it is inconsistent from site to site, sometimes offering a rich aroma of cherry and spice and a soft, lovely demeanor, and other times being thin, hard and tannic. The Nicholas Estate Vineyard turned out to be very suitable for clone 114 and it offered the elegance when grown on this site that was desirable for the Heather’s bottling. From 2008 to 2011, clone 114 was used in combination with other clones and 2012 was again 100% 114.



The winery's initial winemaker was Aaron Hess (2005 to 2009) and his successor is Michael Collins who crafts the wines at 12th & Maple Winery in Dundee. Nick and Sheila have considerable say in the winemaking and blending.

The purpose of the seminar was to first taste a vertical of Nicholas Estate Pinot Noir, 2005-2012, to consider the vertical of Heather's Vineyard Pinot Noir to follow in the context of the vintage. What surprised me most about this vertical tasting was that two less esteemed vintages in Oregon, 2007 and 2011, produced exquisite wines that were aging beautifully. Also it was commendable that each vintage of Heather's displayed an elegant style that contrasted with the more full-bodied Estate bottling.



Vertical Tasting

2005: Record dry winter. Cool and wet spring decreased crop. Summer was warm and dry, but not hot. Rain over the course of a week in October, but dry harvest conditions. Degree days: 2,059

2005 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.48, 213 cases. 25% Pommard, 25% 667, 20% 114, 15% 115, 15% 777. Aged in 30% new French oak barrels. *The most savory wine in the lineup that is showing its age. That said, it is still quite enjoyable for the tertiary characters of tobacco, mulch and leather enhancing the fading black cherry core. Time to drink up.* **88**

2005 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.90, TA 0.45, 70 cases. 100% Dijon 114. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. *Incredibly, this wine is still delightful after ten years. Definitely has an aged Pinot character but still pumping out plenty of Bing cherry fruit flavor. Very languorous on the palate, with a bit of astringency showing up on the finish.* **89**

2006: Mild spring, good fruit set, mild spring, warm and dry summer with a few heat spikes in June and September (not quite as warm as 2003). Intermittent rains resulted in compressed harvest. Degree days: 2,176

2006 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 15.2% alc., pH 3.90, TA 0.42. Aged in 22% new French oak barrels. *Very ripe fruited, with notes of prune and raisin. The oak has nicely integrated over time. A bit cloying and flat on the finish which lacks verve.* **87.**

2006 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 15.1% alc., pH 4.0, TA 0.41, 50 cases. 100% Dijon 114. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. *Much better than the Estate bottling. The nose is strikingly aromatic, featuring a perfume of fresh dark stone fruits and berries. The fruit is delicately presented but flavorful, and the cherry-fueled finish is delightfully spiced.* **91**

2007: Wet and cool at start, good set with generous yields. Waves of rain in late September. Larger berries and less extraction. Degree days: 1,891

2007 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.48, 1,100 cases. 29% 667, 26% 115, 23% 114, 23% 777, 9% Pommard. Aged in 21% French oak barrels. *Still retaining gregarious aromas of fresh cherry pie glaze. Soft and gracious on the palate, with a charge of spice enhancing the red fruits. Quite juicy and enjoyable. Much better than the bottle reviewed in 2010.* **92.**

2007 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.50, 70 cases. 90% Dijon 114, 10% Pommard. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. *The aromatics are stunning, featuring a mix of red cherry, grape and nutty oak scents. Delicate with gossamer tannins and a slippery finish. Much better than the bottle reviewed in 2010.* **90.**

2008: Large crop. Cool growing season followed by September rain followed by warm, dry weather. Nearly a perfect growing season that received claims of "best Oregon vintage ever." The wines were initially somewhat tannic and offered no instant gratification. Degree Days: 1,929

2008 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.49. 37% 667, 25% Pommard, 13% 114, 13% 115, 12% 777. Aged in 18% new French oak barrels. *Full-bodied and ripe, showing a bit of tertiary characters with age such as marzipan and floral bouquet. Appealing suave texture with plenty of sweet black cherry and black raspberry flavors to delight.* **90**

2008 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.90, TA 0.47, 50 cases. Unfiltered. 100% Dijon 114. 100% once-filled French oak barrels. *Scents of red cherry and raspberry leap from the glass. Attention-grabbing on entry, with layers of cherry and red berry flavors complimented by a hint of spice and oak. Silky and feminine, yet with a bold, velvet hammer finish.* **92**

2009: Warm and sunny; warmer than 2008. High yields. Fleeshy but better balance than 2003 or 2006. Forward and showy. Higher alcohols even very ripe. Degree days: 2,095

2009 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.54, 627 cases. 37% 667, 18% 115, 17% Pommard, 15% 777, 13% 114. Aged in 16% new French oak barrels. *This wine will bring you to attention. Intense attack of cherry and blueberry fruits that persist long after the wine is swallowed. Impressive fruit expression with engaging aromatics, and a firm tannic backbone that leaves a bit of astringency behind on the aftertaste.* **90**

2009 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.53. 70% 114, 19% Pommard, 11% 777. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. *Very soft, elegant and lacy on the palate, featuring layers of darker stone and berry fruits that immerse the palate in goodness. Plenty of spice to entice.* **92**

2010:

Warm January and February followed by a wet spring which delayed ripening and reduced yields. Cool spring and early summer. Indian summer that began in early October and lingered saved the vintage. Wines are pleasant with lower alcohol, bright acidity and decent balance with less color. Bird pressure was a problem. Degree days: 1,722

2010 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.55, 1,200 cases. 30% 115, 20% 777, 20% Pommard, 18% 667, 12% 114. Aged in 23% new French oak barrels.

Slightly under ripe in character but highly aromatic featuring an uplifting perfume of fresh crushed cherries and a deep cherry flavor on the palate. Tobacco and herbal notes contribute a savory bent. 90

2010 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.57, 50 cases. 50% 114, 26% 777 and 24% Pommard. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. *I was enthralled with this wine when I reviewed it in 2012, but this bottle didn't have the same appeal. Austere, under ripe and slightly herbaceous. No score.*

2011: Cool spring and early summer until a warm and dry September saved the vintage. Bloom was not until July. Ripeness was challenging. Harvest extended into November for the first time on record. Vintage also set records for minimal temperature and rain. Alcohols were low and about the same as 2010. Degree days: 1,794

2011 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 12.4% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.56, 1,700 cases. 33% 114, 27% 115, 15% Pommard, 14% 777, and 11% 667. Aged in 21% new French oak barrels. *Much lighter in weight but highly flavorful with an array of juicy red fruits that are vibrant. Easy to like, with a driving, cleansing finish. 91.*

2011 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 12.4% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.55, 50 cases. 75% 114, 25% 777. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. *A very demure and delicate wine that is almost rose in character. Flavors of red cherry and cranberry are infused with a touch of dried herbs and backed by smooth tannins. 90.*

2012: Ideal growing season that was warm and completely dry. Wines are ripe, rich and fruit forward with balanced tannins. Degree days: 2,068

2012 Anam Cara Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.54, 1,700 cases. 20% 667, 20% 115, 20% 114, 20% 777, 20% Pommard. Aged in 21% new French oak barrels. *Still young and fresh featuring dark cherry, dark raspberry, blueberry and spice aromas and flavors with a delicate touch of oak. Enticing, with a lingering finish. 93*

2012 Anam Cara Heather's Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.51, 90 cases. 100% 114. Aged in once-filled French oak barrels. Unfiltered. *Noticeably elegant and silky with charming flavors of cherry and hi-tone spice. The gossamer tannins are well matched to juicy acidity, making for harmonious drinking. 93.*

Check with the winery about availability of these older wines. At the seminar, only the 2008 Heather's Vineyard Pinot Noir was sold out, with all other vintages still available. The 2011 and 2012 Heather's Vineyard Pinot Noir were still available in magnum (\$160 regular, \$136 club). Many vintages of the Nicholas Estate Pinot Noir are still available in limited quantities.

Sips of Recently Tasted California Pinot Noir

Albatross Ridge, Carmel Valley, Monterey County

Albatross Ridge winegrower and winemaker Garrett Bowlus studied abroad at the University of Dijon, followed by internships in Oregon, and studied viticulture and enology through classes at UCLA and UC Davis, but he is largely a gifted, self-taught winemaker. His family established a vineyard in Monterey County and Brad began making wines solely from that vineyard.

The 25-acre Albatross Ridge Vineyard is seven miles from the Pacific Ocean at elevations reaching 1,250 feet, featuring unique limestone and shale soils. Located near Talbott's famed Diamond T Vineyard, it is a cool, windswept site, where temperatures rarely exceed 85°F. Heat accumulation is a mere 1,650 to 1,950 degree days putting it in the Region I or coolest area on the Winkler scale. Albatross Ridge is literally farming on the edge of cool climate viticulture.

The vineyard has twelve distinct blocks including eight blocks and four clones of Pinot Noir ("828," 777, Pommard and 115) and four blocks and two clones of Chardonnay (96 and 15).

Interestingly, Brad's grandfather, William Hawley Bowlus, was a pioneering sailplane designer and used the exact site of the vineyard to test his Albatross sailplanes in the 1930s so the name of the winery seemed destined to be Albatross Ridge. For more information, visit the website at www.albatrossridge.com.

2013 Albatross Ridge Cuvée Vivienne Estate Grown Carmel Valley Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., pH 3.62, 1,080 cases, \$40. This wine is named after winemaker Garrett Bowlus' young daughter Vivienne. It is a blend of all eight vineyard Pinot Noir blocks. Harvest Brix 21.5°-22.5°. Clone 777, 115, "828," and Pommard. Yields 1.7 tons per acre. 85% de-stemmed, 4-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Engaging aromas of black cherry, cardamom spice, unlit cigar and humus. The mid weight, earth-kissed black cherry and black raspberry fruit core is backed by juicy acidity. A riff of tobacco oak plies the background. The wine finishes modestly with redder cherry fruit.* **89.**

2013 Albatross Ridge Estate Reserve Carmel Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.68, 300 cases, \$55. A selection of the twelve finest barrels of the vintage. Harvest Brix 21.5°-23.5°. Clones 777, 115, "828," and Pommard. 90% de-stemmed, 4-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A tug of oak currently spearheads this mid weight plus wine offering aromas and flavors of blackberry, black grape, cassis, spice and black tea. The fine grain tannins and acidity are well balanced and the silky texture is très Pinot. The wine is currently a bit tight and the oak overlay is a bit much, but these features should mollify with a few years in the cellar.* **90-91.**

Briceland Vineyards, Humboldt County

A stellar Pinot Noir specialist in Humboldt County producing wines that are reasonably priced considering their high quality. Winemaker Andrew Morris and spouse Rosie Morris assumed ownership of Bricelands Vineyards from founding winemaker Joe Collins in 2014, and the wines continue to shine. Tours and tasting by appointment: www.bricelandvineyards.com. Wines are sold locally and in the tasting room.



2013 Briceland Vineyards Ronda's Vineyard Humboldt County Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 98 cases, \$35. Vineyard is located at 1,600 feet elevation a few miles west and north of Briceland. Unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose reminds of a walk in the forest with aromas of pine resin, pine needle, and wild blackberries. The mid weight boysenberry fruit core is accented with notes of oak and pine. Welcome presence on the palate, with folded in tannins, admirable finesse, and a good finishing grip of acidity. I like this wine for its*

forest spirit. 90.



2013 Briceland Vineyards Alderpoint Vineyard Humboldt County Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., 147 cases, \$33. Vineyard is the most easterly of the southern Humboldt vineyards Briceland works with and although slightly warmer, the warmth is moderated by the vineyard's proximity to the Main Fork of the Eel River. Planted in 1991 in consultation with Briceland's founding winemaker Joe Collins and currently tended by viticultural expert Rey Sanchez. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of black cherry, sous-bois and a floral note. Delicious mid weight plus flavors of black cherry and red currant. Juicy and luxurious, even chewy, with merged tannins, and perfect phenolic*

ripeness. Almost better than sex. 94.



2012 Briceland Vineyards Reserve Humboldt County Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 25 cases, \$45. A blend of grapes from Phelps, Ronda's and Elk Prairie vineyards, held for more than 30 months in oak and bottled in the fall of 2015. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Considerable nuances in this wine offering aromas of dark stone and berry fruits, woodfern, underbrush and bittersweet chocolate. The full-bodied flavors of blackest cherry and blackberry are augmented by an appealing peppery spice. Substantial tannins attack the finish with a vengeance, but are well matched to the fruit load. Decant if you drink now, but a few years in the cellar would be preferable. 92.*

Byington Vineyard & Winery, Santa Cruz Mountains

Bill and Mary Byington bought 95 acres in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1958 with the intent of using it as a family retreat. Bill was a wine collector and a winemaker suggested they plant a vineyard. The Byingtons planted 9 acres of Pinot Noir and Byington Vineyard & Winery was established with its inaugural release in 1987. In 2013, Los Altos Vineyards bought Byington and updated the grounds and facilities which sit on 95 acres and include a wine cave. Beside estate grown Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, Byington sources other grape varieties from California winegrowing regions. In 2014, Los Altos Vineyards bought a 240-acre ranch in Alexander Valley in the Pine Mountain-Cloverdale Peak AVA. The ranch has 36 planted acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Chardonnay. The website is www.byington.com.

2013 Byington Byington Estate Block 4 Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.56, 165 cases, \$45. Reserved from the rest of the Estate Vineyard due to its distinct character and westward location that faces the Pacific Ocean. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new French oak plus 5% Hungarian oak and 60% neutral American and French oak blends. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. This is a cherry-themed, forward-drinking wine that is quite palate pleasing. Bright cherry aromas lead to an impressive attack of black cherry fruit flavors that persist through a cherry-charged finish. A wine with exemplary Pinot essence, a satiny texture and seamless character. 90.*

Camlow Cellars, Russian River Valley

The 2013 vintage represents the inaugural release of Camlow Cellars estate Pinot Noir, Magna Porcum ("The Big Pig"). The Magna Porcum Vineyard is the culmination of years of effort. Clones planted include Dehlinger selection of Swan, Calera, Pommard 4 and DRC. Camlow Cellars is a partnership between long time friends, grower Alan Campbell and winemaker Craig Strehlow (formerly grower at Keefer Estate and winemaker for Keefer Ranch wines). Visit www.camlowcellars.com.

2013 Camlow Cellars Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.61, 200 cases, \$38. Released October 31, 2015. Harvest Brix 24.6°. Clones 23, "828," 667 and 115 from Graham Family Vineyard. Aged 18 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. A hint of reduction upon opening resolves quickly, revealing aromas of black cherry, boysenberry dried herbs and spice with a waft of toasty oak. Light to mid weight flavors of black cherry and raspberry with a hint of red hots in an elegantly styled wine with balanced dry tannins and juicy acidity.* **89.**

2013 Magna Porcum Estate Grown Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.55, \$45. Released February 10, 2015. Vineyard planted in 2007 in Goldridge sandy loam in the heart of the Green Valley. Clones are Swan, Pommard, DRC and Calera. Aged 15 months in a variety of new, once and twice-filled French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy nose, offering hints of dark berry jam and oak. Linear mid weight plus flavors of blackberry and black cherry with a modicum of oak seasoning. Rather blunt and dull, with balanced sandy tannins and a lack of zing. When tasted the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine still lacked aromatic interest and the palate experience was unchanged. I should revisit this wine in another year, although it has been in bottle for almost a year.* **88.**

Eric Kent Wines, Russian River Valley

I have followed winemaker Kent Humphrey since his launch thirteen years ago, and applauded his success. His wines are known to be consistent favorites of wine critics, and his wine labels, original works of art by very accomplished artists, make the wines even more enviable and even collectable. The wines are sold primarily through dedicated followers who belong to the mailing list, with limited retail distribution. Visit www.erickentwines.com.

2013 Eric Kent Stiling Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.58, 396 cases, \$52. Released fall 2015. Label artist Eliza Frye, a Los Angeles comics artist and graphic novelist. Vineyard is 35 acres planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the 1980s, located between Kistler and Dehlinger on Vine Hill Road in Sebastopol. 98% Swan selection 2% 115. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 62.5% new and 37.5% neutral. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of herb garden and oak accents. Mid weight plus flavors of black cherry, blueberry and boysenberry exhibit good attack and mid palate presence with some finishing intensity. Easy to drink, with suave tannins and inviting harmony. The most robust wine of the three 2013 Pinot Noirs reviewed here.* **90.**

2013 Eric Kent "Small Town" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.61, 382 cases, \$50. Released spring 2015. Artist Kelly Puissegur. 40% Grand Vent, 23% Cleary Ranch, 20% V-C Ranch, 10% Michael Valentine, and 7% Stiling vineyards. 40% Pommard, 23% 667, 15% 115, 10% 113, 7% Swan and 5% 777. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new and 50% neutral. *Moderately light deep cherry red color in the glass. Engaging aromas of strawberry, cherry, spice, mulch and a touch of oak lead to a mid weight core of red fruits accented with an overlay of oak. Silky in the mouth, with modest tannins in a forward drinking style.* **88.**

2013 Eric Kent "Sascha Marie" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.61, 296 cases, \$52. Released spring 2015. 67% Sangiacomo Roberts Road, 25% Grand Vent and 8% Stiling vineyards. 42% Swan, 33% 777, 12.5% Pommard, 6.25% 113, 6.25% 667. Intended to be a fuller-bodied style of Pinot Noir composed of more dramatically flavored Sonoma Coast barrels. Historically, tight on release. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry pie, plum and dark chocolate are echoed on the mid weight palate. Noticeable mid palate fruit presence with a waft of toasty oak in the background. More sap than the Small Town bottling. Still tight and will benefit from more time in the cellar.* **89.**

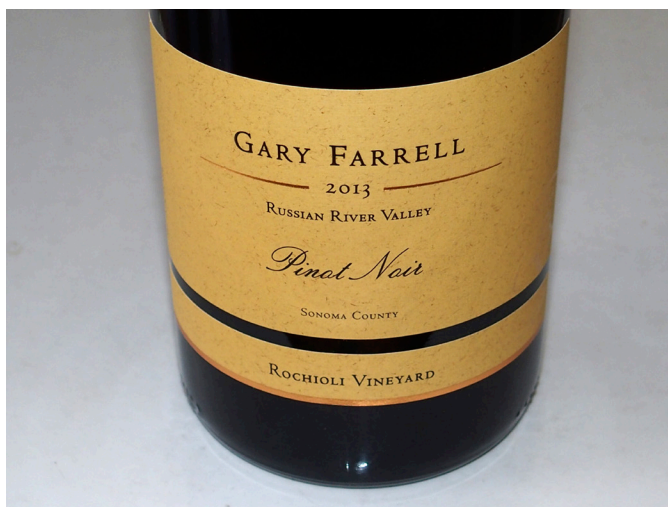
Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery, Russian River Valley

Winemaker Theresa Heredia is carrying on the innovative work started by founding winemaker Gary Farrell many years ago. Both the exemplary Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines are noticeably higher in acidity than most wines produced today in the Russian River Valley, giving them an inviting vibrancy, age ability and serving as ideal food companions. Special bottles under the “Inspiration Series” challenge both the winemaker and the consumer to learn and discover. Visit www.garyfarrellwines.com.

2013 Gary Farrell Gap’s Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.67, 495 cases, \$70. Released September 2015. The Gap’s Crown Vineyard was planted in 2002 and consists of 106 acres of Pinot Noir and 32 acres of Chardonnay. Located in the cool and windy Petaluma Gap where the vines are exposed to considerable maritime influence. A blend of clones “828” and 667. Partially de-stemmed, leaving a portion of whole cluster. 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15-day post fermentation extended maceration, inoculated for malolactic fermentation, and racked into 40% new French oak barrels for 14 months of barrel aging on the primary lees. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Vigorous aromas of black cherry, raspberry, violets and seasoned oak lead to a boisterous attack of dark cherry, black raspberry and savory herbs that unfold in layers. Silky, with substantial, but integrated tannins, and a welcome waft of toasty oak in the background.* **91,**

2013 Gary Farrell Gap’s Crown Vineyard Clone 667 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.67, 70 cases, \$75. Released September 2015. Clone 667 produces rich, dark and bold flavors when grown in a cool site such as Gap’s Crown Vineyard, producing powerful and concentrated wines. Three favorite barrels were chosen for the exclusive “Inspiration Series,” designated by a black label. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A distinctive and unique wine with aromas of earthy flora, fennel, cherries and spice. Mid weight plus flavors of blackberry and boysenberry fruits with a hint of Mexican spiced hot chocolate. Evident, but integrated tannins with an impressively long finish* **awash in fruit. 92.**

2013 Gary Farrell Rochioli Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.67, 539 cases, \$70. Released September 2015. Sourced from several blocks of the 128-acre Rochioli Vineyard, planted in 1974, 1995 and 2000. Some of the vines come from cuttings taken from the original “mother” block planted in 1968. 100% de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15-day extended post-fermentation maceration, inoculated for malolactic fermentation and racked into 40% new French oak barrels for 14 months of barrel aging on the primary lees. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aroma of freshly baked Bing cherry pie bring the taste buds to attention. Delicious mid weight cherry core augmented by vibrant acidity. Rather elegant and lighter in this vintage, with interesting riffs of spice, dried herbs, and floral goodness. Very silky in the mouth, with a juicy finish. The pedigree of the vineyard shows through in this gorgeous wine.* **93.**



Kendric Wine Co., Sonoma

Owner and winemaker Stewart Johnson crafts a single Pinot Noir from the 8.5-acre Kendric Johnson Vineyard located in Marin County, just south of the Petaluma Gap. Planted in 2002 to Mt. Eden, 115, Martini and

Pommard clones. There was no 2011 vintage produced and only a small amount of the 2012 vintage was bottled as a Reserve. Visit www.kendricvineyards.com.

2010 Kendric Vineyards Marin County Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.73, 580 cases, \$36. Released fall 2013. 65% whole cluster fermentation, 10% saignée, native and proprietary yeast, 35-day extended post fermentation maceration for two-thirds, aged 23 months in French (and 1 Hungarian) oak barrels. Filtered. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. This wine (or at least this bottle) has taken on an aged character with fruit on the nose showing a slightly cooked and raisiny aroma. There is still plenty of cherry and raspberry fruit in a mid weight style with hints of oak-driven tobacco and vanilla. The wine finishes with both a sweet and tart cherry going away.* 87.

2012 Kendric Vineyards Reserve Marin County Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.61, 40 cases, \$50. Release spring 2016. The Reserve comes from one edge of the vineyard with the thinnest soil which produces lower yields, more ripeness and concentration. Harvest Brix 24°. 2/3 whole cluster, native and cultured yeast fermentation, 35-day extended maceration, aged 26 months in 2 French oak barrels, 1 new. Unfiltered. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Slowly emerging aromas of cherry glaze, spice and sandalwood lead to an abundance of black cherry, baking spice (particularly cinnamon) and cardamom spice flavors. The silky tannins offer a seductive mouthfeel, and the juicy grip on the nutty cherry finish is quite refreshing. I really like the spicy character of this wine. Much better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* 90.



2013 Kendric Vineyards Marin County Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.61, 600 cases, \$38. Release spring 2016. Harvest Brix 23.5°. 2/3 whole cluster, native and cultured yeast, 40-day extended maceration, aged in French oak barrels (23% new) and one Hungarian oak puncheon for 23 months without racking. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of cherry, strawberry and spice are slow to emerge upon opening. A bit closed on the palate, but showing some spirited black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors, backed by somewhat aggressive tannins. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had undergone a remarkable transformation, offering vibrant aromas, more submerged tannins, and a lasting finish of uncommon generosity. The wine should benefit from more time before the planned release in 3-4 months, but will benefit from even further aging in bottle.* 90.

MacPhail Family Wines, Russian River Valley

The two Pinot Noirs reviewed below and the two Chardonnays reviewed later in this issue are also current new releases. The Mardikian Estate Vineyard is now in its second release. More blocks are coming on line in this sixth leaf along with additional clones. The website is www.macphailwines.com.

2013 MacPhail Vagon Rouge Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.52, 150 cases, \$65. Released fall 2015. Sourced from Lakeview, Susanna's and Mardikian Estate vineyards. A mix of winemaker James MacPhail's favorite 6 barrels throughout the year. Clones are heirloom (suitcase), Swan, 114, Martini and Pommard. Harvest Brix 23.1°-25.4°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, native and cultured yeast fermentations, native malolactic fermentation in barrel, lees stirring weekly for 3 months, aged 17 months

on the lees in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered February 24, 2015. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers an appealing combination of savory woodland and spice savory notes along with fresh black cherry fruit. Charming and fruit-driven on the palate, with a sappy charge of black cherry, black raspberry, pomegranate, spice cake flavors framed by silky tannins and a subtle waft of oak. A solid, seamless wine with some finishing length. 90.*

2013 MacPhail Mardikian Estate Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.56, 500 cases, \$85. Released fall 2015. Harvest Brix 24.5°-25.0°. Clones are 2A, 114, 667, 777, Martini and Pommard. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, native and cultured fermentations, native malolactic fermentation in barrel, barronage weekly for 3 months, aged 16 months on lees in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new, bottled unfiltered and lightly filtered on August 19, 2014. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Lovely aromas of cherry pie glaze, Asian 5-spice and a compliment of oak. Flavorful on the attack and soft and smooth on the mid palate, with a juicy core of cherry fruit. More polished and elegant in the vintage, with less color and fruit intensity, finishing with polish. A velvet hammer of flavor. 92.*

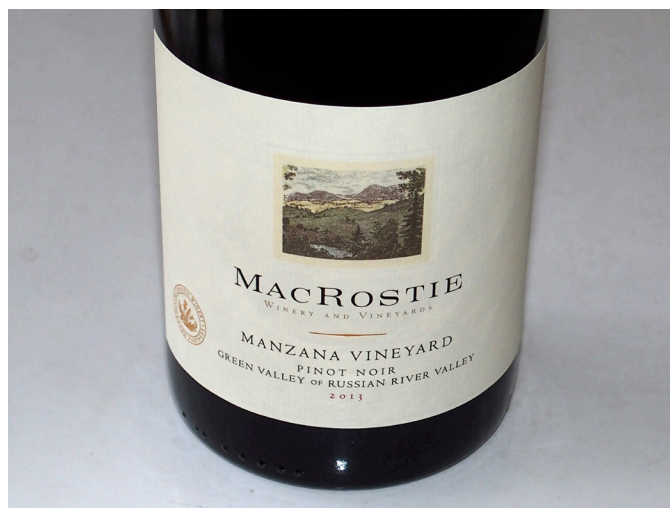
MacRostie, Russian River Valley

Several years ago, veteran winemaker Steve MacRostie took a step back from the business side of running his namesake winery to guide the winery's vineyard program and work alongside winemaker Heidi Bridenhagen to make MacRostie wines. The vineyard program now includes a new estate vineyard in the Russian River Valley. As the vineyard program has expanded, so has the number of vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs, two of which are featured here. The new MacRostie Estate House is located at 4605 Westside Road in Healdsburg and offers an array of intimate seated venues for experiencing three tasting flight options. Visit the website at www.macrostiewinery.com.



2013 MacRostie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 4,661 cases, \$34. Sourced from vineyards in the Sonoma Coast AVA, including Champlin Creek and Wildcat Mountain in Petaluma Gap, Hellenthal in Fort Ross-Seaview, and Dutton-Winkler Ranch in the Russian River Valley. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak, inoculated yeast, punchdowns and pumpovers, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is both fruity and savory with scents of cherry, strawberry, spice, dried herbs and turned earth. The flavors echo the aromas with some added raspberry notes. Light to mid weight in style and very pleasant, with good vibrancy and silky tannins, finishing modestly with red cherry goodness. 89.*

2013 MacRostie Manzana Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 95 cases, \$56. This vineyard is farmed by the Dutton family. Only 4 best barrels were chosen from this vineyard for this wine. 100% de-stemmed, pumpovers and punchdowns, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Orchard cherry aromas are accented with savory dried herb scents. Richly appointed and intensely fruity, with flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate that saturate the palate. Despite its hefty sap and defined tannins, the wine retains a silky texture and elegance, making for easy drinking now. A charismatic wine with both power and gentility. 93.*



2013 MacRostie Cummings Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 184 cases, \$56. This vineyard is owned by Bruce Cummings and is located in the Santa Rosa Plains neighborhood of the Russian River Valley. Charlie Chenoweth manages the vineyard. Clones 667, 777 and 115. 100% de-stemmed, inoculated yeast, combination of pumpovers and punchdowns, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Vivid Bing cherry aromas leads to a light to mid weight styled wine fueled by black cherry, black raspberry, boysenberry and color flavors. Quite elegant, flawless integration of silky tannins and acidity, and noticeable length on the sumptuous finish.* **92.**

Patz & Hall, Sonoma

Patz & Hall's founders have discovered numerous vineyards that have become famous among Chardonnay and Pinot Noir enthusiasts. They have also helped to further elevate the perception of already highly regarded sites. Hyde Vineyard is a good example. Hyde Vineyard was just nine years old when Patz & Hall started working with it in 1990, but there was already a sense that Larry Hyde had established a remarkable vineyard. Patz & Hall is one of the first wineries to make vineyard-designate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Hyde. The acclaimed Chenoweth Ranch was planted specifically for Patz & Hall by vineyard manager Charlie Chenoweth. The Patz & Hall founders developed a working relationship with the Martinelli family over the years, and now access Chardonnay from Martinelli's Zio Tony Ranch and Pinot Noir from their Burnside Vineyard. For more information, visit the website at www.patzhall.com.

2013 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard Carneros Napa Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,079 cases, \$70. Released October 2015. Sourced from a block that contains new and older plantings of the Hyde-Calera selection, and includes grapes from the "old field." Wild and cultured yeast fermentations, 15% whole cluster, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel, aged in 60% new French oak barrels, bottled without fining or filtration. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Purple and black fruits are featured in this wine which combines savory notes of mushroom and soy sauce with the mid weight fruit flavors. The mouthfeel is silky and the character is refined, although there is a noticeable tug of oak. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, with wine's seamless and smooth texture was striking, and the oak overlay reduced. This wine will benefit from further cellaring.* **91.**

2013 Patz & Hall Burnside Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 269 cases, \$75. This vineyard is located just west of Sebastopol and farmed by the Martinelli family. Primarily Dijon clone 115 with a small amount of 777. Wild and cultured yeast fermentations, 15% whole cluster, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel, aged in 60% new French oak barrels, bottled without fining or filtration. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, raspberry and good barnyard lead off. Somewhat luscious black cherry and boysenberry fruits are well balanced by polished tannins and energetic acidity. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was more enjoyable in all respects with plenty of spicy sweet fruit emerging.* **90.**

2013 Patz & Hall Chenoweth Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,347 cases, \$60. Released October 2015. This 7-acre vineyard is planted in Goldridge soils on the far western edge of the Russian River Valley in the Green Valley AVA. Dijon clones. Wild and cultured yeast fermentations, 15% whole cluster, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel, aged in 70% new French oak barrels, bottled without fining or filtration. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of black cherry and dark berries with a hint of forest floor and oak. Plenty to like in this beautifully composed wine, awash in tasty blackberry and pomegranate goodness framed by balanced fruit tannins. Deft integration of oak, and a joyous finish filled with succulent fruit. Everything is in place to age beautifully. The best wine I have tasted from this vineyard.* **93.**

Presqu'ile Winery, Santa Maria Valley

Presqu'ile (pronounced press-KEEL) is run by two generations of the Murphy family, specializing in Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. The focus of its winegrowing program is the 73-acre Presqu'ile Vineyard, although additional grapes are sourced from local acclaimed vineyards including Bien Nacido Vineyard. Winemaker Dieter Cronje is crafting exciting wines here. Vinification includes native yeast fermentations, judicious use of whole clusters, appropriate new oak and extended aging in barrel.

A modern gravity-flow winery has been built on the estate property designed to Matt Murphy's and Dieter Cronje's specifications. The structure is an impressive hospitality destination. Situated on top of a hill, with ocean and vineyard views, the winery is beautifully designed and offers one of the most memorable wine tasting experiences in California's Central Coast. For details, visit www.presquilewinery.com.

2013 Presqu'ile Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.51, \$42. Clones 115, 777 and 667. 47% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 55% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of whole cluster spice, black cherry and smoke. A wine with character featuring mid weight flavors of black raspberry, boysenberry, spice and a thread of oak. Welcome harmony, with mild tannins and some finishing power.* **89.**

2013 Presqu'ile Presqu'ile Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.08% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.52, \$60. A barrel selection reflecting the essence of the vineyard. Pommard, Mt. Eden, 115, 667, and 777 clones. 65% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of black stone and berry fruits with added scents of exotic spice, pine sap and subtle stem. An abundance of boysenberry fruit is complimented by notes of spice and floral intricacy. Luscious but light on its feet, with admirable balance and a berry-fueled finish of note.* **92.**

2013 Presqu'ile Steiner Creek Vineyard San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.522, 612 cases, \$48. Third release from this vineyard that is located on the Phelan Ranch, three miles north of Cambria. The vineyard was planted in 2007 to 13.25 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The sandy, cobbled soils are unique for the Santa Maria Valley and yield very small quantities of grapes. Clones 667, 777, 115 and Pommard. 50% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 55% new. Unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The engaging nose becomes more likable over time in the glass, exuding aromas of dark fruits, spice, fennel and red clay pottery. The boisterous flavors of purple and black fruits saturate the mid palate, picking up accents of charcoal, oak, earth and spice as the finish evolves. The substantial but not intrusive tannic backbone guarantees age ability.* **92.**

Sant Wines

Debbie and Greg Hammill released their inaugural Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noirs with the 2013 vintage in April 2015. Sant is a root word used in many languages, meaning good and truth. The website is www.santwines.com.

2013 Sant Wines Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.69, \$47. Sourced from La Encantada and Rita's Crown vineyards. Clones 115, 667 and 777. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Difficult to coax much from the nose other than woodland scents. Mid weight cherry, red grape and earthy flora flavors backed by soft tannins and bright acidity. Pleasant, with delicate, aromatic cherry on the demure finish.* **88.**

2013 Sant Wines "Buena Aventura" Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.72, \$50. Sourced from La Encantada and Rita's Crown vineyards. 115 and Pommard clones. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The black cherry fruit on the nose seems ripe, even stewed, along with an aroma of brown apple and dried herbs. Flavors of purple berries, grape and cherry with a note of nutty oak in a ripely flavored, modestly concentrated style with zippy acidity.* **88.**

Sante Arcangeli Family Wines, Santa Cruz Mountains

Owner and winemaker John Benedetti's great grandfather was named Sante Arcangeli (SAHNtay AreCANJuh Lee). He built a business in the small farming town of Pescadero on California's north coast that became known as Arcangeli Grocery Company, a world famous bakery and gourmet market under the direction of Sante's grandson, Norm Benedetti and his spouse Shirley. It is now owned by Sante's great grandchildren, John's brothers Mike and Don. There was a wine cellar under the store and Sante laid down many sought-after French and California wines in the 1970s. These wines turned John onto wine early in life.

John taught himself to brew beer by his late teens and early 20s, he moved onto wine by his mid-20s. Ryan Beauregard, the Brassfield family and James MacPhail all acted as mentors and teachers. It started as a

hobby and soon became a hobby gone haywire. Now he produces wonderful Pinot Noir and Chardonnay primarily from vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

A tasting room is located in historic Pescadero, CA, adjacent Duarte's Tavern. Check website for days and hours. The wines are also sold on the winery's website. Visit www.santewinery.com.

2014 Sante Arcangeli Corralitos Cuvée Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.61, 425 cases, \$39. Sourced from three Corralitos vineyards. Harvest Brix 23.0°-24.1°. 95% de-stemmed, 5% saignée, native and cultured yeast fermentations, aged on the lees in 45% new French oak barrels with weekly battonage for 3 months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose reminds of Beaujolais, with aromas of red cherry and raspberry, spice, floral bouquet and cedary oak. Light weight flavors of cherry, raspberry, spice and oak backed by juicy acidity. Velvety in the mouth with soft tannins, and a tart cherry-infused finish. The wine's best quality is its energy and juiciness.* **89.**

2014 Sante Arcangeli Split Rail Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.62, 175 cases, \$45. This vineyard is located at 1,700 feet elevation on a Corralitos mountaintop. David Bruce selection, clone 32, Pommard, Swan, Martini, and Wädenswil. Harvest Brix 23.0°-23.8°. 90% de-stemmed, native and cultured yeast fermentations, aged on the lees in 30% new French oak barrels with weekly battonage for 3 months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Ebullient aromas of cherry, raspberry, spice, rose petal and toasty oak. The light to mid weight cherry and raspberry flavors are enhanced with a waft of oak. The wine has good energy, integrated ripe tannins, a silky mouthfeel and a lip-smacking finish.* **90.**

2014 Sante Arcangeli Lester Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.58, 125 cases, \$45. Harvest Brix 24.1°. This vineyard is located at 450 feet elevation in the Pleasant Valley area of Corralitos. Clone 2A, Dijon 115 and a tiny amount of 23. 100% de-stemmed. 2.5% saignée. Native and cultured yeast fermentation, aged 10 months on the lees in 40% new French oak barrels with weekly battonage for 3 months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Love the nose on this wine which displays hi-tone aromas of cherry, spice and redwood. The mid weight, chewy cherry core is well balanced by ripe tannins. A nutty oak and conifer note are complimentary. The tannins are evident but submerged, and the finish has pleasing pizzazz.* **91.**

2014 Sante Arcangeli Family Reserve "Selezione Susie" Mardikian Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.62, 100 cases, \$75. This vineyard is the estate vineyard of MacPhail Family Wines and is a close collaboration between winemaker James MacPhail and grower Jim Pratt. The vineyard was planted in 2009, with the first harvest in 2013. A unique feature of the vineyard is that it overlaps 3 AVAs: Sonoma Coast, Russian River Valley and Green Valley of Russian River Valley. It is located only 4 miles from the Pacific Coast resulting in a strong maritime influence. Martini and 777 clones. Harvest Brix 25.5°. 100% de-stemmed. Native and cultured fermentations, aged on the lees in 30% new French oak barrels with weekly lees stirring for 3 months. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of black cherry coulis and vanilla pod. A showy wine, with pleasing flavors of dark cherries and purple berries accented with just the right note of oak and framed by soft, nearly invisible fine tannins. Powerfully flavored, yet elegant, with plush presence on the palate, and a generosity that persists through the attack and finish. A score magnet!* **93.**

Three Sticks, Sonoma

Former Williams Selyem winemaker, Bob Cabral, is now the Director of Winemaking for Three Sticks. The 2013 wines were crafted by winemaker Don Van Staaveren who joined Three Sticks in 2004. In January of 2015, Don transitioned to an emeritus winemaker at Three Sticks. The winery's restoration of the historic Vallejo-Casteñada Adobe in downtown Sonoma has been completed and is open by appointment only. Visit www.threestickswines.com.

2013 Three Sticks Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.67, 585 cases, \$65. Three blocks at Durell Vineyard provide the grapes for this estate wine: The Extension (777), The Terraces (115), and Block R (667). 15% whole cluster, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. Winemaker is Don Van Staaveren. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of black cherry, ollaliberry, and herbal tea. Both fruity and savory on the palate, with a charge of succulent cherry and raspberry*

fruit flavors accented with a thread of savory dried herbs and mushroom notes. Rather earthy and individualistic, with deft integration of oak, and a savory finish. A terroir driven wine of great interest. 92.

2013 Three Sticks Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.67, 329 cases, \$65. This vineyard is located on the western slope of Sonoma Mountain at an elevation of 300' to 800'. 15% whole cluster, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly over time, offering aromas of black cherry and cranberry relish. Noticeably bright fruit freshness, with flavors of black cherry, cranberry and black raspberry. A subtle note of oak adds support and interest, the tannins are quite modest, and the finish has admirable length. 90.*

Westwood Wine Co., Sonoma

Winemaker Ben Cain joined Westwood Estate Winery in Sonoma Valley in 2014 after leaving Twomey (and a short stop at Hirsch) at the urging of David Ramey, who has been asked to bring this unique estate back to prominence. All wines are sourced from Annadel Gap Estate Vineyard, located in the northern reaches of the Sonoma Valley, in a tight passage between Hood Mountain and nearby Sonoma Mountain. The wines are just beginning to be released.

The upper portion of the Sonoma Valley is actually cooler than much of the Russian River Valley region and is more akin to the Petaluma Gap. The soils in the vineyard are varied, with fractured shale and sandstone interspersed with river gravels, clay and sand. Vine plantings began in 2001 and there are nine Pinot Noir clones including Calera, 777, 115, 943, Mt. Eden, Pommard and Chambertin. In all, there are 15.62 acres planted to Pinot Noir in ten distinct blocks, alongside a variety of Rhone varieties, for a total of 22.46 planted acres. Significant investments have been made in the vineyard with Biodynamic™ consultant Philippe Coderey helping to refine the approach to farming Annadel Gap Vineyard.

Plans are afoot for Pinot Noir from other appellations including a 2015 release from the Wendling Vineyard in Anderson Valley. A tasting room is located on the Square in Sonoma. Visit www.westwoodwine.com.

2014 Westwood Annadel Gap Vineyard Estate Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.56, RS 0.1g/L, 780 cases, \$44. Released June 2015. 115, 777, 943 and Calera clones. Native fermentation, 20% whole clusters, 5 to 6-day cold soak, berries kept whole with each clone separated, native yeast fermentation, aged on lees in French oak barrels, 30% new, for 6 months. Gentle fining with no filtration. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting aromas of black cherry, earthy flora and barrel. The mid weight black raspberry and blackberry flavors are complimented by a waft of oak. Seductively suave in texture with silky tannins. Noticeable harmony and forward drink ability. 89.*

2014 Westwood Annadel Gap Vineyard Estate Heritage Clones Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.57, RS 0.8g/L, 98 cases, \$54. Released December 2015. Pommard and Mt. Eden clones. Berries kept whole with 20% whole clusters, 5 to 6-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, basked pressed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. Gentle fining and filtration. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose reluctantly offers scents of dark fruits and a hint of vanilla. Robust and structured, showing delicious flavors of black raspberry, boysenberry and plum with a compliment of oak, finishing modestly with a wave of non astringent tannins. Great potential here, but needs more time in bottle. 90.*

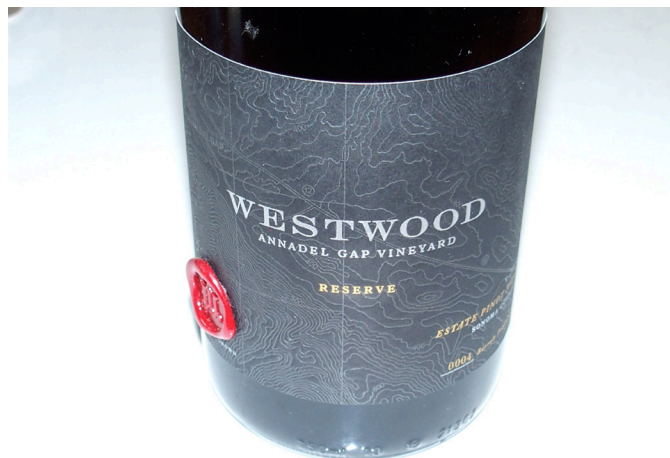
2014 Westwood Annadel Gap Vineyard Estate Pommard Clone Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.66, RS 0.6g/L, 98 cases, \$54. Released December 2015. Berries kept whole and included 20% whole clusters, 5 to 6-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, basked pressed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. Gentle fining and filtration. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of dark cherry, forest floor and shaved oak lead to middleweight flavors of oak-kissed black cherry and blackberry fruits. The tannins are generous and mildly astringent on the sweet black cherry finish. There is a good acid underbelly. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the astringent tannins still stood out. 88.*

2014 Westwood Annadel Gap Vineyard Estate Clone 37 Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.79, RS 0.8g/L, 98 cases, \$54. Released December 2015. Mt. Eden clone. 5 to 6-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, basket pressed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. Gentle fining and filtration. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting aromas of dark berry preserves and*

underbrush lead to a mid weight plus core of tasty black cherry and black raspberry fruits. This is a seamless wine that finds balance between fruit, tannin, acid and oak. Enjoyable now, with a lingering sweet berry finish that leaves behind a memorable impression. 92.

2014 Westwood Annadel Gap Vineyard Estate Clone 90 Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.57, RS 0.6g/L, 98 cases, \$54. Released December 2015. Chambertain selection (90). Berries kept whole, 5 to 6-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, basket pressed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Gentle fining and filtration. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The cherry and raspberry fruit flavors of this wine are seasoned with savory notes of sous-bois and damp pine needles. The wine is still a bit tight, with the redder-toned fruit searching for expression. Nicely composed, with a light imprint of oak, integrated tannins, and a refreshing finish. 91.*

2014 Westwood Annadel Gap Vineyard Estate Reserve Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.56, RS 0.8g/L, 220 cases, \$64. Release March 2016. Pommard and 667 clones. 20% whole clusters, 5 to 6-day cold soak, native yeast fermentations, basket pressed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Gentle fining and filtration. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of cherry pie and baking spices lead to a luscious and structured array of black cherry, raspberry and black tea flavors augmented with a deft touch of oak spice. The wine's most remarkable feature is the finish, which is filled with aromatic cherry energy and lasts for what seems like a minute. Clearly, an exceptional but young wine that will continue to improve in the cellar. 93.*



Williams Selyem, Russian River Valley

Winemaker Bob Cabral has now departed and Jeff Mangahas is now in charge of winemaking. Although the 2013 vintage in the Russian River Valley was reported as delivering bountiful yields with grapes achieving full maturity despite the threat of inclement weather late in the season, this small sampling of Williams Selyem Pinot Noirs seemed to fall short in quality compared to the previous 2012 vintage, at least now. The ideal drinking window is said to be about 2017-2027 for these wines and my scores may prove low over time. Williams Selyem wines are allocated through a mailing list at www.williamsselyem.com.

2013 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.64, \$82. Released fall 2015. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 64% new and 36% 1-year-old. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. An array of inviting aromas include strawberry, cherry, raspberry, cardamom spice, and sweet smoke. On the palate, oak plays too great a role currently for me to thoroughly enjoy the wine. Mid weight fruit flavors of black cherry, spice and earthiness are dominated by oak-driven notes of toast and smoke. The wine finishes with a slightly tart (? acid addition), cherry-driven note. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle the luscious fruit was more expressive and the oak overlay had lessened a bit. Best to cellar this wine for another year or two. 90.*

2013 Williams Selyem Rochioli-Riverblock Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.60, \$79. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 62% new and 38% 1-year-old. Released fall 2015. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a paucity of fruit with overbearing oak and*

vegetal notes. Somewhat flat on the palate, with middleweight flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with matched tannins. Barrel work is a bit overbearing with the oak surfacing on the slightly tart finish. Unchanged when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. **89.**

2013 Williams Selyem Burt Williams' Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.63, \$78. Released fall 2015. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 60% new and 40% 1-year-old. Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Moody, but pleasant, aromas of well-ripened black cherry, pomegranate and black raspberry. Superb intensity and length, featuring unctuous flavors of dark stone fruits and berries. Deft oak integration and modest tannins, finishing with a rush of dark berry goodness. This wine finds balance between fruit, tannins and acidity. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. **92.**

Windy Oaks Estate Vineyards & Winery, Santa Cruz Mountains

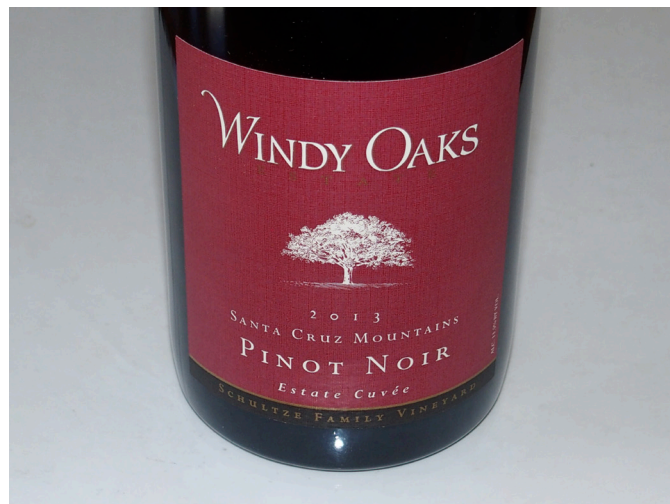
Winemaker Jim Schultze along with spouse Judy and son Spencer, continue to craft remarkable Pinot Noir wines from his estate Schultze Family Vineyard and nearby estate Charmant Mountain Vineyard in his small, modern winery in Corralitos. His wines have appearing on my All-American lists multiple times and have maintained an impressive badge of consistency since the first vintage in 1999. Visit the tasting room at the winery or the new tasting room in Carmel-by-the-Sea and you will quickly see why I have been a fan for many years. The winery's mailing list is one of the few that I continue to participate in. The website is at www.windyoaksestate.com.



2013 Windy Oaks Estate Terra Narro Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$29. Unfined and unfiltered. This wine serves as an introduction to the Windy Oaks style as an everyday drinking wine. Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of cherry, baking spices and red rose petal. Light to mid weight crisp and bright flavors of red cherry with a hint of red licorice and cola. A solid forward drinking wine with supple tannins and welcome acidity. **89.**



2013 Windy Oaks Estate Estate Cuvée Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$39. 100% estate fruit from the 15-acre Schultze Family Vineyard at the southern end of the Santa Cruz Mountains AVA in Corralitos. Five clones. Unfined and unfiltered. Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. The nose personifies what I love about the Pinot nose: aromas of cherry, spice, rose petal and sandalwood. Delicious core of well ripened black cherry fruit, accented with a hint of white pepper and other spices and root beer. Very sleek and silky, with suede tannins and an elegant, charming presence. The preverbal iron fist in a velvet glove. **94.**



2013 Windy Oaks Charmant Mountain Vineyard Diane's Block Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$45. A 5-acre, former apple orchard, 600 feet above Monterey Bay, slight warmer than the Schultze Family Vineyard. Unfined and unfiltered. Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Deep cherry aromas with a hint of rose petal. Forward drinking, mid weight plus flavors of black cherry framed by balanced dry tannins and a

touch of oak. Seductive and silky in the mouth, with a broad-shouldered display of fruit on the finish. The beauty of this wine lies in the silky texture. 93.

2013 Windy Oaks Estate Limited Release Wild Yeast Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$55. A limited release wine that features the unique aromas of wild yeast fermentation. Available to wine group members and visitors to tasting room. Unfined and unfiltered. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Interesting aromas of lees, black cherry, spice cake, mushroom and a touch of oak. Light to mid weight flavors of red cherry and blueberry in a vibrant style with lifted acidity, balanced tannins, and a modest finish. 90.*

More

2013 Anaba Chenoweth Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.54, TA 0.62, 304 cases, \$48. Sourced from Bootlegger's Hill Vineyard planted and farmed by Charlie Chenoweth. It is situated close to the coast at 700 feet elevation and contains Goldridge soils. Harvest Brix 24.3°. Clones 115, Calera and Elite. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, basket pressed to barrel, aged 11 months on lees in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of very ripe berries, iron and vanilla lead to a full-bodied mix of blackberry, black currant and boysenberry fruit flavors with supportive oak. Succulent and deeply flavored, with fruit veering to the riper side, yet very charming with good harmony. 89.*



2013 Carmel Road Drew's Blend Monterey Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., TA 0.58, 5,095 cases, \$28. Winemaking partner of Kris Kato is Drew Barrymore. Sourced primarily from the Carmel Road Estate Panorama Vineyard in the foothills of the Arroyo Seco AVA. Clones 23, 115, 667 and 777. Aged 8 months in 95% French oak barrels (17% new). *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Interesting aromatic complex featuring black cherry, blackberry, peppercorn and toast. A forward drinking wine offering flavors of black cherry, blueberry, black tea and spice with haunting oak in the background. A friendly wine with balanced tannins and a heady finish. 89.*

2014 Dutton-Goldfield Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.55, \$44. A blend of seven Dutton Ranch farmed vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, 14-20 days on skins, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A good amount of oak shows up in this wine that offers aromas of Bing cherry, strawberry, mulch and sandalwood, and light to mid weight flavors of cherry, strawberry and toast. An easy drinking, straightforward style with silky tannins and a dry finish. Needs more time to shed some of the oak overlay. 88-89.*

Sips of Recently Tasted Oregon Pinot Noir

Airlie Winery, Willamette Valley

One of Oregon's lesser known growers and producers of wine since 1986 that I believe is making, along with Evesham Wood, the best reasonably priced Pinot Noirs in the Willamette Valley. The winery is located in Monmouth, Oregon, just south of Dallas, and operates a tasting room that is open Thursday-Monday from March until November (December through February by appointment). The wines are also sold online through the winery's website at www.airliewinery.com.

Winemaker Elizabeth Clark ended up in Oregon purely through chance when she hitched a ride to visit a cousin living in Portland. She quickly fell in love with Oregon and the winemaking community and never left. She spent five years in training at one of the pioneering wineries in the Willamette Valley before being hired as winemaker at Airlie Winery in 2005.

Grapes are sourced from the 32-acre Estate Dunn Forest Vineyard planted in 1983 and 1991 to Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Marchal Foch, Gewürztraminer, Riesling and Müller Thurgau, and BeckenRidge Vineyard planted in 1978. Vineyards are Certified Sustainable by L.I.V.E and Salmon Safe.



2012 Arie Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.71, 663 cases, \$25. Dunn Forest (58%) and BeckenRidge (42%) vineyards. Harvest Brix 22.1°. Pommard, 115, 667 and 777 clones. 100% dep--stemmed, 4-day cold soak, inoculated yeast fermentation, inoculated for malolactic fermentation and aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 5% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Gold at the Oregon Wine Awards in 2015. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very savory nose featuring aromas of forest floor, pine needle, and spice with a hint of dark fruits. A fruit grenade with copious layers of purple and black fruits with an underpinning of pine sap and spice. The firm tannins are well matched to the prodigious fruit sap. A lot going on in this wine, but it is the savory vibe I like most.* **92.**



2012 Airlie Vintner's Blend Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., pH 3.31, TA 0.75, 150 cases, \$35. Dunn Forest (50%) and BeckenRidge (50%) vineyards. Harvest Brix 22.0°. Pommard clone. 100% de-stemmed, high percentage of whole berry fermentation. 4-day cold soak, cultured yeast fermentations, inoculated for malolactic fermentation and aged 22 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. Six selected reserve barrels were racked to neutral barrels for an additional year of aging. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Only produced when vintages warrant. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing aromas of dark berries, black cherry milkshake and forest floor. Gorgeous array of dark red and black stone and berry fruits. Amazing depth of fruit but with well-matched tannins and a satisfying thread of acidity in the background. A huge wine by Oregon standards, yet crafted in harmony, finishing with a lip smacking, fruit jubilee. A bodacious wine built for the long haul, yet thoroughly enjoyable now.* **95.**



Evesham Wood Vineyards & Winery, Eola-Amity Hills

Owner and winemaker Erin Nuccio continues to craft some of Oregon's most treasured connoisseur's wines that still remain modestly priced. **The Pinot Noir wines offer the most bang for the buck of most any other Oregon winery.** The 13-acre estate vineyard, Le Puits Sec ("The Dry Well") is dry farmed and certified organic is the focus of the winery, with some grapes sourced from like-minded growers. The wines feature fermentations a house starter induced fermentation, aging in primarily used French oak barrels, racking by hand, and no filtration. Delicacy and finesse are the hallmarks of the wines offered here. The iconic winery is open for tours and tastings by appointment. The new tasting room is open beginning January 22, 2016, from Friday through Sunday. Join the mailing list to hear about new releases, wine dinners and other events. I buy these wines every year. Visit the newly update website at www.eveshamwood.com. A Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$21), Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir (\$26), Ilahe Vineyard Pinot Noir (\$30), and Mahonia Vineyard Pinot Noir (\$36) are also offered in the 2013 vintage. Erin also crafts the Haden Fig wines which are quite good and sold on the website.

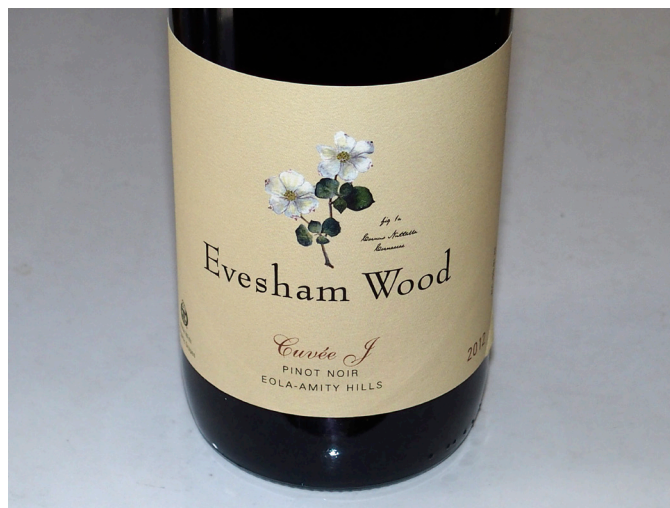


2013 Evesham Wood La Grive Bleue Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 150 cases, \$28. This wine pays homage to the Western Bluebird, the preservation of whose habitat was a prime motivation to farm the vineyard organically. Sourced from a 2-acre block on the estate vineyard. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of cherry, blueberry, woodfern and Asian 5 spice. Light to mid weight attack of vivacious cherry fruit, persisting through an intense maraschino cherry fueled and slightly tart finish of good length. Bright and juicy, with supple tannins and the faintest oak in the background. 90.*

2013 Evesham Wood Le Puits Sec Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 525 cases, \$40. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose offers an appealing mix of red berry fruits and woody flora notes. A little more concentration and intensity on the intact than the La Grive Blanc, with an eloquent display of red raspberry and red cherry fruits. The balance is spot on, and the juicy cut of acidity lifts the fruit to enjoyable heights. The amazing finish lasts at least 30 seconds. 92.*



2013 Evesham Wood Cuvée J Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 149 cases, \$50. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of black cherry, exotic spices, earthy flora and rose petal. The wine fills the mouth with pleasure, offering generous layers of black cherry fruit enhanced with notes of cardamom, thyme, vanilla and oak. Somewhat firm, but balanced tannins add needed structure for the sappy fruit. The finish has memorable length and generosity. A very age worthy wine of uncommon excellence. 94.*



2013 Evesham Wood Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 145 cases, \$36. Made from organic grapes grown on non-irrigated vines. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Complex nose leading off with both savory and fruity aromas of cherry, rose petal, underbrush, tobacco and dry grass. Earthy red cherry and berry fruits form the backbone of this middleweight wine that adds peppery spice to the mix. Nicely balanced tannins add needed structure to the ebullient fruit which shows up on the lingering finish. 92.*

Keeler Estate, Tualatin, Oregon

Keeler Estate Vineyard is located in the Eola-Amity Hills AVA in the Willamette Valley. Craig and Gabriele Keeler found an abandoned property in Amity, Oregon, in 1989 and the following year they moved to their 200-acre property. Today, the estate has a thriving biodynamic vineyard planted to Pinot Noir (667, 777, 115, 943, Pommard 4 and 5, and Wädenswil), Chardonnay (55, 75, 76 and 95), Pinot Gris (04 and 52) and Riesling (49). The winemaker is Darcy Pendergrass, formerly of Amity Winery. A tasting room is located at 5100 SE Rice Lane in Amity (open Thursday-Sunday, but check for winter hours). Visit www.keelerestatevineyard.com.



2013 Keeler Estate Vineyard Reserve Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.54, 55 cases, \$48. Released June 2015. Made from organically grown grapes. 60% Pommard, 40% 115. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of cherry, strawberry, spice, rose petal and smoke. Light to mid weight core of juicy strawberry and cherry fruits with a dusting of oak. Silky on the palate, with fine grain tannins, and noteworthy length on the finish. 90.*

2014 Keeler Estate Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.64, 143 cases, \$38. Not yet released. Made from Keeler Estate Vineyard organically grown grapes. 45.25% Wädenswil, 36.5% Pommard, 18.25% 115. 100% de-stemmed, aged 9 months in French oak barrels, 73% neutral and 27% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of wild berries, mulch, earth and a hint of pungent volatile acidity. Ripely fruited, with flavors of black grape, boysenberry and dark chocolate. Well proportioned tannins and a modestly intense, sweet berry finish. 87.*

2014 Keeler Estate Vineyard Reserve Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.74, TA 0.59, 196 cases, \$48. Released to wine club members, not released to public yet. Made from organically grown grapes. 67.75% Pommard, 35.75% 115, 2.5% Wädenswil. 100% de-stemmed, aged 9 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The fruit pushes the ripeness envelope, but never finds over ripeness. Aromas of dark berry preserves lead to a rich and luscious assortment of purple and black fruits that saturate the palate in waves. The wine becomes more expressive over time in the glass, offering a sterling balance between fruit fatness and structured tannins, finishing with an explosion of sweet boysenberry goodness. Enjoyable now, but this wine will benefit from another few years in the cellar. 91.*

More

2013 Gran Moraine Winery Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.55, 3,700 cases, \$45. The first Gran Moraine vintage that winemaker Eugenia Keegan has produced vine-to-bottle. She has experience working with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the Russian River Valley, Napa-Carneros, Burgundy and now Oregon's Willamette Valley. This 198-acre vineyard was planted in 2005 to several Dijon clones and consists of over 80 blocks. Aged 10 months in 41% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Robust aromas of black cherry, cardamom spice and sweet oak. Lovely core of black cherry and black raspberry fruits overlain with oak-driven accents of black tea, char and tobacco, and framed by gently firm tannins. The finish is attenuated. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, drying oak still dominated the aromas and flavors. Time will integrate some of the oak overlay but this will always be a well-oaked wine.* **88.**

2014 Privé Vineyard Joie de Vivre Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 132 bottles, \$90 (available only on futures to mailing list). The first few gallons of press load from le nord and le sud are gathered to be blended and aged in 50% new French oak barrels for 12 months. Lovingly offered in an etched, hand painted, numbered and signed bottle. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Soaring aromas of cherry, resin, spice and nutty oak lead to an elegantly styled wine that is both demure but powerfully flavored. Cherry and red berry fruits are featured with a savory oak note in the background. Both cherry fruit and savory nuances mingle on the memorable finish. This wine should reward further cellaring, but hard to keep your hands off it now.* **92.**

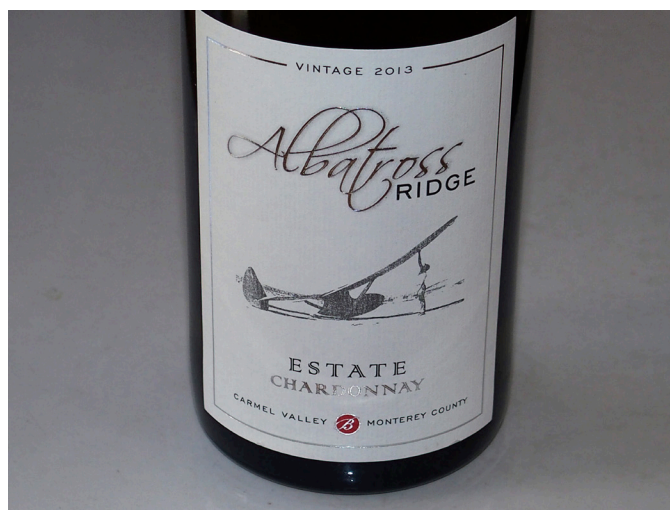



Sips of Recently Tasted Chardonnay




2012 Airlie Willamette Valley Estate Bottled Oregon Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.55, 308 cases, \$18. Dunn Forest Vineyard. Harvest Brix 22.2°. Dijon clones. Whole cluster pressed, inoculated with thirteen yeasts, one per barrel, and barrel fermented in mostly neutral oak (7% new American oak), 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 10 months on the lees in barrel. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Very appealing perfume of lemon oil, mango and yellow apple sauce. An impeccably balanced wine with good richness of yellow citrus, lemongrass, honey, apple butter and caramel flavors. Very charming and easy to like, with welcome tension on the finish.* **92.**

2013 Albatross Ridge Estate Carmel Valley Chardonnay 12.5% alc., pH 3.24, 410 cases, \$55. Sourced from four distinct blocks on the estate vineyard. Cones 96 and 15. Harvest Brix 20.5°-21.5°. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented with native yeasts on the lees with no stirring or racking, 100% native malolactic fermentation, aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Welcoming aromas of canned peach, lemon zest, vanilla creme and subtle toast. A discretely concentrated offering featuring bright flavors of lemon, pineapple and peach with complimentary nutty oak and a subtle salinity. Engaging acidity provides vivaciousness.* **91.**



 **2013 Anaba Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.0% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.62, 206 cases, \$36. Sourced from Mills Station Vineyard and Shop block, both Dutton Ranch properties in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Harvest Brix 23.6°. Wente clone. Whole cluster pressed, 100% barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 9 months on lees in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Pleasant aromas of lemon oil, lemongrass, pineapple and caramel lead to a bright and crisp style of citrus driven wine that is almost crunchy. A hint of banana and brioche is a donation from oak. Fruit and acidity work in harmony in this enjoyable offering. Dutton Ranch fruit always delivers the goods.* **90.**

 **2013 Anaba J McK Estate Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.60, 213 cases, \$34. An estate vineyard that is sustainably farmed. The vineyard name is derived from proprietor John Sweazey's children, John and McKenna. Harvest Brix 23.8°. Wente clone. Whole cluster pressed, 100% barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 9 months on lees in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A little more fruit and oak mix than the Dutton Ranch wine that is easy to like. Aromas of lemon curd, pear and toasty brioche lead to a richly flavored core of poached pear, peach and burnt caramel flavors. Pleasingly viscous in the mouth, with a soft, satiny finish.* **90.**



2013 Byington Wrights Station Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.54, TA 0.52, \$30. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Aged in 30% new French oak and 70% neutral oak. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon curd, yellow apple, and nutty oak come to the fore over time in the glass. The displays an intricate marriage of fruit and oak, with flavors of lemon and yellow peach combined with blonde caramel and toasty brioche. Beautifully balanced with a dancing cut of acidity fueling the refreshing finish.* **90.**



2013 Eric Kent Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.36, TA 0.63, 341 cases, \$42. Released spring 2015. 50% Stiling, 36% Black Emerald, and 14% Roberts Road vineyards. 50% Rued clone, 36% clone 4 and 14% Robert Young clone. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The nose is pleasant but not particularly complex, offering the aroma of cut apple. More interesting on the palate, with flavors of lemon, pomelo and toffee backed by vibrant acidity. Nicely balanced, with modest richness and fullness on the palate.* **89.**

2013 Eric Kent Sangiacomo Green Acres Hill Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.36, TA 0.69, 168 cases, \$46. Released spring 2015. Old Wente clone. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 28% new and 72% neutral. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Scents of lemon and kiwi lead to a noticeable attack of flavorful nectarine, grilled lemon and pomelo fruits. Polished, with complimentary oak highlights, a good cut of underlying acidity, and a lip-smacking finish. A perfect companion for the dining table.* **90.**

2013 Gary Farrell Rochioli-Allen Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.3% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.66, 473 cases, \$55. Released September 2015. Sourced from two adjacent vineyards: Rochioli vineyard and Allen Vineyard planted just to the South, which is farmed by the Rochioli family. Primarily clones 76 and 15 from the Allen Vineyard and clone 5 from the Rochioli River Block Vineyard. Harvest Brix 22.0°-23.0°. Whole cluster pressed, inoculated fermentation with Montrachet yeast, barrel fermented, aged 8 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas and flavors of nectarine, lemon, grilled grapefruit, vanilla and toast combined with a comforting texture make for delightful drinking. A noticeable attack precedes an expanding fullness on the slightly viscous palate, finishing with a burst of acidity. Beautifully composed and seamless.* **92.**

2013 Gary Farrell Skin Fermented Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.0% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.66, 47 cases, \$50 (wine club offering). Released August 2015. Sourced from Cornerstone Vineyard owned by Jim Pratt, an esteemed grower. Clone 4. *Moderately light golden yellow color and cloudy in the glass. A very stylistic and unusual wine that will appeal to those looking for a different angle. Aromas of lemon-lime, sap and willow bark lead to flavors of citrus, peach and stem-like notes. Challenging to describe properly, but suffice it to say that it was more instructive than pleasing for me although it tended to grow on me over time in the glass.* **88.**

Skin Fermented Chardonnay

Most Chardonnays are made by pressing the grapes before fermentation to separate the juice from the skins, seeds and stems. The skin fermented Chardonnay is made like a red wine, fermented with skins and seeds, taking advantage of the aromatics and all these solids have to offer.

The inspiration for this wine came when the winery's winemaker and GM were dining out in Manhattan and were looking for something out of the ordinary to enjoy with dinner. They chose a bottle of skin fermented white wine, commonly known as "orange wine. The wine was intriguing with its extraordinary aromatics and richness. Excited by the wine, the winemaker and GM decided to try their hand at this style of wine with the 2013 vintage.

Grapes for the Gary Farrell Skin Fermented Chardonnay were harvested at 22.5° Brix, de-stemmed, and transferred to four mini, neutral oak fermentation tanks. The grapes sat at room temperature for a few days until native fermentation spontaneously began. The grape skins were then pushed to the top and the cap was punched down three times per day for seven days until fermentation was complete. The wine was left to age in the mini oak but split into two lots: half left for 30 days with the skins and seeds, and the other half for 60 days. The 30-day skin contact wine was floral and aromatically driven, while the 60-day skin contact wine was more structurally driven. The finished wine is a blend of both lots.

2013 Gary Farrell Rochioli-Allen Vineyard Oak Puncheon Fermented Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.76, 103 cases, \$60. Released October 2015. A blend of clone 15 from Allen Vineyard and clone 5 from the Rochioli River Block Vineyard. Harvest Brix 22.0°-23.0°. Whole cluster pressed, inoculated fermentation with Montrachet yeast, aged in 500-liter French oak puncheons and left on the lees. Oak puncheons add subtle structure and aromatics and polish the finished wine without dominating the expression of terroir. Aged 8 months (50% new) and bottled separately from the larger Rochioli-Allen Vineyards Chardonnay because of its unique profile. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Lovely blend of citrus and tropical fruits with oak leads to a delicious charge of citrus and yellow peach flavors with conspicuous, but pleasant, oak influence. Noticeable weight and presence on the palate with a satiny texture and a refreshing cut of acidity on the finish. Very appealing, especially to those who like a bit of appropriate oak overlay in their Chardonnay (I do).* **93.**

2013 Keeler Estate Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Chardonnay 12.8% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.53, 74 cases, \$28. Released December 2015. Made from organically grown grapes. Clones 96, 95, 76 and 44. Whole cluster pressed, aged 10 months on the lees in 62% once-filled French oak barrels and 38% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon-lime, peach skin, Vegemite, sea breeze and floral bouquet lead to a citrus-driven wine with a hint of peach and green herbs. The wine displays nice polish, although the fruit seems under ripe.* **87.**

2014 Kingston Family Vineyards Sabrino Casablanca Valley Chile Chardonnay 13.5% alc., 270 cases, \$26. Released fall 2015. Part of wine is aged in concrete which keeps the wine fresh and smooths out the rough edges, and some is aged in used French oak barrels (just a touch of new oak). *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Inviting aromas of lemon-lime, cut apple, sliced Asian pear and celery stalk. Light and smooth in the mouth, even sheik, with a clean and refreshing core of citrus fruits and just the right touch of vanilla and toast. A very solid, even exceptional, everyday drinker at the right price.* **90.**

2013 MacPhail Vagon Blanc Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.57, RS .18 bms/100ml, 100 cases, \$65. Release fall 2015. Winemaker James MacPhail was setting out to emulate a white Burgundy-like expression of Chardonnay, drawing on his 4 favorite barrels from Pratt and Gap's Crown vineyards. Harvest Brix 23.3°-23.9°. Clones are Mt. Eden, Robert Young, Dijon 76 and 96. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented with a blend of native and cultured yeasts, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel, batonnage once weekly through primary fermentation, aged on lees for 17 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. (3 cigar-shaped Ermitage barrels), and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Complex and engaging nose, offering aromas of cooked pear, butterscotch budino, grilled lemon and salted caramel. Flavorful tastes of lemon, pineapple, pear and yellow peach with balancing toast, finishing with bright, lemon-infused goodness and some uncommon length for a Chardonnay.* **92.**

2013 MacPhail Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.58, RS .13 gms/100ml. Harvest Brix 23.9°. Dijon 76 and 96. Whole cluster pressed to barrel, 100% malolactic fermentation, batonnage once weekly through primary fermentation, aged on lees for 17 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The aromas build over time in the glass, offering notes of apple, lemon, cream soda and cedary oak. A sneaky wine that acquires more flavor over time, leading to bright tastes of citrus, pear, caramel, cream soda and some minerality for sake of a better word. Nicely balanced with integrated acidity and pleasing intensity on the finish.* **92.**



2013 MacRostie Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., 25,000 cases, \$25, screwcap. Sourced from several vineyards in the Sonoma Coast including Sangiacomo, Dutton Ranch, Martinelli family Woolsey Road Vineyard and Goldrock Ridge. Whole cluster pressed, racked into French oak barrels for fermentation, 20% of which were new. 100% malolactic fermentation, aged on the lees for six months with occasional stirring. A few lots were fermented in stainless steel tanks and never went to barrel. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. I was enamored with the nose which kept pumping out aromas of lemon, spiced pear, golden apple and brioche. Easygoing on the palate, soft and smooth, with flavors of lemon, pear and toast embraced by acidity that is not too assertive. An impressive and very affordable appellation offering.* **90.**

2013 MacRostie Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.6% alc., 285 cases, \$46, screwcap. A selection of the twelve best barrels made from this vineyard. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 10 months on lees with occasional stirring in 100% French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A nose with intent, offering scents of lemon oil, white peach, vanilla pod, creme brulee and a fleeting floral note. Beautifully balanced with juicy flavors of lemon-lime and honey augmented with a deft touch of toasty oak. Highly enjoyable, with a pleasing cut of lemon-driven acidity on the uplifting finish.* **91.**

2013 MacRostie Wildcat Mountain Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., 1,075 cases, \$40, screwcap. Grapes come exclusively from this estate vineyard owned by Steve MacRostie and his partners Nancy and Tony Lily. The wines are planted in sparse volcanic soil and are subjected to strong maritime winds and fog. Four blocks, four clones. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 18% new, 18% one-year-old and the rest older, lees stirred several times. The best barrels from each lot were selected for this bottling. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Pleasing aromas of lemon curd, cut yellow apple and nutty oak. Slightly plush in the mouth, with riveting flavors of grilled peach, lemon creme and wood sap. Nicely put together with impeccable harmony and a refreshing charge of lemon goodness on the finish.* **92.**

2014 Patz & Hall Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$40. Released July 2015. This bottling is made from a "who's who" of outstanding winegrowing sites. Recently, Patz & Hall started to use grapes from Gap's Crown Vineyard and Sanchiotti Vineyard Pleasant Hill (planted specifically for Patz & Hall) in this bottling. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast fermentation, aged on the lees with weekly stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel, aged in 35% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Very nicely perfumed with scents of lemon, honey, crème brûlée and brioche holding up over time in the glass. Slightly creamy on the palate and moderately rich in flavor with oak enhanced notes of citrus and peach. Good cut with a slightly tart lemon-driven finish that is a bit cloying.* **89.**

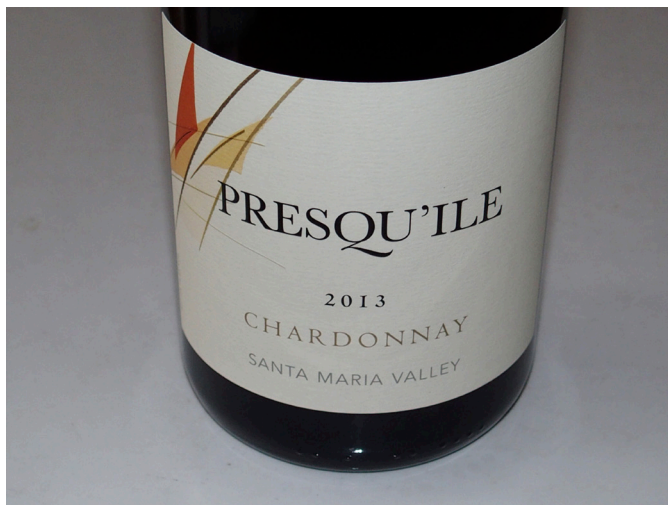
2013 Patz & Hall Zio Tony Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 380 cases, \$65. Released October 2015. This vineyard was planted by the Martinelli family in 1990. It is located in the heart of the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. 100% Dijon clone 76, grown in Goldridge sandy loam soils. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast fermentation, aged on lees with weekly stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel, aged in 50% new French oak barrels, bottled without filtration. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The nose is noticeably steely, with accessory aromas of lemon, green apple and peach syrup. A reserved, but pleasing style, with flavors of lemon curd and pear framed by juicy acidity, a slightly viscous mouthfeel, finishing with a lemon drop lift.* **90.**

2013 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard Carneros Napa Valley Chardonnay 1,161 cases, \$60. Hyde-Wente selection planted on the best soils at Hyde: very low vigor and extremely well-drained sandy, clay loam. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast fermentation, aged on lees with weekly stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrels, aged in 45% new French oak barrels, bottled without filtration. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas and flavors of lemon creme, cut apple and grapefruit in this acid-driven wine*

with obvious class. The right touch of toasty oak is complimentary, and the cleansing finish is uplifting. Not up to the 2012 version, but still exceptional. **92.**



2013 Presqu'ile Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 13.4% alc., pH 3.54, TA 0.58, \$35. Clones 131, 124, 76, 4 and 96. Native yeast fermentation, native malolactic fermentation, aging on lies 12 months in French oak barrels (15% new) and 6 months in stainless steel, with light lees stirring. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Bright aromas of lemon drops, yellow apple, nutty oak and a hint of salinity. A nicely composed, lighter-weight, and pleasing wine with flavors of lemon and honey presented on a slightly viscous platform.* **90.**



2013 Presqu'ile Presqu'ile Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 13.33% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.61, 657 cases, \$45. Clones 4, 95, 124. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 32% new. Unfined and unfiltered. A barrel selection intended to represent the essence of the vineyard. *Moderately light golden color and clear in the glass. The nose leads with scents of lemon, pear skin and seashore. Flavors of citrus and peach are balanced with a steely minerality which I liked. Very enjoyable, with well integrated oak, saliva inducing acidity and some finishing citrus-driven ebullience.* **92.**

2013 Three Sticks Durell Vineyard Sonoma Valley Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.64, 713 cases, \$50. Fruit is sourced from two blocks: Old Wente 1 and Rocky Flat (Dijon 76). 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Many discoverable nuances in this wine that leads with aromas of poached pear, cut apple, kiwi, warm toffee, roasted nuts and buttery brioche. Discreetly rich flavors of lemon curd, yellow peach syrup, caramel apple and honey lead the way. The wine lacks a bit of acidic verve, but otherwise fulfills its mission.* **91.**

And...



2014 Briceland Vineyards Spirit Canyon Vineyard Mendocino County Arneis 13.4% alc., 81 cases, \$18. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Welcoming aromas of lemon, pineapple and apple lead to a tasty melange of apple, pear and citrus fruit flavors complimented by a note of buttery brioche and backed by bright acidity. Easy to like on its own or will match perfectly with seafood.* **90.**

NakedWines.com

Ryan O'Connell, part of an American family winemaking team that lives and makes wine in France, recently brought my attention to NakedWines.com, a customer funded wine business. Customers, so-called "Naked Angels," fund independent winemakers in return for exclusive access to wines at wholesale prices (40%-60% discounts plus free wines included in orders). Naked Angels invest \$40 a month that is used to spend on any of the over 280 offered wines. Every wine has a 100% money back guarantee.

Launched in 2008, NakedWines.com now has over 200,000 Naked Angels investing in their Naked Piggy Bank accounts. Currently, the Naked Angels are a closed group, but one can put their name on a waiting list through the website at www.us.nakedwines.com.

Naked Angels have invested over \$38 million in more than 130 winemakers worldwide. NakedWines.com invests in winemakers, with little investment in sales, marketing and distribution. The company is based in Napa with a winery in Sonoma Valley

For more information, visit The Naked Blog at www.nakedwinesdotcom.wordpress.com.

Ryan sent me the following Pinot Noir wines to sample, some from well-known winemakers. The quality was consistently high with a few exceptional wines. Prices are Angel prices.



2014 D.R.G. River Road Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$18.99. Noted winemaker Daryl Groom has received multiple "Winemaker of the Year" awards, and at one point in his career, made Penfolds' flagship red, Grange Hermitage. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose offers inviting aromas of dark red and black fruits, cedar, spice and mushroom. A luscious, fruity wine, with plenty of black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate fruit flavors complimented by hints of oak, grilled beef and cola. Firmly structured with tannins showing up on the lingering finish.* **90.**



2014 D.R.G. Highmark Ridge Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$18.99. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose blossoms over time in the glass, offering aromas of dark berry jam and spicy oak. Very charming, with a core of sweet, succulent blackberry and black currant fruit flavors. Fully integrated tannins and oak, with a satiny texture, and a pleasingly long and slippery finish. My only nit is that the fruit is very ripe with a little raisin note showing up over time in the glass. Still, I liked this wine a lot especially for its texture.* **90.**



2014 Jacqueline Bahue Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$19.99. This talented winemaker brought the NakedWines.com winery to life. Her experience includes making wine in Italy, Spain and New Zealand. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. I was taken by the nose which offered vivid black cherry glaze aroma complimented by a subtle note of barrel spice. Eye-opening attack, and both luscious and lithe on the palate, featuring middleweight flavors of black cherry and black raspberry. The seamless quality of the wine is striking, and the sweet cherry finish holds on for what seems like a minute.* **92.**





2014 La Tapatia Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$17.99. Dalia Ceja, a second generation winemaker from the Ceja family that founded the first Mexican-American owned winery in Napa County, has her own personal winemaking project. La Tapatia is a nickname given to women born in Jailsco, Mexico, where her mother was born. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with expressive aromas of black cherry, anise and spice cupboard. Discreetly concentrated and appealingly sappy, with flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and Hoison sauce with an echo of oak.* **89.**

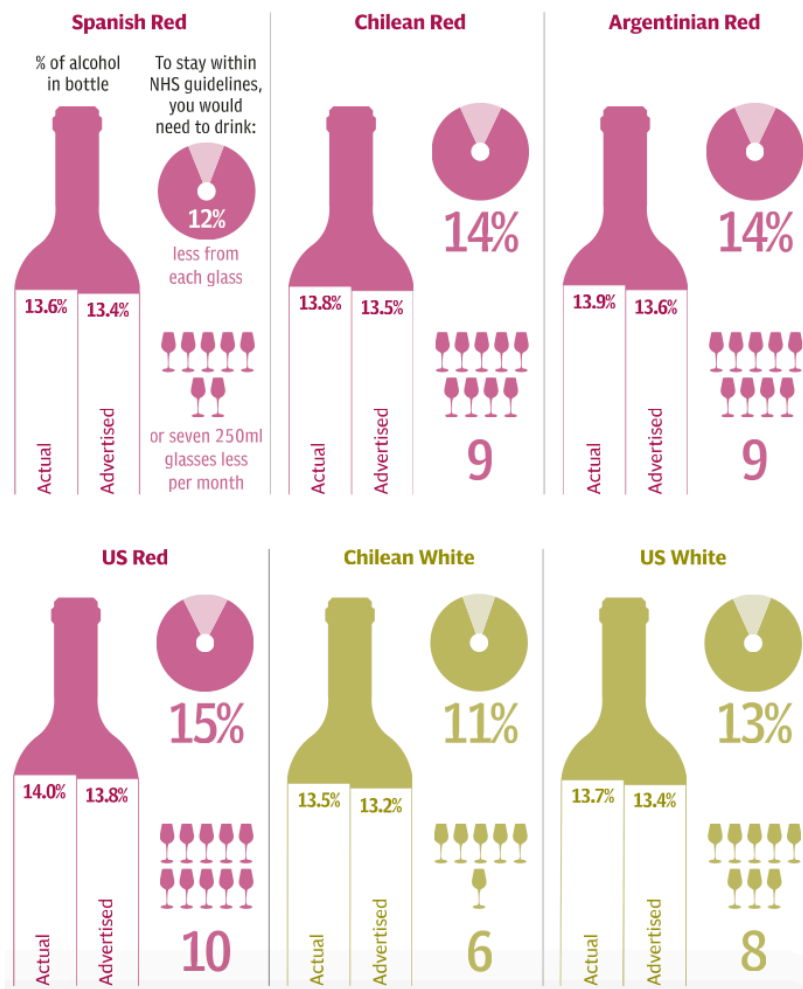
2014 Matt Parish Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$19.99. Matt Parish was the chief winemaker for the Americas at Treasury, responsible for big name wines like Stags' Leap, Chateau St. Jean, Etude and others. This label brings him back to the cellar and vineyards and away from administrative tasks. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy aromas of black cherry fruit. Nicely composed, very pretty, and forward drinking, with a mid weight black cherry core backed by modest tannins.* **88.**

2014 Richard Bruno Monterey Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$12.99. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Delicate aromas of cherry, crushed red berries and sandalwood. Light weight flavors of red cherries and berries with an accent of oak spice. Elegant, charming and simple, with gossamer tannins, juicy acidity and a silky mouthfeel.* **88.**

2014 Scott Kelley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$N/A. Kelley made Pinot Noir at Robert Mondavi and Estancia for over a decade, and has struck out on her own using the NakedWines.com platform to fund wines from southern Oregon (Umpqua Valley). This is his first vintage of southern Oregon Pinot Noir. It is sourced from dry-farmed hillside vineyards and fermented in concrete and oak fermenters. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of cherry, cranberry, peat, oak and floral bouquet. Up front and easy to like, with mid weight flavors of dark cherry and berry on the palate, accented by savory dried herbs, and framed by matched fine grain tannins. The finish is uplifting and juicy with modest length.* **88.**

Pinot Briefs

Wine Label ABV's Misstated - Duh! There has been quiet a bit of buzz in the wine literature about UC Davis Professor Julian Alston's research on wine label ABV statements which pretty much confirmed what many of us already knew. Published in the *Journal of Wine Economics* ("Splendide Mendax: False Label Claims About High and Rising Alcohol Content of Wine," 10:3, pp275-313, 2015), Alston and his associates looked at data from The Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) which has a monopoly on the importation of wine for sale in the province of Ontario, Canada. The LCBO provided actual and stated alcohol content on over 100,000 observations of domestic and foreign wines tested between 1992 and 2009. The impetus for this study was a report by Alston, et al., in 2011 that focused on the alcohol content of California wine imported by the LCBO. That work indicated that climate change did not appear to be responsible for the recent increases in the alcohol content of wine in California, and that the label claims about the alcohol content of California wine exhibit systematic errors. The results of this more recent study found that the alcohol content of wine varies systematically among countries, with lower alcohol for white than red wine varieties and lower alcohol for countries in the Old World of Europe than for New World producers in the Southern hemisphere and the United States. The alcohol content has been trending up around the world, though at different rates in different places. The authors note, "Some, but not much, of this trend can be accounted for by trends in the heat index. The trend in alcohol that is not explained by the heat index is attributable to factors such as other features of the climate or producer responses to the market, or changes in the mix of varieties or regional emphasis on production. Our findings lead us to think that the rise in alcohol content of wine is primarily man-made....with alcohol content of wine systematically related to prices in ways that are consistent with the role of excise taxes, in particular for lower-priced wines (the U.S. tax rate is \$1.07 per gallon for wine at 14% alcohol or less, and \$1.57 per gallon for wine at 14.1% or above), and the perceived market preferences for wines having more intense flavors in the higher-priced wine segment." Their analysis found that label claims on average understate the true alcohol content by about 0.39% alcohol for Old World Wine (red or white) and about 0.45% for New World wine (red or white), an overall average of 0.42%. The understatement means a wine with a label ABV of 13.5%, on average, will be 13.92% ABV. Looking at this from the standpoint of a standard drink, a 13.5% bottle of wine (750 ml) contains 5.7 drinks, and a 13.92% wine contains 5.9 drinks. That is not enough of a difference to get real excited about, although the chart from UC Davis below shows how much less one would need to drink from each glass or how much less glasses of wine per month one would need to drink to stay within NHS guidelines for alcohol consumption for different wines reported in this study when actual and advertised alcohol levels are compared for wines from different regions. If the producer chooses to error by 1.0% (if wine is above 14.1%) or 1.5% (if wine is 14.0% or below), the understatement of ABV becomes more significant. Most wine-knowledgeable people know that label ABV statements are often misstated because of the U.S. law that allows variance of up to 1.5% for wines with ABV under 14% and 1% of wines above 14% (other countries have similarly large tolerances). Truth in labeling with accurate ABV statements on wines is something for wineries to aspire to, even though my experience has been that consumers should, but usually pay little attention to the stated ABV on wine labels. I love the quote by Ron Washam HMW: "Taking the alcohol listed on the label seriously is like believing the guy's height or the woman's weight on Match.com. The wine is always going to be shorter and fatter than you expected."



Source: UC Davis via The Telegraph – Read the entire UC Davis study

New U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Alcohol The U.S. government posted new Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 (eight edition) on January 7, 2016. The report pointed out that in 2011, approximately 56 percent of U.S. adults 21 years of age and older were current drinkers. Drinking in greater amounts than moderation was more common among men, younger adults, and non-Hispanic white. Two in three adult drinkers do not limit alcohol intake to moderate amounts one or more times per month. The recommendation is that if alcohol is consumed, it should be in moderation - up to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men - and only by adults of legal drinking age. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) underscored that there is no 'drink of moderation,' only the practice of moderation. The definition of what is called a 'drink equivalent' was reaffirmed as 0.6 fluid ounces (14 g) of pure alcohol: 12 ounces of regular beer (5% alcohol), 5 ounces of wine (12% alcohol), or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (40% alcohol). The guidelines urged drinkers to look into the varying 'drink-equivalents' in any given alcohol drink (multiple volume in ounces by the alcohol content in percentage and divide by 0.6 ounces of alcohol per drink-equivalent). View the guidelines at www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/. The drink-equivalents of wine:

New UK Alcohol Guidelines Unreasonably Strict for Men The UK chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies, and her Guidelines Development Group, recently announced new UK alcohol guidelines. First, the new guidance is that men should not drink more than women, a surprising statement since there is no basis in science for this, and is not part of alcohol guidelines from other countries. Second, the guidelines say that there is no safe level of drinking. Third, the new guidelines recommend an upper limit of 14 units a week. A 6 ounce glass of wine (U.S. standard drink equivalent of 14 g of alcohol) is just under 2 UK units (UK unit is 8 g of alcohol). This would mean that the guidelines recommend one drink a day maximum for both men and women. This is in line with the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Alcohol for women, but not for men. Fourth, drinkers should have more than one day a week alcohol-free. UK government officials did admit that women over 55 to enjoy some benefits from small quantities of alcohol.

Second Silicon Valley Wine Auction (SVWA) The Silicon Valley Education Foundation (SVEF) and the Santa Cruz Mountain Winegrowers Association (SCMWA) present two events in association with the SVWA: a Grand Wine Tasting at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 16, 2016, and an evening Wine Dinner and Live Auction. The Grand Wine Tasting will feature over 150 wines by Santa Cruz Mountains vintners. The Wine Dinner and Live Auction on Saturday evening will start with a wine tasting hour featuring rare and premium wines followed by a 5-course wine-paired dinner and a live auction hosted by Dawn Marie Kotsonis. The 2015 Silicon Valley Auction drew more than 1,000 guests and raised over \$600,000 to benefit SVEF's STEM Education programs. Notable auction items for 2016 include private winemaker dinners with Mount Eden Vineyards, Ridge Vineyards and Thomas Fogarty. For more information and tickets, visit www.siliconvalleywineauction.org.



Recommended Book: *Vietnamese Food and Wine Pairing* Alfredo De La Casa has written a handy book that includes wine recommendations for 100 Vietnamese popular dishes. The author, a British national and member of the Society of Wine Educators, lived several years in Vietnam and still lives in Ho Chi Minh City. Beginning with the basics of wine and food pairing, De La Casa describes each dish and its ingredients along with black and white photos, and suggestions for wine pairings. He does not recommend wine brands, but the likely grapes from regions that will pair better with the food. A very handy feature is the three indexes at the back of the book: an index in alphabetical order for the dishes in Vietnamese names, a second index with the name of the dishes in English, and an index that suggests matching dishes if you have a wine in mind. I know where I live in Southern California, Vietnamese food has become extremely popular, and many wine enthusiasts would find this book invaluable. Since Vietnamese restaurants rarely offer worthwhile wine lists, you will need to consult the book ahead of time and bring an appropriate wine to the restaurant. Since the book is in a compact, paperback format, it can also easily be taken to a restaurant for further reference. 175 pages, 2015, \$24.99 at www.amazon.com.

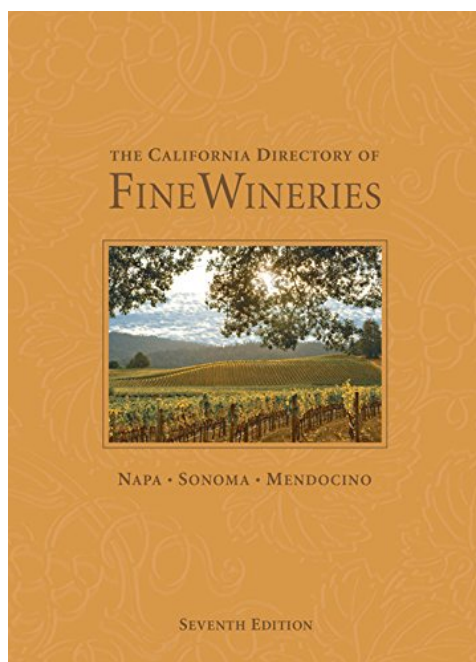
VIETNAMESE FOOD AND WINE PAIRING



WITH RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR 100 VIETNAMESE
POPULAR DISHES

ALFREDO DE
LA CASA

Newest Book in *The California Directory of Fine Wineries* series This is the seventh edition of this full-color, hardback guide to some of California's notable wineries found in the wine regions of Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino. 68 destination wineries are profiled by a team of primarily travel writers, along with more than 200 color images by renowned travel photographer Robert Homes. 26 new wineries are included in this edition. Along with descriptions of each winery's unique features, the book's sidebars include location and directions, vineyard tours and wine tastings, winemaker names, special events and nearby attractions. Full-page maps are included. Of special interest to Pinot Noir lovers are the inclusion of the following wineries: Acacia Vineyard, Domaine Carneros, Etude Wines, Anaba Wines, De La Montanya Winery & Vineyards, DeLoach Vineyards, Gary Farrell Vineyards and Winery, Handley Cellars, Hartford Family Winery, J Vineyards & Winery, Keller Estate, Lynmar Estate, Martinelli Winery, Moshin Vineyards, Papapietro Perry, Patz & Hall, Three Sticks Wines and Walt Wines. This is the type of travel guide book one would expect to see on the coffee table at a fine resort in one of California's wine regions. The choice of wineries to be included is apparently those with name recognition and reputation. A handy e-book format for iPad and Kindle is also available. 160 pages, hardcover, 7.5 x 10 inches, 2015, Wine House Press, \$22.95. Available nationwide at booksellers and www.amazon.com.

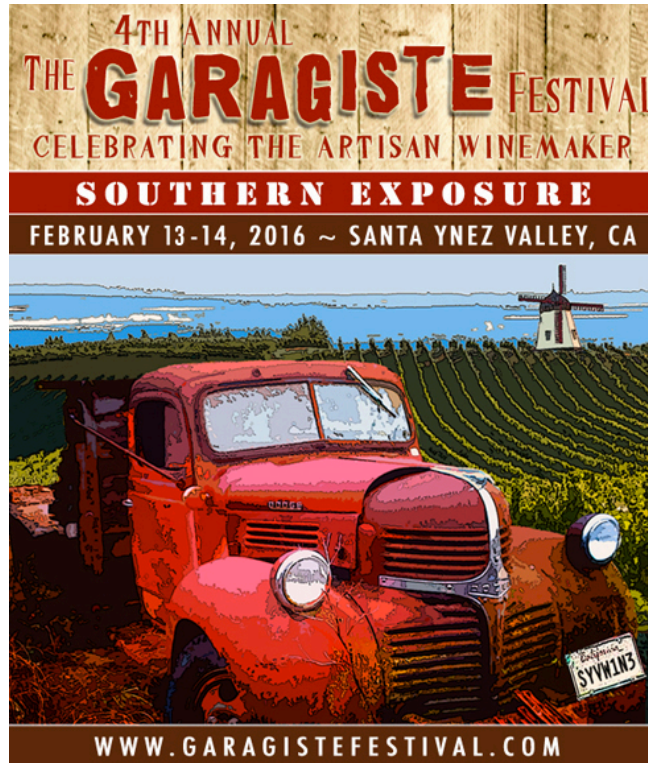


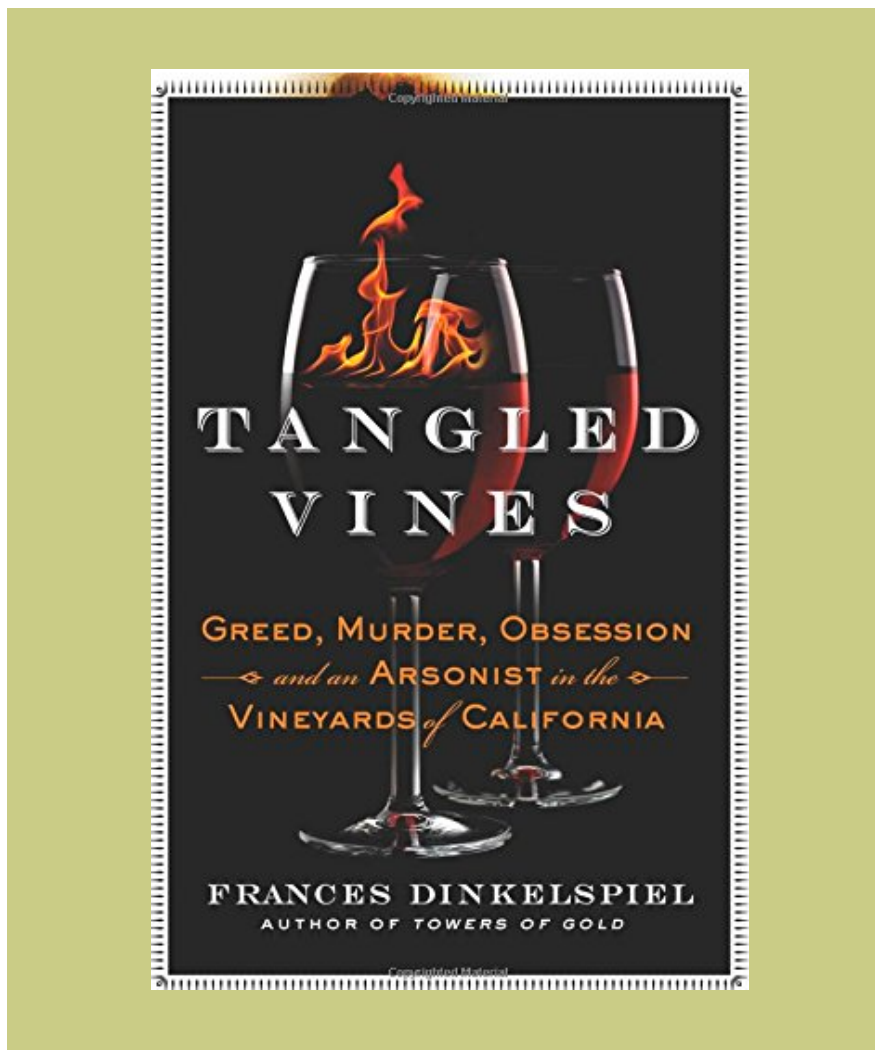
In Pursuit of Balance 2016 Schedule Announced IPOB has announced a wine dinner and trade tasting in partnership with Triangle Wine Experience February 4 to 6 that is open to attendees of the Triangle Wine Experience. Also an IPOB tasting and seminar will be held in London February 22 that is open by invitation to members of the trade. IPOB will be conducting tasting and seminars at ProWein March 13 to 16 that will be open to attendees of ProWein. Finally, IPOB will offer a public tasting in Los Angeles on April 17 and a trade tasting on April 18. For information, visit www.inpursuitofbalance.com.

Furthermore Pinot Noir Acquires Graton Ridge Cellars Furthermore, one of the featured and recommended Pinot Noir producers in *The PinotFile*, has bought Russian River Valley's Graton Ridge Cellars including the label, tasting room, winery and estate vineyard. The tasting room will soon offer tasting of Furthermore's single vineyard-designate Pinot Noirs and Graton Ridge Cellars Russian River Valley Pinot Noirs. Furthermore's 2013 Nevina's Vineyard won Best Pinot Noir at this year's San Francisco International Wine Competition. Furthermore also announced that Erica Stancliff would become head winemaker. She is the winemaker for her own Trombetta Family Wines label and was formerly part of the winemaking team at Paul Hobbs' CrossBarn, Rudd and Vina Cobos. Furthermore's new home at Graton Ridge is open daily at 3561 Gravenstein Hwy N in Sebastopol.

The Garagiste Festival: Celebrating the Artisan Winemaker This "Southern Exposure" event will be held February 13 & 14, 2016, in the Santa Ynez Valley in Solvang, CA. This festival is sponsored by Garagistes Events, a non profit organization benefiting the Cal Poly Wine & Viticulture Program. A

garagistes (garage-east) is a term originally used in the Bordeaux region of France to denigrate renegade small-lot winemakers, sometimes working out of garages, who refused to follow the “rules” of the wine establishment. It is now a full-fledged movement responsible for make some of the most individualistic, cutting edge wines in the world. Some participating wineries whose wines you may have seen reviewed in the PinotFile include Kessler-Haak Vineyard and Wines, La Montagne, Ryan Cochrane Wines, Seagrape, and Weatherborne. These small producers (most are less that 1,000 cases per year) deserve your respect and attention! The 2016 Garagiste Festival begins with winemaker panels and tasting seminars, moving on to the Grand Tasting. For more information and tickets, visit www.californiagaragistes.com.





The author, award-winning journalist, Frances Dinkelspiel, is drawn to the story of the worst case of wine arson in California history because a family member's 175 historic bottles of Angelica and Port, passed down through generations, was lost in the tragic fire. Frances Dinkelspiel's great-great-great-grandfather, Isaias Hellman, crafted the wines in 1875 from one of the oldest vineyards in California. The dark history of Isaias Hellman's vineyard in Rancho Cucamonga, that includes murder and struggles for monopolies among rich men with an obsession for wine, is detailed as a backdrop for the modern story of how a demented, preposterous and blatantly crooked wine enthusiast, Mark Anderson, torched a warehouse in Vallejo, California (Wines Central) in 2005, destroying an estimated 4.5 million bottles of wine worth \$400 million.

Central Napa Valley wine luminaries in this book include Delia Viader (Viader), Dick Ward (Saintsbury), and Ted Hall (Long Meadow Ranch), among others, whose dismay at losing valuable vintages and in some cases, irreplaceable libraries of wine, is related through interviews.

Dinkelspiel was also able to gain intimate interviews with Anderson to try to understand his motivation for such a horrific deed. Anderson remained evasive to the end, unable to fully admit his own wine obsession and self-serving greed that led to his actions.

This book is absolutely captivating! I simply could not put it down, and read it quickly over the course of two days. It is a remarkable piece of investigative journalism that will send shivers down your spine if you store wine in a storage facility. I immediately wanted to check the security and fire prevention system at the wine storage facility where I store all of my wines. This is the best wine book (and I read almost every new one published) I have read in several years. I guarantee you will be captivated.

Published by St. Martin's Press, New York, hardback, 289 pages, 2015, \$26.99.