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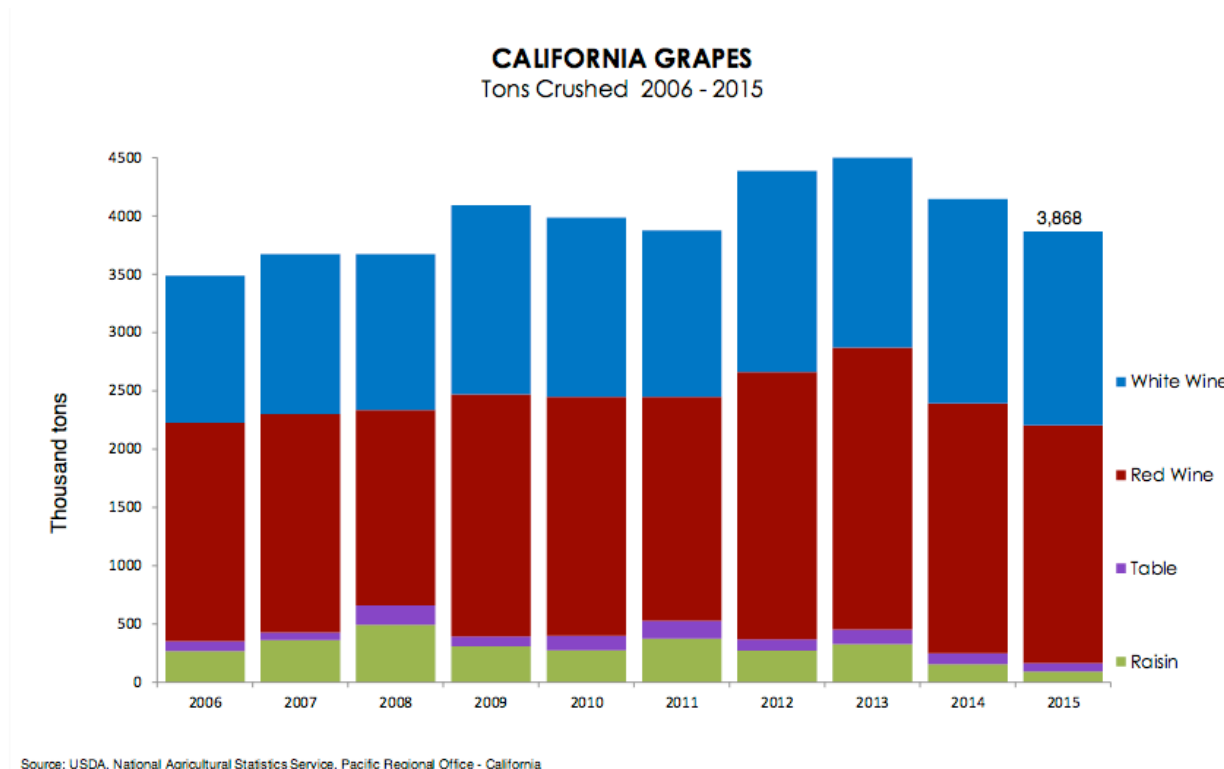
The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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Pinot Noir is the Tiffany of the Wine World

Many Exceptional Pinot Noirs Reviewed

California Pinot Noir enthusiasts might want to stock up on 2013 and 2014 vintage releases as quantities of premium California Pinot Noir from the 2015 vintage will be significantly reduced. The final California Grape Crush Report 2015 from the California Agricultural Statistics Service revealed that overall wine grape tonnage was down 7 percent compared to 2014, with red wine varieties down 5 percent from 2014. Yields of Coastal Chardonnay and Pinot Noir were particularly affected because of poor weather during bloom. Sonoma County Pinot Noir was down 36 percent off of the five-year average and Sonoma Chardonnay was down 27 percent according to Brian Clements of Turrentine Brokerage. Total tons of Pinot Noir crushed in 2015 was 184,969 compared to 246,905 in 2014. Average Brix crushed was 25.0 in 2015 compared to 24.7 in 2014.



Oregon was more fortunate in 2015, with the Pinot Noir harvest delivering exceptional quality and higher than normal yields. Warm winter weather persisted throughout the spring and summer, with harvest starting about August 26, making the 2015 harvest one of the earliest on record in Oregon.

The California offerings reviewed here span the state from Mendocino County in the North to Santa Barbara County in the South, running the gamut in price from \$8.99 to \$120. The Willamette Valley Pinot Noirs reviewed in this issue range from \$15.99 to \$150.

California

Black Kite Cellars, Anderson Valley (Estate Vineyard), California

Angel Hawk Pinot Noir is a reserve wine only produced in the best vintages. The most age worthy barrels are selected from the three estate vineyard blocks after the first 10-11 months of barrel aging. The wine in these barrels is then blended and returned to oak barrels for a total of 22-24 months of barrel aging.

2013 Black Kite Cellars Angel Hawk Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.60, 163 cases, \$85. Released February 2016. Dijon 114 and 115 and Pommard clones. 2-day cold soak, inoculated with RC212 yeast and punched down three times daily. After fermentation, the wine first rested for 10 months in a mix of 33% new and 1-year-old French oak barrels. The best barrels were aged for another 12 months for a total of 22 months in barrel. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is practically orgasmic, offering soaring aromas of dark red grapes, berries and cherries accompanied by a woodland scent. The rich core of cherry, raspberry and cranberry fruits are well-spiced and are accented with weighted notes of anise and caramel. Bold, yet charming, with good restraint and guile.* **93.**



George Wine Company, Healdsburg, California

Read the full store about George Levkoff here: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1469/. George got a bit off track with these 2014 vintage wines that are atypical for George Pinot. They are higher in alcohol, more extracted and exhibit more oak overlay than is usual with George Pinot.. Still, George Pinot is so popular that the 2014 vintage is sold out.

2014 George Vintage XII Leras Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., \$188 cases, \$60. Forty-year-old Dijon and Pommard clone plantings. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy, with dominant aromas of toast and campfire and a lack of fruit appeal. Ripe and sappy, with mid weight plus flavors of blackest cherry, blackberry and baking spices overlain with toasty oak. Tannins and acidity are complimentary, but the wine finishes with a slight sense of alcoholic warmth.* **88.**

2014 George Vintage XII Hansen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 280 cases, \$60. 30-year-old Pommard clone plantings. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The telltale pungent manure aroma typical of this vineyard shows up on the nose as well as the scent of cigar. A very unique and terroir-driven wine that consistently offers a strong manure flavor in each vintage accenting the black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors. Silky in the mouth with a modest finish that ends with some warmth.* **88.**

2014 George Ceremonial Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 280 cases, \$60. 15-year-old Dijon clones plantings. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Toasty oak engages the black cherry fruit in this wine with a luscious, sappy fruit core. The flaunting, very ripe fruit is hard to ignore, but is superseded by oak-induced flavors of herbs, cola and dark caramel. I want to like this wine, but oak gets in the way.* **88.**

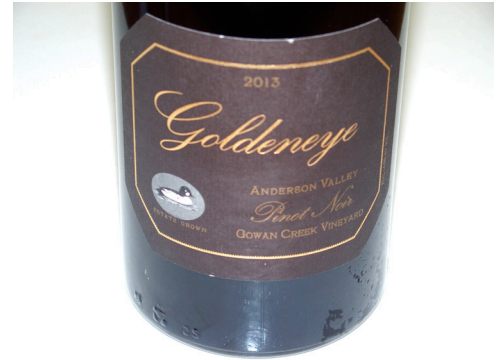
Goldeneye, Hopland and Philo, California

Winemaker Michael Fay took over the helm at Goldeneye in 2012, inheriting a diverse Anderson Valley estate program with 24 different clones of Pinot Noir and 69 distinct clone and rootstock combinations. In the 2013 vintage, Michael experimented with different canopy techniques on certain clones so the grapes could be picked earlier and at a slightly lower Brix. Most of the estate blocks were picked at two different times to build diversity in Brix and acidity levels. In the winery, new oak was dialed back ever so slightly on most wines, and some native yeast fermentation was added. Less saignée was done to accentuate the juicy mouthfeel of the

wines. I could sense a subtle difference in the 2013 Goldeneye Pinot Noirs and embraced the winemaking direction.

2013 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 13,625 cases, \$55. Released February 2016. 95% estate fruit from four vineyards, 5% fruit from Elke Vineyard. Aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 70% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A beautifully balanced and engaging wine that offers aromas and flavors of black cherry, blueberry, pomegranate, blackberry, spice and dried herbs in a fruit-forward style that is smoothly textured and easy to like. Modest in concentration, with welcome oak seasoning, and a mild grip of tannins. 90.*

2013 Goldeneye Gowan Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 1,100 cases, \$82. Released April 2016. Composed of six different clones. A small percentage of whole cluster was included while subtly reducing the new oak. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Brooding, haunting aromas of dark berries, oolong tea and anise that I found very seductive. Full-bodied, yet nimble, with flavors of blackberry, cassis, black plum, dark chocolate and umami. Very harmonious, long, deep and concentrated, with bashful tannins and a lingering finish that speaks of perfectly ripened fruit. 93.*



2013 Goldeneye Ten Degrees Estate Grown Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 1,035 cases, \$120. Released February 2016. A selection of the finest barrels in the cellar, from the best lots and top estate blocks. The final wine was made from the best 3% of estate grapes and includes 32% Split Rail Vineyard, 32% Gowan Creek Vineyard, 31% Confluence Vineyard, and 5% The Narrows Vineyard. Aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels (this bottling has the most new oak of the three 2013 Pinot Noirs reviewed here). *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of dark berry preserves, dark red rose petal and earth lead to a full charge of chewy black fruits. The wine enters aggressively but turns agreeable and silken on the palate, finishing with generous amounts of toothsome fruit, leathery beef and toasted oak notes. The wine is a bit impenetrable and not as expressive as the Gowan Creek at this stage and warrants further cellaring. 92-93.*

Helen Grace Wines, Napa, California

Peter Colabuono worked with Paul Lato during the 2014 and 2015 vintages where he fell in love with Central Coast Pinot Noir. He crafted a small lot of Sangiacomo Pinot Noir in 2014 in an “unadulterated, minimalist, all free run, 25% oak-aged Pinot Noir.” No website.

2014 Helen Grace Wines Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$N/A. Produced at The Wine Foundry in Napa. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Coy aromas of darker berries and an aura of oak lead to a middleweight wine blessed with vibrant flavors of fresh black cherries and black raspberries. Very suave on the palate, with immersed tannins and some finishing power. Still very solid the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with ebullient fruit aromas and flavors and a seductively smooth mouthfeel. 92.*



Kutch Wines, Sonoma, California

For complete winery information: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1618/. I was curious why Jamie chose to use no new French oak on the 2014 Pinot Noir wines. In essence, he feels he can build structure and seasoning in the wines with stems instead of oak. Here is what he told me. “New oak can overtake a wine overshadowing the terroir. A new oak barrels is not part of the original terroir, but stems are a part of the terroir as a part of the

plant itself. Falstaff Vineyard stems taste more stemmy than McDougall's stems and that is the signature of the terroir. Stems are obviously wood and add tannin, but that wood or tannin is integrated during fermentation, not after the wine is made as happens when aging wine in new oak. In 2014 and 2015, I completely removed any new oak from my wines for this reason. I don't need the additional structure from new oak.....Stems can take a wine to heights that are not achievable without using stems. Stems broaden the shoulders of a wine. I have experimented multiple times in multiple vintages with multiple vineyards and always found complexity goes up considerably when a de-stemmed wine is compared to a 100% whole cluster wine. For my style and my hands and my vineyards, I find de-stemmed Pinot Noir to be inferior."

2014 Kutch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 1,500 cases, \$39. A blend of fruit from Campbell Ranch Vineyard (100% whole cluster) in the remote coastal mountains near Annapolis, and Sonoma Stage Vineyard (100% de-stemmed) located at the cold southernmost tip of the Sonoma Coast AVA. Net is 60% whole cluster. Fruit crushed and punched down by foot, native yeast primary fermentation and native malolactic fermentation, aged 11 months without racking on lees in 100% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very aromatically pleasing with scents of black cherry coulis, rose petal, spice and pine sap. Beautifully balanced, with a mid weight core of black raspberry fruit enhanced by a floral thread that is appealing. Soft in the mouth with a gracious finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was less aromatic, more tannic and more savory yet the black raspberry core continued to show good intensity.* **89.**

2014 Kutch Falstaff Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 350 cases, \$59. This vineyard is located at the extreme edge of the Pacific Ocean and is the coldest site Kutch works with. Planted in 2001 by owners Ron and Judy Lougheed in marine quartz sandstone and Goldridge soils to Dijon clones "828," 777 and 115. Yields often less than 1 ton per acre with very small berries and clusters. 100% whole cluster. Crushed and punched down by foot, native yeast primary fermentation and native malolactic fermentation, aged on lees for 11 months without racking in 100% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly aromatic, with hi-tone scents of black cherry, bark, pine sap and rose petal. Vibrant on the palate, with vivid flavors of dark red cherries and berries and spice accented with a woody, earthy bent. Very inviting, with buried tannins and a vivacious finish of graham and soil-fused fruit. This is a wine with many nuances you would hope for and some you didn't know you wanted.* **93.**

2014 Kutch Bohan Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 150 cases, \$49. Bohan Ranch was the first modern vineyard planted on the far Sonoma Coast in 1972. The grapes for this wine were sourced from a block planted in 1072 on its own rootstock which is rare in California today. The vines are planted in Yorkville Laughlin loam with a California sprawl trellis and are dry farmed. 100% whole cluster. Native yeast primary fermentation and native malolactic fermentation, fruit crushed and punched down by foot, aged on lees for 11 months in 100% neutral French oak barrels without racking. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine has a distinctive feral and rustic character that is clearly a reflection of the terroir and grape selections. Slightly shy aromatically but pleasant, with aromas of raspberry, sous bois, woodland and dark rose petal. The mid weight flavors of black raspberry and blackberry are framed by mildly astringent tannins. The fruit has remarkable intensity which lifts the mid palate and finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was still uniquely rustic in character and seemed worthy of cellaring for to achieve further expression and to meld the tannins.* **92.**



2014 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

12.4% alc., 350 cases, \$59. This vineyard is located 3.5 miles from the Pacific Ocean at an elevation of 935 feet. The site is farmed by noted vineyard manager Ulises Valdez. The vineyard was planted in 1998 to clone 114 in Graywacke and sandstone soils. 100% whole cluster, native yeast primary fermentation and native malolactic fermentation, aged on lees 11 months without racking in 100% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Intriguing, mysterious and seductive in every way, with aromas of fresh, dark fruits, floral meadow and forest. Velvety and enchanting on the palate, with sensual flavors of black raspberry, black plum, boysenberry, black tea, spice and floral goodness. The tannins offer good grip and the finish lingers. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was still extremely appealing with a*



blessed mix of fruit, spice and floral tones and a huge finish that grabs at the heart strings emotionally. Truly, this is a wine that can make you blissfully happy. 95.

Land of Promise, Petaluma, California

Charles and Diana Karren own a distinguished vineyard in the Petaluma Gap region of the Sonoma Coast named Terra de Promissio. The name reflects the family owners who are immigrants pursuing the American dream. Both Charles and Diana were born, lived and worked overseas before pooling their life savings in 1999 to buy diary land in Petaluma in what was virgin territory for wine grape growing. They planted the first 32 acres of Pinot Noir (clones 115 and 777) in 2002 and then ran out of money. With their last dollars, they bought a tractor and lived on site in a used house trailer, and brought Diana's parents and Diana's sister over from Russia to help farm the newly planted vineyard. The project is a true family run operation, with all members of the family contributing to the management of the vineyard on a day-to-day basis, with each of the vineyard rows and blocks custom farmed according to each winemaker's preferences. Eventually, Charles and Diana were able to convert a barn on the property into a home and in 2012 and 2013 planted an additional 18 acres of Pinot Noir (clones 943, 97 and Calera). In 2015, the vineyard's eleventh harvest, they sold grapes to 13 wineries, many of which were vineyard designated including Pinot Noir from Domaine Della, Kosta Browne, Whetstone and Williams Selyem.

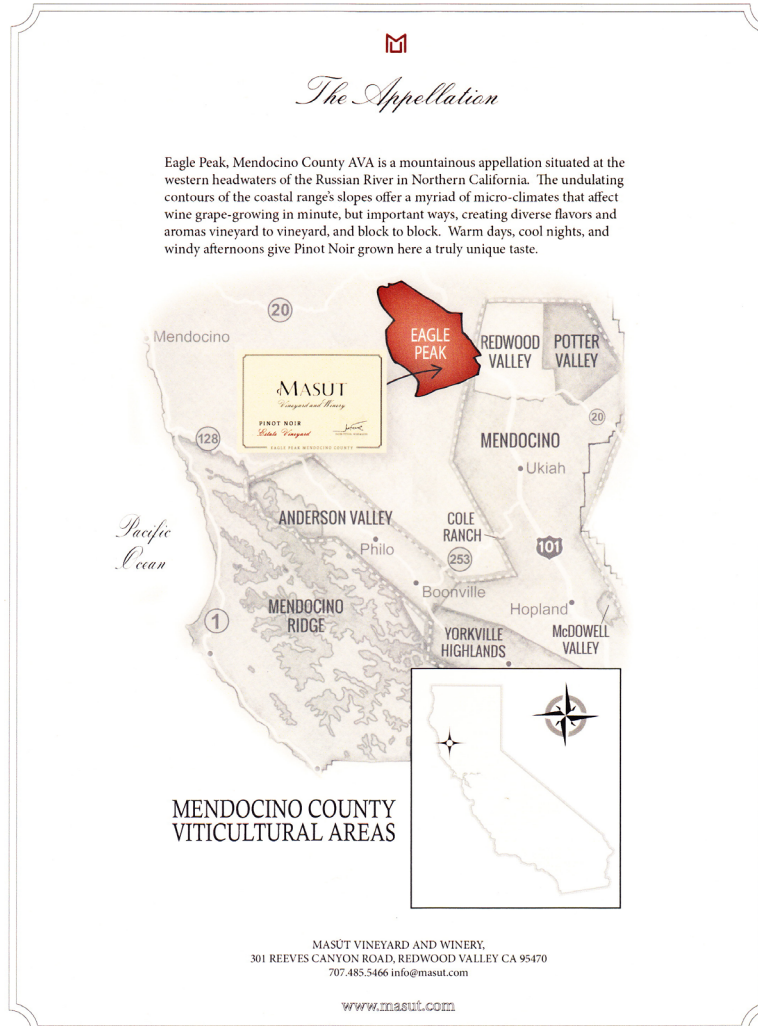
Diana and her mother oversee the making of the Land of Promise wine which was first released with the 2013 vintage. The inaugural wine is sold on the website at www.landofpromisewine.com.



2013 Land of Promise Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$75. Native yeast fermentation, aged 15 months in 60% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of earth-kissed black cherry and blackberry fruits with oak-driven notes of vanilla and dark chocolate. A bold and ripe expression of Pinot Noir with full-bodied flavors of black cherry, plum, blackberry, dark chocolate and a hint of prune. The polished texture is quite seductive and the tannins are well matched to the sappy fruit. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine remained noticeably silky in texture and the black fruited finish was impressive. 90.*

Masút Vineyard and Winery, Redwood Valley, California

Brothers Jake and Ben Fetzer grew up in the vineyards of Mendocino County where their grandparents, Barney and Kathleen Fetzer established Fetzer Vineyards in 1968. In the early 1990s, the Fetzer brand was acquired by Brown Forman, and second generation vintner Robert Fetzer bought a 1,200-acre property in 1994 and named it Masút, a Native American word meaning “dark, rich earth.” He envisioned a place where he would be able to grow Pinot Noir. Planting began at Masút in 1997 and many wineries began to see the potential of the site. Unfortunately, Jake and Ben’s father passed away in a rafting accident in 2006. The brothers became determined to move forward in his honor. A barn on the property was converted into a winery and the brothers released the first vintage of Masút Pinot Noir 2011. The brothers spearheaded a petition for a new AVA called Eagle Peak Mendocino County that has been approved.



There are 19 distinct blocks of predominantly Pinot Noir planted among 40 acres of rugged, sloped terrain with elevations varying from 800 to 200 feet. Pinot Noir clones include Dijon 113, 115, and 777, and UCD 23, Mt. Eden, “La Tache.”

2014 Masút Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 1,800 cases, \$45. Clones 115 (50%), 23 (33%) and 777 (17%). Yields 2.9 tons per acre. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in small open-top fermenters. Aged 15 months on lees in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. Unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Elevating aromas of dark raspberries, blueberries and blackberries lead to an intensely fruited and gutsy wine featuring a mid weight plus core of blackberry fruit. The large fruit load is nicely tethered by tannins and the overall impression is one of finesse rather than muscle. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose had blossomed with ingratiating aromas of fresh black raspberry preserves, and the finish stood out for its generous intensity of purpose. 93.*



Peter Paul Wines, Santa Rosa, California

Peter T. Paul founded Peter Paul Wines after buying the former Grove Street Winery in Healdsburg. Daniel Moore of M2 Wine Consultants crafts the wines. The winery's focus is Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines are sold on the website at www.peterpaulwines.com.

2013 Peter Paul Gravenstein Highway Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 561 cases, \$34. Sourced from vineyards located on Gravenstein Highway between the towns of Sebastopol and Forestville, primarily Anderson-Ross Vineyard. Dijon 115 and clone 23. 6-day cold soak, natural yeast fermentation, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of Bing cherry, shaved oak and earthy flora. Forward and giving, with mid weight plus flavors of red and black fruits and a pinch of oak. Sleek, with streamlined tannins and some length on the giving finish.* **90.**

2013 Peter Paul Mill Station Road Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 370 cases, \$40. Sourced from a vineyard on Mill Station Road which lies to the west of Gravenstein Highway near the tiny town of Graton. Goldridge soils. Dijon 115 clone. 6-day cold soak, natural yeast fermentation, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of dark red cherry, black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate are replicated in the mid weight plus flavor profile. Rigorous in intent with luscious fruit presence, with the vivid fruit load matched to fine-grain tannins. The well-endowed, fruit-driven finish leaves an impression.* **92.**

2013 Peter Paul Hawks Roost Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 72 cases, \$45. Vineyard owner Chuck Jones farms this 5.5-acre vineyard planted entirely to the Mariafeld clone of Pinot Noir. The grapes have been a main component of the Gravenstein Highway Pinot Noir since 2009, but in this vintage it was decided to offer an exceptional three barrel selection that features the vineyard. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 75% new, for 15 months. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Upon opening, Asian 5-spice really appeals on the nose, with dark fruits showing up over time in the glass. A well-structured wine with plenty of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit to satisfy. The slightly astringent tannins are a bit aggressive now but should settle down over further time in bottle. This wine has the most cellaring potential of the three wines tasted from the 2013 vintage, but is not the best for drinking now.* **91-92.**

ROAR Wines, Santa Lucia Highlands/San Francisco, California

The grapes for the ROAR wines are from premier vineyards of the Santa Lucia Highlands, including the Rosella's, Garys', and Sierra Mar vineyards owned and farmed by the Franscioni family. The wines are crafted in the ROAR winery in San Francisco and are available through the winery's website at www.ROARWINES.com and through distribution in select markets nationally.

2014 ROAR Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.55, 1,814 cases, \$42. Clones are Pommard, Pisoni, Swan, 667, 777 and "828." Aged in 100% French oak cooperage, 58% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but charming aromas of dark fruits and toasted oak. Packed with very ripe fruit flavors framed by sleek tannins and proper oak seasoning. Enjoyable, but not complex. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine again demonstrated commendable balance but the nose was not open for business and oak tended to overshadowed the fruit. This wine will benefit from another 6 to 12 months in bottle.* **88-89.**

2014 ROAR Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.57, 595 cases, \$58. Pisoni clone. Aged in 100% French oak cooperage, 60% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy nose upon opening, only revealing some fruit and spice the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. More giving on the palate, with a juicy blend of dark cherry and dark berry fruits touched by oak. Silky and seductive, with style, grace and a finishing surge of fruit. The wine would benefit from another year or two in bottle.* **91-92.**

2014 ROAR Sierra Mar Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.55, 648 cases, \$52. Swan, Pisoni and “828” clones. Aged in 100% French oak cooperage, 69% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of black cherry, raspberry and spice. A charge of well-spiced dark red and black fruits greet the mid palate and linger through a splashy finish. Highly soothing and harmonious, with a gentle grip of tannins and juicy acidity. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was still shy and tight. Decanting or cellaring advised.* **91-93.**



Saxon Brown, Santa Rosa, California

Owner and winemaker, Jeff Gaffner, has many longstanding grower relationship that he developed over time as a consulting winemaker. He began his career at Chateau St. Jean under the tutelage of vintner Richard Arrowood, and since has been a winemaker for many artisan labels including Ram's Gate Winery and Black Kite Cellars. The Saxon Brown label focuses on small lots of vineyard-designated Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from special vineyard sites in Sonoma County, Carneros, Anderson Valley and the Santa Lucia Highlands. The Saxon Brown wines, less than 2500 cases annually, are allocated to mailing list customers at www.saxonbrown.com, with some retail and restaurant distribution in select markets nationally. The wines reviewed here are new spring releases.

2013 Saxon Brown Fighting Brothers Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 254 cases, \$48. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Demure aromas of black cherry and oak spice arrive slowly over time in the glass. Highly flavorful, with robust flavors of black cherry and black raspberry and a bit of spice. Sleek on the palate with a modest finish and submerged alcohol.* **91.**

2013 Saxon Brown Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 176 cases, \$58. Vineyard is located at the western base of Sonoma Mountain. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Highly aromatic, offering a perfume of strawberry, candied cherry and toasty oak. A cherry-fueled wine with a halo of oak that tends to dominate the fruit. Silky and smooth with harmonious tannins and pleasing acidity. This wine will be favored by those who prefer noticeable oak overlay in Pinot Noir.* **89.**

2013 Saxon Brown Durell Vineyard Hayfield Block Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 99 cases, \$58. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of dark cherry liquor, orange pekoe tea and hazelnut lead off. Moderately rich in the mouth with ripe flavors of black raspberry and cassis accented with teasing notes of oak seasoning. Impressive harmony, with immersed tannins and some length on the soft and highly seductive finish.* **92.**



2013 Saxon Brown Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 226 cases, \$68. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a mix of dark berry, earthy flora and oak aromas that are pleasing. Profoundly fruited on the palate with deep flavors of blackberry and black raspberry. Well-structured with a generous infusion of oak that tends to show up more over time in the glass. The classy fruit in this wine is hard to ignore.* **90.**

2013 Saxon Brown Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 226 cases, \$68. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose lifts interest with aromas of black cherry, cardamom spice and toast. The mid weight plus flavors of black cherry and blackberry are accented with notes of white pepper and spice. Nicely balanced with commendable oak integration and some length on the finish which leaves a hint of warmth in its wake.* **90.**

2013 Saxon Brown Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 197 cases, \$78. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Effusive aromas of spiced black raspberry and wine cave are very enticing. Caressing on the palate, with mid weight flavors of darker berries framed by slightly astringent tannins. Energetic and forward drinking with a noticeable oak overlay that diminishes over time in the glass. The wine's most impressive asset is the endless finish. 91.*

Sedition Wine, Sonoma County, California

Sedition is a family owned boutique winery showcasing the terroir of the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Co-founder and winemaker Josh Bartels has spent ten years as an assistant winemaker at Kokomo Winery where he crafted wines from all over Sonoma County. The second founder, Jigar Patel, met Josh while the two were students attending Purdue University over twenty years ago. This first release from Sedition Wines is composed of grapes from Chenoweth Vineyards and Graham Family Vineyards. The inaugural wine is available by allocation through the mailing list at www.seditionwine.com. Tasting is available in downtown Forestville at Jigar Wines.

2013 Sedition Chenoweth Vineyards Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.68, 230 cases, \$75. Pommard (Chenoweth Vineyards) and clones 667 and "828" (Graham Family Vineyard). Harvest Brix 25°. Aged 16 months in 33% new French oak barrels. *Light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is quite savory featuring aromas of underbrush, sous bois, and herbs with demure notes of red cherry. Red-fruited and slightly confected, with a savory herbal thread in the background. Smooth in the mouth with buried tannins and a satisfying, bright finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the cherry theme was front and center, the tannins had moved further into the background and the herbal thread provided interest. 90.*

Tessier Winery, San Francisco Bay, California

Owner and winemaker Kristie Tacey has been crafting small lots of Pinot Noir from special vineyards in the Russian River Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains since 2009. Her wines are available through the winery website at www.tessierwinery.com.

2014 Tessier Saveria Vineyard, Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 140 cases, \$39. Vineyard owned by Frank Saveria and farmed by Prudy Foxx. Clones 667 and 115. Aged in 33% new French oak barrels. *Light cherry red color in the glass. This wine aims to please with bright aromas of cherry, strawberry, white pepper and sandalwood that are echoed in the flavors in an elegant and lighter-styled wine that offers more gusto than the light color would predict. Softly textured and elegantly styled with complimentary oak accents. The wine held up beautifully the following day maintaining aromatic interest when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 90.*

Tongue Dancer Wines, Healdsburg, California

Tongue Dancer Wines is a new project created by winemaker James MacPhail and "Knowledgeable One" Kerry Forbes-MacPhail. The label is modest in size and scope meant to satisfy James' cravings for winemaking creativity. The name illustrates James' style of crafting Pinot Noir and Chardonnay that have mouthfeel, that is, wines that are meant to "dance on the tongue." The label art is a nod to intellectual whimsy. Next year, a Tongue Dancer Russian River Valley Bacigalupi Vineyard Chardonnay and Tongue Dancer Putnam Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir will be introduced. Visit www.tonguedancerwines.com.

2013 Tongue Dancer Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.75% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.56, 100 cases, \$45. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold maceration in small open-top fermenters, native and inoculated yeast ferments, daily punchdowns by hand or foot, and aged 11 months on the lees in 100% French oak barrels, 1 new, 2 from 2012 and 1 from 2011. Lightly filtered at bottling with no fining. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of fresh cherry, red berry and spice pick up intensity over time in the glass. Very sleek with impeccable balance, offering mid weight flavors of black cherry and brown spice in a highly enjoyable style that ends on a high note of generous cherry goodness. 92.*



Waxwing Wine Cellars, Belmont, California

For full winery information: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1470/. Winemaker and proprietor Scott Sisemore is a one-man show and now up to producing nearly 1,000 cases annually. It has taken him two years, but he finally has his Belmont winery up to his standards.

2014 Waxwing Spring Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 89 cases, \$39. Released March 2016. Fifth bottling from this vineyard located between the town of Petaluma and the northern tip of Point Reyes in the center of the Petaluma Gap. 20 acres were planted between 2001 and 2003 to Swan, Pommard, Calera, and Dijon 667, 777 and 115 clones. This bottling is 100% Pommard clone. Harvest Brix 22.7°. All fruit crushed by foot whole cluster and fermented with indigenous yeast and no sulfur addition in open-top fermenters. Aged 11 months in once-used French oak barrels, with a light filtration before bottling. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a complex array of aromas including red berries, white pepper, earthy flora and a hint of tobacco. The tannins and acidity battle the fruit for supremacy in this wine that is spearheaded by flavors of dark red cranberries, strawberries and cherries. A touch of anise-laced oak adds seasoning. Texturally, the wine's ruddy tannins create some interest but stick out. The wine's hi-strung acidity creates an uplifting finish. 89.*

Wren Hop Vineyards, Windsor, California

Wren Hop Pinot Noir is stylistically unique for its full-bodied, luscious fruit flavors, and character imparted by aging in 100% new French oak. This is a family winery run by partners James McDonough and his father James McDonough, Sr. James and his spouse Jennifer bought a 10-acre Russian River Valley property in 2008 including a 6-acre vineyard named Wren Hop after the resident birds. The first release was from the 2009 vintage. The winemaker is Russell Bevan. Each wine has a unique and provocative name. The wines are sold through the winery's online store and via a mailing list at www.wrenhop.com.

2013 Wren Hop Vineyards "Oracle's Whisper" Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.36, 332 cases, \$72. Sourced from Wren Hop Estate Vineyard, clones 667, 777 and 115. Vineyard is located in the Middle Reach of the Russian River Valley on a hillside protected from afternoon heat. The vineyard is planted in Goldridge soil and farmed with organic and biodynamic practices. Aged 14 months in 100% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of ripe Bing cherry, boysenberry, Hoison sauce, dark red rose petal and wine cave. A generous charge of sweet black cherry fruit greets the mid palate, encased in firm but refined tannins and accented by welcome oak seasoning. A seamless offering that is luscious and extracted yet agile, finishing with uncommon fruit expression. 92.*

2013 Wren Hop Vineyards "Witch's Ladder" Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.52, 288 cases, \$72. Sourced from Swicegood and Wren Hop Estate vineyards, clones 777 and 115. Aged 14 months in 100% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of black cherry, black raspberry, sous bois and seasoned oak. The mid weight darker fruits are lush and sappy, yet bright and crunchy. A riff of spice and oak top note add interest. The tannins are well-managed and the finish is generously endowed. The wine is nicely composed although the oak detracts a bit of pleasure for me, but the oak is non drying and should integrate further over time in the bottle. 91.*



2013 Wren Hop Vineyards “Architects & Saboteurs Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir pH 3.65, 160 cases, \$78. Sourced from Bentrack Vineyard, clones 777 and 115. The vineyard is but a few miles of the Pacific Ocean and has a major maritime influence allowing slow ripening. Aged 14 months in 100% new French oak barrels. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass.*

Deep, haunting aromas of blackberry, cassis, oak spice and cigar humidor. A mid weight plus array of dark fruits are enchanting and delicious. The tannins are soothing, the texture is refined and the mild oak notes of tobacco and toast are gratifying. This wine has the most extraction of the three wines tasted here, but the acidity keeps the wine nimble. Even better when tasted later in the day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. A bodacious charmer. Pull the cork, put the dog out, find your spouse, turn off all distractions, dim the lights, and engage in some Pinot heaven. 94.



More Wines

2013 Bogle Vineyards California Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$8.99. This winery in Clarksburg consistently offers value for the price. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, black raspberry and floral bouquet hold up over time in the glass. A middleweight mix of black cherry, darker berry and plum flavors are framed by integrated tannins. Nicely balanced with a modest finish that has the slightest warmth. When tasted several hours later, the fruit had faded a bit and the oak had come to the forefront. A good value wine that should be drunk young. 87.*



2014 Borne Mile Marker 33.89 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$24.99. Borne refers to the old byways of France dotted with milestones called bornes. *Moderate light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, Asian 5-spice, pepper and bark lead to a lighter weighted and elegant wine with crisp and juicy flavors of cherry, raspberry and cranberry framed by a subtle halo of oak. Mild tannins make for easy drinking. 89.*

2014 La Voix Winery Rebel Rebel Quinta Del Mar Vineyard Central Coast Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 1,000 cases, \$45. A new project from vintner Steve Clifton (Brewer-Clifton). 10% whole cluster, native yeast fermentation, 28 days on the skins including extended maceration, aged 12 months in most neutral oak barrels (10% new). *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Both savory and fruity on the nose, with aromas of cherry, violet, herbs, toast and floral uplift. The flavors of black raspberry and blackberry are overlain with a generous halo of oak. Otherwise the wine is nicely composed with a silky mouthfeel, a subtle floral undertone, and a slightly tart finish. 89.*



2014 Ocean View San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$14.99. Produced and bottled by Sinor-LaVallee in Arroyo Grande by noted winemaker Mike Sinor for Trader Joe's markets. Sourced from the Estate Ocean View Vineyard located only 1.3 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean.

Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens nicely with swirling, offering engaging aromas of dark red and black berries, spice, briar and a subtle salinity. A giving and satisfying mid weight wine with flavors of blackberry, black raspberry, spice and anise framed by ruddy tannins. Silky on the palate with good cut, subtle oak seasoning, and a satisfying finish with some length. Still highly enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine could easily bring three times the price. 90.



2012 W.H. Smith Maritime Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., \$58 (I have seen it discounted to \$42). A blend of grapes from several small growers. Winemakers are Bill and Jean Smith who craft the wine in Angwin. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Toasty oak is at the forefront on the nose with aromas of cigar and vanilla. The charming black cherry and black raspberry fruit core is overlain with aggressive oak. The mouthfeel is satiny and the finish offers up a generous charge of fruit and spice. I have mixed feelings about this wine because the fruit is very classy but there is an onerous whack of oak. 89.*

2013 Zepaltas Devoto Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 72 cases, \$46. Vineyard is located in the Sebastopol Hills. Owner and farmer Stan Devoto is a noted organic apple grower who planted this vineyard in 2006 on Gold Ridge Road. 50% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of red cherry, brick, sandalwood and toast lead to a light weighted wine with delicate flavors of red cherry and raspberry. A demure wine with appealing finesse with gossamer tannins, but lacking a bit of mid palate impact and finishing power.* **89.**

Willamette Valley

Anam Cara Cellars, Sherwood, Oregon

2013 Anam Cara Cellars Nicholas Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir, 13.4% alc., 250 cases, \$33. Wädenswil (40%), Pommard (20%), Dijon 114 (25%), Dijon 777 (15%). Aged in French oak barrels, 27% new. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of fresh cherry, strawberry, red rose petal and sandalwood. Engaging on the palate, with discretely concentrated flavors of red cherry, cranberry and Damsel plum. On the delicate side with modest tannins, a silky mouthfeel, and a modest finish. Very Oregonian in demeanor, this wine should pick up intensity over time in bottle.* **89-90.**

2013 Anam Cara Cellars Nicholas Estate Reserve Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., 47 cases, \$45. Dijon 777 (50%) and Pommard (50%). Aged in French oak barrels, 37% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Clearly a step up in quality, this wine offers bright aromas of cherry and red berry preserves leading to a middleweight core of black cherry, blackberry, cola, spice and mocha flavors backed by mildly firm and deft tannins. More sappy than the regular Nicholas Estate bottling, with a bigger finish. A very gracious wine that engages with flavor and transparency.* **92.**

CARDEN Cellars, Gaston, Oregon

James Carney moved to Oregon in the early 1980s to study at the University of Oregon and soon became enamored with Oregon Pinot Noir. Nearly 20 years later he partnered with one of his friends and fellow wine lover Susan Weeden to start Carden Cellars. The winemaker is noted Oregon veteran Tony Rynders. The wine is sold on the winery website at www.cardencellars.com.

2012 Carden Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 745 cases, \$48. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers very ripe dark fruited aromas with hints of violet and soy sauce. More engaging on the palate, with mid weight plus flavors of blackberry, boysenberry, black currant and spice. A bold wine with hefty sap and ripeness reflective of the vintage. Highly fruit-driven with deft oak management.* **89.**

Cristom Vineyards, Salem, Oregon

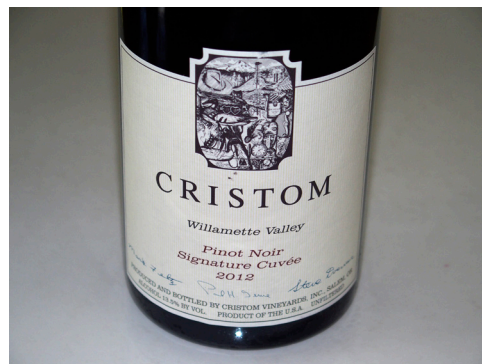
Read about one of Oregon's most cherished wineries: www.princeofpinot.com/winery/142/.



2012 Cristom Signature Cuvée Eola-Amity Hills Oregon

Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$150. This bottling is rarely produced in small amounts from barrels that call out for a unique expression. The exact blend is not revealed because it is different each time the wine is made. This is only the fifth time this barrel selection from multiple vineyards has been offered since Cristom was established in 1992. Bottled unfiltered and

unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Haunting and exotic aromas of spiced black cherry and pine sap. A rainbow of purple and black fruits are accented with spice and floral notes in a gutsy style that offers ripe, honed tannins, unusually intense and caressing mid palate presence, and exceptional, even extraordinary length on the finish that is like a three-hour movie you don't want to end. There is plenty of whole cluster goodness to engage the Pinot connoisseur in this evocative wine from a special vintage. 95.*



Mouton Noir Wines, Dundee, Oregon

This winery was founded by French Laundry and Per Se sommelier André Hueston Mack in 2007. The wines were originally created for some of New York's best restaurants and are now available nationwide. The wines offer clever, irreverent names including the wine reviewed here.

2014 O.P.P. Other People's Pinot Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$15.99, screwcap. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a blend of cherry, rose, dried herbs and oak aromas. Light in weight and easy to drink, with flavors of red cherry and berry with a noticeable infusion of toasty oak. A simple, straightforward, and delicate Pinot Noir. 86.*

Byron Introduces Single-Vineyard Wines

Inspired by innovative vintner Uriel Nielson, the first to plant a commercial vineyard in Santa Barbara County in 1964, Byron returns to its roots with a focus on limited production, single vineyard Pinot Noir, while continuing to make wines that feature Santa Barbara's coastal AVAs under the Nielson label, including Santa Maria Valley, Sta. Rita Hills and the broader Santa Barbara County AVA. Byron Winery, located in Santa Maria, was one of Santa Barbara's pioneering wineries, but in recent years has shifted its focus away from vineyard designated wines.

The 2013 vintage of Byron wines marks a return to single vineyard Pinot Noirs including releases from Nielson Vineyard, Julia's Vineyard, Sierra Madre Vineyard, and Monument Vineyard, all in the Santa Maria Valley AVA. Future releases will offer Pinot Noir from the John Sebastiano, Rita's Crown and La Encantada vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills and Chardonnay from the Nielson and Bien Nacido vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley. The new wines will be available primarily through the winery mailing list and website at www.byronwines.com, with limited distribution nationally to select wine retailers and restaurants.

Director of Winemaking for Byron Winery, Jonathan Nagy (pictured below), grew up in Santa Barbara County, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from University of California at Davis. After graduation, his initial winemaking experience was at Cambria Winery, later followed by an assistant winemaker position in 2001 at Byron Winery under pioneering Santa Barbara vintner, Ken Brown. In 2003, Jonathan became the Director of Winemaking at Byron Winery. He lives in Santa Maria with his spouse Clarissa, who is also a winemaker.



Byron offers public and private tastings daily at a newly remodeled tasting room in downtown Los Olivos.

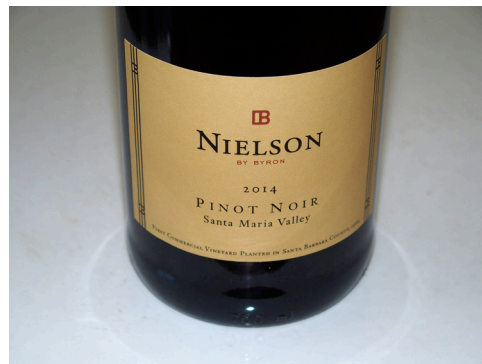
2014 Nielson by Byron Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.50, \$19. Sourced from Sta. Rita Hills, Los Alamos and Santa Maria Valley appellations. Aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 5% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of wood-kissed cherries lead to an easy drinking, cherry-flavored wine with accents of black tea, a flowery infusion and oak. Nothing serious or contemplative, but a solid everyday wine with nicely integrated tannins and acidity.* **87.**



2014 Nielson by Byron Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.55, \$29. Small lot fermentations, 10% whole cluster, extended maceration for some tanks. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 15% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of fresh berry tart and kitchen baking spices. Juicy and suave on the palate, with*

vivacious flavors of dark red strawberries and boysenberries. Very giving, with impressive balance. 90.



The new Byron vineyard designated wines are vinified differently depending on site. The grapes are either crushed whole cluster, 33% de-stemmed or fully de-stemmed into a variety of vessels from oak barrels and one-half ton bins up to 6-ton tanks. Most lots are inoculated and punched down twice daily. The wines are age on the lees in a French oak barrels from several cooperages. On average, Byron Pinot Noir is aged for 16 months in barrel and 12 months in bottle before release.

2013 Byron Nielson Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 1,750 cases, \$45. Nielson Vineyard surrounds the winery and is more than just Byron's Estate Vineyard as it has historical significance as the first commercial vineyard planted in Santa Barbara County in 1964 (and replanted in 2000). Thin sandy loam soils, cooling maritime influence. Dijon clones 114 and 667 and Pommard. 100% de-stemmed, 3 to 5-day cold soak, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The first impression on this wine is oak as the nose and flavor spectrum is dominated by notes of espresso, caramel and toast. Although only 35% new oak was used, the halo of oak pervades this wine even over time in the glass and when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Soft and silky in texture, with lovely integration of tannins and acidity, the wine offers a core of black cherry, raspberry and plum flavors, and some finishing power. I gave the wine every chance, but the oak overlay proved too daunting to warrant a higher score. 89.*

2013 Byron Sierra Madre Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 225 cases, \$45. A cool and exposed site in the Santa Maria Valley with sandy loam soils. Planted in 1974. Clone 667. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 31% new. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Elevating aromas of cherry and spice cake that hold up over time in the glass. Very satisfying attack and mid palate presence of mid weight cherry, raspberry and brown spice flavors. Very charming personality, offering delicate fine-grain tannins, buried oak, and a highly approachable demeanor. Still engaging the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Tres Pinot. 92*

2013 Byron Julia's Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 115 cases, \$45. This vineyard has some of the oldest vines in the region. Ancient alluvial sandy loam soils and cool, maritime influence. Planted in 1970 originally. Pommard 4 clone. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 39% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, ripe strawberry and sous bois lead off. Easy to like, with silky tannins, a suave texture, nicely integrated oak, and a generous amount of dark red and black cherry and berry flavors that linger on the finish. Still solid the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 90.*

2013 Byron Monument Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 119 cases, \$65. This wine is crafted from the best blocks of Byron's Estate Nielson Vineyard. Dijon clones 114, 667 and Pommard. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 78% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy initially, picking up character over time in the glass to reveal aromas of cherry reduction sauce, spice and biscuit. On entry, there is an explosion of blackest cherry, blackberry and cassis fruit flavors that are refined and dance in a flirty manner on the palate. Very classy, with considerable polish, and remarkable intensity and length on the notable finish. The noteworthy finish still stood out the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. A beautiful expression of Central Coast Pinot Noir. 93.*



The Legacy of Burt Williams & Williams & Selyem Pinot Noir Keeps on Giving

Burt Williams had an extraordinary intuition for crafting Pinot Noir. He was enamored with wine by his late teens, bought his first case of wine, a Pedroncelli Zinfandel at the age of 20, and made his first wine in 1964 at the age of 24 at his house in Forestville. The location of the house in "Hacienda Del Rio," would grace the label of the first wines Williams crafted with neighbor, friend, partner and fellow winemaker Ed Selyem.

Williams enjoyed Russian River Valley Zinfandel, and although he dabbled in Burgundy and was attracted to it, he considered it too expensive. In fact, the escalating cost of Burgundy was one of the reasons he and Ed Selyem decided to start their own winery. They never set out to make a splash or become rich, but rather wanted to make good Pinot Noir they could drink at home. Burt would recall, "I had no big plan. I wanted to buy grapes and turn them into good wine. We weren't trying to conquer the world or make millions of dollars. We were trying to make the best wine we could and enjoy it ourselves. If enough was left over, we could sell it. We never imagined that we would become a cult winery capable of selling everything we made."

When Burt and Ed started out in 1979, consistently fine California Pinot Noir was nowhere to be found. Blessed with a superb palate and possessing a self-taught keen understanding of how Pinot Noir should be crafted, Williams realized there was a place for world-class Pinot Noir in California, a "niche" for something that no one had ever done before. Williams read every book on wine and winemaking he could get his hands on and visited many local Russian River Valley winemakers who offered practical advice and encouragement. Burt attended many Burgundy tastings in the Bay Area, but never set foot in Burgundy because of his admitted reluctance to fly.



The Williams Selyem Pinot Noirs had a powerful charisma that turned on many devoted followers. A customer wrote, "Please hurry up with your next release because I missed the last one and my friends have stopped coming over." The quirky garagiste origins of the wines added to their mystique with their scarcity contributing

to the appeal, but the truth was these were flat-out some of the greatest California Pinot Noirs of their time. The wines even appeared on restaurant lists in Burgundy!

Williams was forever humbled by the public's attraction to his wines. He was encouraged that consumers enjoyed his wines, but was more concerned with making wines that pleased himself.

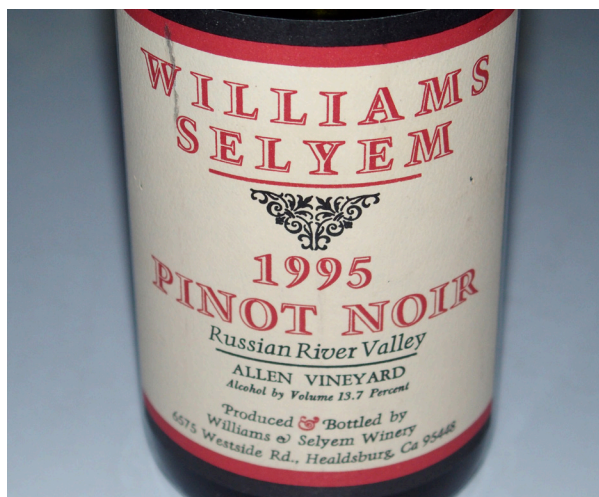
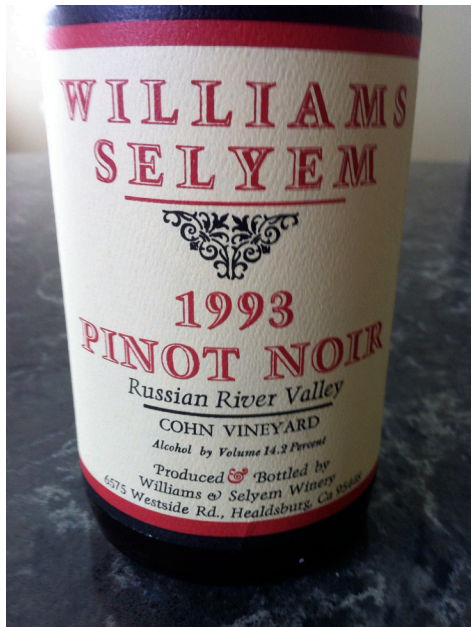
The Williams Selyem Pinot Noirs were charming and complex when young, but they would turn out to age better than many California Pinot Noirs crafted at the time. People thought that they were so delicious when young, they couldn't possibly age. Their age ability has proven itself over time, in part due to moderate alcohols and well-honed acidity, as well as impeccable balance. Balance was very important to Williams who explained, "Wine needs to be transparent and to be transparent, it must be balanced. Over ripe, over blown wines do not reflect the site."

Williams Selyem was sold in 1998 and Burt was asked to consult for a few years after the sale, but he could never put his heart in it and soon left permanently. The last vintage he vinified at Williams Selyem was 1997. After the winery was sold, Burt bought a 40-acre property in Anderson Valley and planted 13 acres of Pinot Noir at what was named Morning Dew Ranch. He crafted two vintages from this vineyard, 2008 and 2009, and then retired completely from winemaking.

Ed Selyem was an equal partner in Williams Selyem and although he did much of the business accounting and management, and came up with the idea of allocating the wines through a mailing list, he was also involved in the winemaking. Since selling the winery, he has shunned the limelight and press, and cherished his retirement.

Fortunately, the wines of Williams Selyem have continued to offer remarkable longevity, and well-cellarred examples are still drinking beautifully. The legacy continues.

Recently I had the good fortune to drink two older vintages of Williams Selyem Pinot Noir: **1993 Williams Selyem Cohn Vineyard Sonoma County Pinot Noir** and **1995 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**.



Cohn Vineyard, now an estate vineyard of Benovia Winery, entered Burt's radar through a winemaker friend at Hop Kiln Winery that was sourcing grapes from Cohn Vineyard beginning in 1981. When the Hop Kiln Winery contract expired in 1987, Williams Selyem began sourcing grapes from Cohn Vineyard, usually blending them into the Russian River Valley and Sonoma County bottlings. A vineyard designated Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir was produced in only two vintages: 1988 and 1993. Burt dropped the vineyard in 1995 when owner Arne Cohn put in drip irrigation and over-watered the vineyard.

I was able to acquire a pristine bottle of 1993 Cohn Vineyard Pinot Noir from a collector and recently shared it with winemakers Michael Sullivan of Benovia Winery and Rod Berglund of Joseph Swan Vineyards. *The wine*

had astonishing freshness and color, infused with aromas of incense, spice, Bing cherry and rose petal that held up for an hour while the bottle was consumed. Tasted blind, it would have been impossible to identify this wine as 23 years old. The balance was impeccable, the oak thoroughly immersed, and the tannins gossamer in nature. It was without doubt one of the greatest, if not the greatest, old California Pinot Noir I have ever tasted in over 40 years of tasting Pinot Noir.

Grape sources were critical for the success of Williams Selyem and Allen Vineyard become one of the cornerstone sources of Pinot Noir for the winery. Since Burt and Ed had spent a significant part of their lives in the Russian River Valley, they knew where the good vineyards were located. In 1987, Joe Rochioli introduced Burt and Ed to Howard Allen who owned a vineyard farmed by Joe Rochioli that was located directly across from Rochioli Vineyard on Westside Road. Not every vineyard met Williams Selyem's high standards and only the best were deemed able to stand on their own as a vineyard designate. Allen Vineyard was consistently one of the favored vineyards in the Williams Selyem vineyard designate program.

The 1995 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Pinot Noir that I opened recently was a delight. *The color had turned a brickish red and was hazy (unfiltered). Upon opening, aromas of spice, leather, woodland and cherry zoomed from the glass, but faded over time. The wine was still fascinating to drink, offering ever changing nuances of flavor including cherry, strawberry, orange-infused cranberry, orange pekoe tea, and brown spice. At 13.7% alcohol, the wine was easy to drink, with resolved tannins and a sappy richness still persisting on a surprisingly long finish. Not epiphanic like the Cohn bottling, but still engaging.*

More examples of aged Williams Selyem Pinot Noir were reviewed in 2014 here: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1487/.

Pinot Briefs

Pinot Noir New Zealand 2017 Acclaimed “I’ll Drink to That!” United States podcaster Levi Dalton will join noted British wine writer Jancis Robinson, MW, eminent wine and sake expert Ken Ohashi, MW, and Grammy Award-winning Tool frontman and winemaker Maynard James Keenan from Arizona in the US, as key note speakers. Registration for Pinot Noir NZ 2017 is now open at www.pinotnz.co.nz.

The International Chardonnay Symposium Wente Family will be honored at this year’s International Chardonnay Symposium to be held in Pismo Beach, CA, May 12-14, 2016. Wente Family Estates will receive the first Legendary Family of Chardonnay Award. The Wente family story began in 1883 when first generation C.H. Wente planted 47 acres in the Livermore Valley that quickly grew to 200 acres before Prohibition. His sons, Ernest and Herman, took over the family business after Prohibition, and developed the Wente Chardonnay clone that transformed California’s Chardonnay wine landscape. Today, 80% of Chardonnay grown in California is derived from the Wente clone. This year the Wente family celebrates the 80th anniversary of bottling the nation’s first varietally-labeled Chardonnay, a 1936 vintage. Wente Family Estates continues to release award-winning wines from their vineyards in Livermore Valley, San Francisco Bay and Arroyo Seco appellations. The Symposium is also hosting a panel titled, “Wente Clone Comparative Tasting,” that will explore the Wente clone planted at various sites. To purchase tickets, visit www.TheChardonnaySymposium.com.



Foley Food & Wine Society Orange County Event The Foley Food & Wine Society has planned an event at Orange County, California’s Lyon Air Museum on April 9, 2016. Tapas will be offered to accompany spring releases and other wines in the Foley Estates portfolio. Winemakers from Foley Estates and Lincourt, Chalk Hill Estates and Roth Estates will be present. 25% off all wines the day of the event. Profits from the event benefit the Folded Flag Foundation and Dream Foundation. For tickets (\$150 per person), visit www.foleyfoodandwinesociety.com.

40th Anniversary of the Judgment of Paris in Sonoma County The three days of the Russian River Valley Barrel Auction will kick off with a recognition of Helen Bacigalupi as one of four Sonoma County Icons for her part in shaping the heritage of Sonoma County winemaking. Bacigalupi Vineyards will join four other Russian River Valley vintners in producing The Judgment of Paris 40th Anniversary Barrel during the Sonoma County Vintner’s Annual Barrel Auction. This never before and never again barrel is composed of lots of Chardonnay from the original Wente clone plantings at Bacigalupi Vineyards. The Return to Paris Tasting will be held Saturday, April 30, 2016, at Bacigalupi Vineyards, offering a tasting of current vintage French burgundies and California wines that emulate the wines tasted in 1976 along with a BBQ lunch. A forum of guest speakers (including me) will discuss the influence of Sonoma County farming on the winning Chardonnay and the Judgment of Paris’ affect on the California wine industry. This event coincides with the 60th anniversary of the planting of the historic Bacigalupi vineyard. The tasting is sold out, but tickets to the BBQ are still available: visit www.bacigalupivineyards.com. The photo below shows a young Charles and Helen Bacigalupi.



West of West San Francisco West Sonoma Coast Vintners present the West of West SF Wine Festival on May 19, 2016, to be held at the Golden Gate Club of the Presidio in San Francisco. VIP Library Tasting and Barrel Tasting will be held from 5:00-6:00 p.m. (\$120) and the Consumer Grand Tasting will be from 6:00-8:30 p.m. (\$80). There will be 34 participating West Sonoma Coast Vintners member wineries pouring Pinot Noir, Syrah and Chardonnay. For information and tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com.

Pinot, Pigs & Poets Event The Pinot, Pigs & Poets Committee, in collaboration with the Nebraska Pork Producers Association, has announced the 7th Annual Pinot, Pigs & Poets to be held at Happy Hollow Club on June 2, 2016. All proceeds benefit the Completely KIDS weekend and after-school food programs. The event features outstanding Pinot Noir wines and savory pork dishes from renowned Omaha chefs as well as slam poetry and vintner and chef competitions. Participating wineries include Adelsheim, Beaux Freres, Big Table Farm, Domaine Serene, Failla, FEL, Loring Wine Company, Pali Wine Co., Ponzi Vineyards, Reuling Vineyard, Small Vines, Talbott Vineyards and Williams Selyem. Reservations are available at www.pinotandpigs.org.

Sta. Rita Hills Winegrowers Road Trip to Southern California Members of the Sta. Rita Hills Winegrowers Alliance will be returning to the Marriott Marquis and Marina Kitchen in San Diego for an afternoon of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and BBQ. The Bottles and BBQ public event begins at 4:00 p.m. Tickets on sale at www.eventbrite.com.

Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival The 19th Annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival will be held May 20-22, 2016. Respected industry experts will speak at Friday's Technical Conference (I will be the emcee for this Conference) followed by a Casual BBQ at Pennyroyal Farm. The Grand Tasting will be held the following day at Goldeneye Winery from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.. Local wineries will have open houses on Sunday. Accommodations are limited in the Anderson Valley so arrange now to stay in the Anderson Valley, Mendocino Coast (a 45 minute drive), or Cloverdale (a 60 minute drive). This event always sells out. Tickets are available at www.avwines.com.

California Wine Festival The 7th Annual California Wine Festival will be held in Dana Point, Orange County, California April 15-16, 2016. The California Wine Festival has partnered with the Surfrider Foundation as the beneficiary of the proceeds of this event. A Sunset Rare & Reserve Wine Tasting and Silent Auction on Friday, April 15 at the Laguna Cliffs Marriott Resort & Spa will offer large format bottles, hand made surfboards, wine country adventures and more. A Beachside Wine Festival will be held on Saturday, April 16, at Lantern Bay Park offering tasting of wines, microbrews, and gourmet food samples. For tickets, visit www.californiawinefestival.com.



Flavors of Carlton On May 7, 2016, Yamhill Carlton Together Cares presents the 13th Annual Flavors of Carlton at Ken Wright Cellars Winery in downtown Carlton. The evening begins in the barrel room of Ken Wright Cellars with wine, hors d'oeuvres and a silent auction. Dinner follows in the big tent featuring offerings from 10 regionally renowned chefs with pairings of wine from 20 Yamhill County wineries. The evening will climax with a live auction of rare wine, original art, spectacular travel packages and one-of-a-kind items. Tickets are \$100 and include dinner, wine and a commemorative wine glass. For information and tickets, visit www.yctogethercares.com. Yamhill Carlton Together Cares, Inc. is a non profit organization dedicated to providing programs for local youth and families in Carlton and Yamhill.

Banquet: Wine from America's Best Merchants The people who launched Delectable four years ago have created an app - Banquet - that allows consumers to shop over 20,000+ bottles of wine from top independent wine stores and boutique wineries using their iPhone. Visit www.itunes.apple.com or www.shopbanquet.com.

Zena Crown Winery Debuts Zena Crown Winery debuted its four 2013 Pinot Noirs for the media and trade on March 31, 2016, in Salem, Oregon. Winemaker Shane Moore has worked with well-known Oregon winemaker Tony Rynders for the past few years to craft the Zena Crown Winery Pinot Noirs. They are sourcing various blocks throughout the 250-acre Zena Crown Vineyard that is located at the southern end of the Eola-Amity Hills AVA in the Willamette Valley, surrounded by the estates of Bethel Heights Vineyard, Cristom and St. Innocent Winery. The vineyard has proven to be a premier growing site for Pinot Noir and has supplied grapes to several celebrated producers in the Willamette Valley including Beaux Freres, Penner-Ash and Soter. Jackson Family Wines bought the Zena Crown Vineyard in the spring of 2013 increasing its vineyard holdings in the Willamette Valley to 440 acres. Look for the public release of these wines this year.

Domaine Serene Guaranteed Cork (DSGC) Domaine Serene President, Ryan Harris, announced a zero-tolerance policy against TCA and other forms of cork taint for all Domaine Serene wines starting with the release of the 2014 "r" Rose in February, 2016. DSGC assures positions Domaine Serene as the world's first winery to extend a comprehensive guarantee of taint-free natural cork closures to consumers and trade customers, regardless of where or when the wine was consumed. The higher cost associated with these rigorous new testing protocols will not be passed along as increased prices to consumers. In related news, at this year's Unified Grape Symposium, Amorim and M.A. Silva presented natural cork products that guarantee each individual cork has been inspected for TCA. Cork inspection is moving from testing batches of corks to testing each cork individually and the technique is good enough that the cork

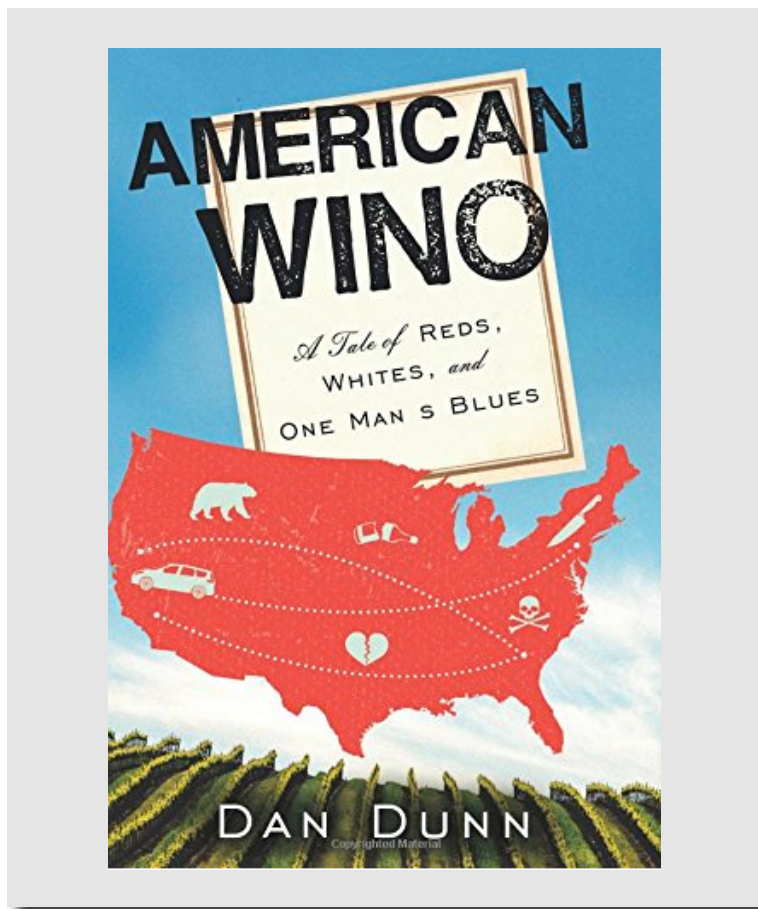
companies will certify the results. Corticera Amorim is based in Portugal and is the largest producer of cork products in the world. Amorim's ND Tech is a quality control system using gas chromatography and solid phase micro-extraction to test each individual cork for TCA, insuring that if it remains present, is below the detection threshold of 0.5 nongrams per liter. M.A Silva is also automatically inspecting each individual cork for TCA using gas-phase spectroscopy and is standing behind the results.

Wine Glass Transport How many times have you been to restaurants and wished you had proper stemware for the cherished Pinot Noir or Burgundy you brought? How often have you thought about bringing your own stemware to a tasting but lacked a proper carrying case? Wine Glass Transport offers an elegant wine glass travel case made of solid Beechwood with a leather handle that contains two padded pouches perfectly sized for Riedel's Sommeliers Burgundy glass or other fine glassware. Smaller glasses of almost any size can also be protected. This is the ultimate Pinot geek accessory. The case is priced at \$65 at www.wineglasstransport.com.



Wine & Spirits Restaurant Poll 250 restaurants participated in the 27th Annual Restaurant Poll. The results indicate a continued surge in popularity of Pinot Noir over the last decade. California Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir continue to dominate by-the-glass pours. Meiomi California Pinot Noir was the #1 by-the-glass restaurant pour with an average price of \$14. Other Pinot Noirs in the top 30 in order of popularity included Copain Tour Ensemble Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, Sandhi Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir, Domaine Eden Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir, Sonoma Cutrer Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, Bench Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, DeLoach Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, Laetitia Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir, and Elk Cove Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. The most popular Top 50 wines in America's restaurants from wineries that produce Pinot Noir were Cakebread Cellars (#1), Merry Edwards (#3), Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards (#16), Cristom Vineyards (#23), Kistler Vineyards (#25), La Crema (#27), Flowers (#28), Argyle (#29), Frank Family (#32), Calera (#24), Ferrari-Carano (#37), Mark West (#45) and Soter Vineyards (#48). The average restaurant price of Pinot Noir has increased from \$39 in 1994 to \$76 in 2015.

By The Numbers *Oregon Wine Press* reported in their 2016 Oregon Wine Almanac the following stats for Oregon as of the end of 2014. 1,027 vineyards (591 in the North Willamette Valley), 27,390 acres planted (16,545 in the North Willamette Valley), 676 wineries (440 in the North Willamette Valley). Total tons harvested in 2014 by variety: Pinot Noir - 45,239, Pinot Gris - 13,701, Chardonnay - 3,972 and Riesling - 2,194.



American Wino

A Tale of Reds, Whites, and One Man's Blues

Dan Dunn, former *Playboy* magazine nightlife columnist who wrote mainly about beer and spirits for two decades, knew little about wine when the confluence of personal life crises and a desire to learn about wine led him to hit the road in his FJ Cruiser on a seven-month, 15,000-mile journey to practically every wine region in the United States. Dunn's live-in girlfriend had abandoned him, his beloved dog, Piglet, had succumbed to cancer, and his brother had committed suicide. In addition, he had become disenchanted with living in Los Angeles, what he termed, "A gorgeously fucked-up bubble." This humorous travelogue turns out to be one of personal discovery, a way for Dunn to free himself of sadness, or as Dunn notes, "A tale of a man drinking himself to life."

Dunn admits, "I've spent most of what some people charitably call 'a career' writing about booze....not so much a job that you get as a job that you get away with." For years he had "bullshitted" his way through wine tastings and learned how to fake a knowledgeable grasp of wine ("what the trade calls Speaking from the Rectum"). He decided to educate himself about wine by visiting well known winery states as well as places in the United States that you would never think made wine, such as Missouri, Nebraska, Georgia and Vermont,

The trip would begin in Venice, California, and culminate at the Pebble Beach Food & Wine Festival in Northern California where he would recount his travels as a keynote speaker. Through a haze of freeloading, drinking, womanizing, and a stream of expletives, the downtrodden Dunn shares some useful wine production basics, wine terminology and insights, albeit in a cynical tone. For example, the term "complex," when used to describe a wine, is translated by Dunn to, "I actually have no clue what I'm fucking tasting."

After reading this book, I did not learn a thing about wine that I did not already know, but I laughed out loud at many junctures about experiences only wine insiders would muse over, and overall was thoroughly entertained.

American Wino, Dan Dunn, William Morrow Publishers, paperback, 338 pages, 2016, \$16.99.