



PinotFile

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*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

Final California Wine Reviews of 2016

December is an ideal time to buy Pinot Noir as many wineries are offering Holiday discounts including price reductions on 6 and 12 bottle purchases and free shipping. I wanted to get these reviews published so the wineries could be considered in your December buys. It is often advisable to call the wineries personally and discuss your needs as this interaction can lead to the most generous discounts.

Albatross Ridge, San Francisco

The Albatross Ridge 25-acre vineyard is located just seven miles from the Pacific Ocean in Carmel Valley at 1,250 feet elevation with limestone and shale soils. The site is cool and windswept with degree days falling below the upper threshold for the coolest Winkler Region I winegrowing designation (annual growing degree days from the estate vineyard are between 1650 and 1950 GDD). The result is a very long growing season allowing the grapes to achieve ripe flavors even at low Brix.

2014 Albatross Ridge Estate Reserve Carmel Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., pH 3.64, 300 cases, \$55. Harvest Brix 22.0°-23.0°. Yield 1.25 tons per acre. 15% whole cluster. 4-day cold soak, long, cool fermentation in small open-top tanks. Multiple individual native fermentations involving four clones of Pinot Noir spread over eight unique blocks. The majority clone is "828," with additions of 777 and Pommard clone. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. A selection of the finest barrels of the vintage. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens quickly to reveal aromas of purple berries and sous-bois. Exquisitely balanced and unctuous on the palate, with nicely ripened flavors of black cherry and boysenberry. Very polished, with seamless tannins, and a thread of dried herbs that adds a savory note. 92.*

2014 Albatross Ridge Estate Carmel Valley Chardonnay 13.0% alc., pH 3.29, 280 cases, \$55. Clones 96 and 15. Yield 1.25 tons per acre. 100% whole cluster pressed and native barrel fermented on the lees with no lees stirring or racking. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Exuberant aromas of citrus, warm brioche, spice, nutty oak and sea breeze. Beautifully crafted with spot on balance, offering flavors of citrus, Bartlett pear, apple, subtle oak and a hint of salinity. The sustained finish is particularly notable. 93.*

Anaba Wines, Sonoma

The first wines from the new Anaba winemaker team of Ross Cobb and Katy Wilson are being released. Ross and Katy joined Anaba in 2014 and work at the winery in Carneros. The Pinot Noirs have taken on a noticeable elegance.

2014 Anaba Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.61, 1,215 cases, \$42. A blend of three vineyards in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley AVA along with two others in the Sonoma Coast that overlaps with the Russian River Valley. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. Harvest Brix 24.1°. Clones are Pommard, 115, 777, 667, "828," and 9. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, fermented separately by clone, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aroma of fresh cherry pie and nutty oak. Light to mid weight in style with appealing elegance and balance. Very approachable darker cherry flavor with a deft touch of oak spice. A bit shallow on the attack and mid palate. 88.*

2014 Anaba Los Brisas Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.64, 180 cases, \$48. This vineyard is owned by Francis Mahoney, one of the most influential figures in Carneros Pinot Noir. Harvest Brix 24.1°. Clones are Swan, 667 and 777. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, each clone fermented separately, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of black cherry and spice. Elegant in demeanor, with light to mid weight juicy flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with an earthy underpinning. Impeccable balance, with a modest oak-kissed finish.* **89.**

2014 Anaba Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 13.6% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.6a, 887 cases, \$36. A blend of grapes from three vineyards: the Anaba J McK Estate Vineyard, Denmark Vineyard and Dutton Ranch (Mill Station and Shop Block). Harvest Brix 23.9°. Whole cluster pressed before barrel fermentation. 60% malolactic fermentation. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A generous wine with good spirit, offering aromas of honeyed pear, buttery lemon tart, crème brûlée and ocean air. Flavors of lemon creme, melon, blonde caramel and nutty oak aim to please and the uplifting citrus-driven finish is highly refreshing.* **92.**

Alma Fria, Holtermann Family Wines, Healdsburg

After three generations in wine imports, the Holtermann family planted new roots in the remote ridge tops of Annapolis on the Sonoma Coast. The small-production wines are sold primarily through a mailing list at www.almafria.com. Alma Fria is pronounced "ai-mah-free-ah."

2014 Alma Fria Plural Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 325 cases, \$40. Native fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting aromas of strawberry, cherry and the slightest oak. Light to mid weight flavors of black cherry, strawberry, baking spices and seasoning oak backed by integrated tannins and some noticeable intensity on the finish that has good cut. An early drinking wine with attractive finesse.* **89.**

2014 Alma Fria Holtermann Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 140 cases, \$62. Vineyard planted in 2002 in Annapolis at 700-800 feet elevation. 10% whole cluster. Native fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. I really was intrigued with the nose that offered scents of cherry, blackberry, bourbon and spice box. Both fruity and savory on the palate in a middleweight style. Fruit flavors of black cherry and raspberry interplay with savory notes of forest and herbs. The wine becomes more expressive over time in the glass.* **92.**

2014 Alma Fria Doña Margarita Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 195 cases, \$62. Vineyard planted in 2002 in Freestone at 400-625 feet elevation. 10% whole cluster. Native fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of cherry, red berry, sandalwood and rose petal. Elegantly composed and nicely balanced, with light to mid weight flavors of cherry, grape, boysenberry, spice and cedary oak. Very giving now, with gossamer tannins and a finish filled with spiced fruit goodness.* **92.**



2014 Alma Fria Plural Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 13.5% alc., 175 cases, \$40. Native fermentation. Aged 14 months in no new French oak barrels. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Very light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The complex nose offers aromas of lemon, cut yellow apple, marzipan, vanilla creme and sawdust. Lush in the mouth yet rather delicate and easy going with a good cut of acidity well immersed. Flavors of citrus including grapefruit and lemon stand out.* **91.**

Black Kite Cellars, Santa Rosa

Tom and Rebecca Green Birdsall offer Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs made from the Kite's Rest Vineyard, as well as small lot bottlings of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from similarly expressive vineyard sites in the Sonoma Coast and Santa Lucia Highlands. These Black Kite Cellars fall releases are available through the winery website at www.blackkitecellars.com and wine club, as well as through distribution in select wine shops and restaurants nationally.

2014 Black Kite Cellars Kite's Rest Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 1,254 cases, \$50. Clones 114, 115 and Pommard. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of dark cherry and berry and spice with plenty of oak chiming in harmony. Well ripened mid plus style wine with flavors of black cherry, coffee and toast. Structured with a very appealing silky texture and not too warm. The mouthfeel is the best feature, but there is too much oak overlay for full enjoyment. 89.*

2014 Black Kite Cellars Redwoods' Edge Block Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 193 cases, \$60. Clones 114 and 115. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly with swirling offering aromas of black cherry and baking cocoa. Deeply flavored dark, dark black cherry and spice framed by fine-grain tannins and integrated oak. The silky texture appeals and the wine finishes with juiciness and extended length. 91.*

2014 Black Kite Cellars Stony Terrace Block Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 193 cases, \$60. 100% Pommard clone. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of piquant coffee grounds and black cherry. The mid weight plus core of darkest cherry, boysenberry and blackberry fruits are framed by firm tannins. Similar to the River Turn, but more vibrancy and more tannin. The lasting finish reveals some subtle alcoholic heat. 90.*

2014 Black Kite Cellars River Turn Block Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 193 cases, \$60. 100% Pommard clone. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Moody aromas of dark cherry and berry, dark chocolate, barbecue and oak. Full bodied, with a luxurious core of velvety-textured purple and black berry fruits. A ripe, hedonistic wine, with edgy tannins that fit in and balance nicely the prodigious fruit. 91.*

2014 Black Kite Cellars Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 572 cases, \$50. Pisoni selection. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Blackest cherry, ripe strawberry and toasty oak drive the aromas and flavors in this mid weight styled wine. Plenty of oak plies the nose, even the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The dreamy texture captivates, the tannins are soft, and the finish aims to please. 90.*

2014 Black Kite Cellars Sierra Mar Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 120 cases, \$50. Pisoni selection. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Seasoned oak and dark fruits combine in an inviting perfume. Fruit-driven, with a luscious core of lip smacking blackberry and red and black raspberry fruits. The copious fruit and alcohol adds a bit of sweetness and a velvety mouthfeel. Assertive dark fruits embellish the finish that leaves a hint of alcoholic warmth in its wake. 90.*

2014 Black Kite Cellars Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 292 cases, \$60. Dijon 777 clone. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The beguiling nose offers scents of black cherry, raspberry coulis and a hint of toast and vanillin. Nicely structured with round shoulders, this wine features overreaching flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, and dark chocolate supported by bright acidity and fine-grain tannins. Easy to like, finishing with a burst of chocolate-covered cherry flavor. This wine just seems to stand out. 92.*



Byron Winery, Santa Maria

Byron has returned to its original focus on small lot Pinot Noir from Santa Barbara's best vineyards and in 2014 include the first releases from the Sta. Rita Hills appellation. Individual rows and blocks are selected to express the site. Jonathan Nagy is the winemaker. Byron wines are available through the Los Olivos tasting room, mailing list and website at www.byronwines.com. I found the oak treatment a bit heavy handed in this wines that are otherwise blessed with gorgeous fruit. Some of the wines have been downgraded because of the heavy-handed oak.

2014 Byron La Encantada Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 277 cases, \$55. Clone 777. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, anise and pungent herbs reaching more expression over time in the glass. The mid weight core of earthy black cherry and blackberry fruits are embellished with herbal oak. A savory wine, with modest, balanced tannins and a revealing satiny texture that attracts interest. I tasted this wine over and over and just couldn't find compelling delight. 87.*

2014 Byron Rita's Crown Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 295 cases, \$65. Clone "828." Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 46% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry and subtle oak leave a good impression. Mid weight flavors of dark red cherries and berries with a very appealing expression of cherry fruit, especially on the finish. The tannins are silky, there is good acidity, and the oak offers subtle seasoning. A highly respectable wine that can be enjoyed now but will last in the cellar. 93.*

2014 Byron John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 349 cases, \$55. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Boastful black cherry fruit aromas are shy but appealing. Oak-kissed flavors of black cherry and boysenberry are elevated with juicy acidity. Discretely concentrated, with a silky mouthfeel, and some notable fruit engages on the finish. 92.*

2014 Byron Julia's Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 342 cases, \$45. Pommard 4 clone. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 39% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is dominated by oak-driven scents of coffee grounds and toast. Much more appealing on the palate, with mid weight flavors of dark red cherries and berries and heavy accents of oak toast and spice. Forward drinking and nicely balanced with sleek tannins, yet oak currently plays too big a role for me in this wine. Still replete with oak-infused black cherry flavor when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 87.*

2014 Byron Sierra Madre Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 348 Cases, \$45. Clone 667. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 31% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Oak-driven aromas of espresso, toast and spice lead to a lively palate of oak-kissed black cherry fruit. The fruit is juicy and vibrant, the tannins are modest and the finish attracts attention with its energy and gift of bright fruit. I wanted more fruit on the nose, and less oak infusion, but the wine delivered plenty of pleasure in the mouth. 88.*

2014 Byron Monument Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., 390 cases, \$65. Clones Wädenswil 2A, Pommard, Swan, Benedict Selection. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 78% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is primary, offering little even with vigorous swirling, except notes of oak-driven coffee and spice. Much more giving on the mid weight palate, offering fresh flavors of black raspberry and black cherry fruits. The satiny texture is very seductive and the wine is impeccably balanced with oak delicately augmenting the fruit flavors. 92.*



2014 Byron Nielson Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 1,984 cases, \$45. Clones 114, 667, Pommard and Wädenswil 2A. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Boisterous aromas of dark red cherry and berry with a compliment of oak. Mid weight plus core of black cherry and boysenberry fruit flavors in a rather simple*

but pleasurable style. The mid palate has noticeable intent, the tannins are nicely balanced, there is an noticeable oak thread plying the background, and the finish shows some vigor. **90.**

2014 Byron Nielson Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 14.3% alc., 348 cases, \$40. Wente and Dijon 95 and 76 clones. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 54% new. *Very light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Highly enviable aromas of lemon zest, almond, vanilla and brioche. Very enterprising on the palate, with hi-tone flavors of lemon, pear, white peach, melon and spice. Sleek in texture and refined in character with a palate cleansing finish.* **93.**

2014 Byron Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 14.3% alc., 255 cases, \$45. Clones 95 and Wente 4. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 58% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Toast dominates the nose that also offers scents of citrus, white peach and pear. Much better with time in the glass with more energetic fruit aromas. The flavors of lemon, white peach, pear, fig and butter echo the nose but with more citrus singing. Sleek and clean, with a razor finish.* **88.**

La Follette Wines, Sebastopol

Noted winemaker Greg La Follette specializes in vineyard-designated Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. These two North Coast blends are more value priced and offered in more widespread distribution. Sites are selected for their potential contribution to the overall blend. In 2014, a warm growing season hastened the onset of harvest, and picking the Pinot Noir began in the third week of August. Tasting is available at The Barlow in Sebastopol.



2014 La Follette North Coast Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.53, TA 0.62, 7,458 cases, \$22, screwcap. Heart of this blend is Pinot Noir grown in the cool Petaluma Gap region of the Sonoma Coast AVA. Grapes from two family owned and organically farmed vineyards in Mendocino County round out the wine. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A mix of black cherry, peppery spices and black toast aromas lead to a mid weight wine with deep cherry flavor embellished with a note of spice. Silky tannins but enough structure to give the wine shoulders. Easy drinking, with a modicum of oak underlay and a modest but crisp finish.* **88.**



2014 La Follette North Coast Chardonnay 13.8% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.60, 3,335 cases, \$22, screwcap. Grapes for this blend come from both Mendocino County and the Sonoma Coast. A blend of tank and barrel fermentations. *Very light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon wafer, honey, spice, brioche and buttery oak lead off. Inviting brightness on the palate, with flavors of lemon, pineapple, green apple and grapefruit, and a pleasing texture that hints at creaminess.* **88.**

MacPhail Family Vineyards, Napa and Healdsburg

James MacPhail launched his namesake winery in 2002 and the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay offerings achieved widespread success, and seemed to escalate in quality each year. In 2011, the winery was sold to The Hess Collection with James staying on as winemaker. In June, 2016, James left the winery and was replaced by winemaker Dave Guffy. The 2014 vintage wines reviewed here are the last that James vinified in entirety under the MacPhail Family Vineyards label. Overall, I found that oak played a noticeable role in the aromatic and flavor profile of several of these Pinot Noirs and they may warrant higher scores when they are released next year as the oak further integrates. The Sonoma Coast bottling is the most forward drinking in the lineup and has been released.

For all these Pinot Noirs, the grapes are 100% de-stemmed, undergo a 5-day pre-fermentation cold soak, followed by fermentation with feral yeasts and/or proprietary yeast. Malolactic fermentation is usually native. Battonage in barrel once weekly for three months with a total aging of 11 months (17 months for the Pratt Vineyard bottling) in French oak barrels. The wines are bottled unfiltered and either lightly filtered or unfiltered.

2014 MacPhail Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.56, 2,350 cases, \$40. Release fall 2016. A blend of ten vineyard sources. Clones 114, 115, Pommard 4, 23, 667, 777, "828," Martini, Calera and Swan. Aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of black cherry, mulch and vanilla. Welcome fruit richness on the palate, with flavors of black cherry, boysenberry and blackberry infused with noticeable oak overlay. The tannins are*

reigned in, the mouthfeel is plush and the wine offers some generous fruit on the finish. The most approachable wine in the 2014 lineup. **89.**

2014 MacPhail Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.64, 94 cases, \$49. Release spring 2017. First MacPhail bottling from Ferrington Vineyard since 2010. Harvest Brix 24.0°-25.3°. Clones 667, "828," and Pommard. Aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 26% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of black cherry, toast and tobacco. Mid weight flavors of oak-kissed black cherry and blackberry fruits have noticeable intensity and freshness. The tannins are nicely balanced, there is a hint of welcome spice, and the deep cherry finish impresses. The wine attracts more attention with time in the glass.* **91.**

2014 MacPhail Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., pH 3.82, TA 0.58, 459 cases, \$49. Release spring 2017. Clones are Pommard, 115, 667, 777 and Wädenswil 2A. Aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 38% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. There is more oak in this wine than I like, but otherwise it is a captivating wine. Aromas of boysenberry, blackberry, cola and toasty oak are replicated in the mid weight loquacious flavors. There is admirable lift and juiciness, with silky tannins, with oak striving for attention on the finish. A little less oak intrusion was noted on the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **90.**

2014 MacPhail Sundawg Ridge Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.59, 409 cases, \$49. Release spring 2017. Clones are Pommard, 115 and Calera. Aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of cherry, peppery spices, earth and sweet oak. Highly seductive in the mouth with a lush texture and ripe flavors of strawberry, black cherry and black raspberry. A very polished and harmonious wine with good energy, deft barrel management and a grand finish. Considerably better the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **92**

2014 MacPhail Dutton Ranch Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.57, 297 cases, \$49. Release spring 2017. Thomas Road and Manzana vineyards. Harvest Brix 25.5°-26.0°. Clones 115, 777 and "828." Aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 34% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of fresh cherry, baking spice and toasty oak lead off. In the mouth, there is a modest attack of black cherry and blackberry fruits accented with vivid oak. The texture is suave, the tannins are well balanced, and the wine finishes with a flourish of dared bed berry goodness.* **89.**

2014 MacPhail Wildcat Mountain Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 108 cases, \$49. Release spring 2017. Harvest Brix 23.8°. Clones 115, 667 and 777. Aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 34% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Oak dominates the character of this wine that has aromas of cherry, old book and toast and flavors of black cherry, dark berries, spice and tobacco. Decent balance of t'n'a and some finish filled with sweet dark berry fruits.* **88.**

2014 MacPhail Pratt Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.61, 203 cases, \$49. Release spring 2017. One of California's premier Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyards. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Clones are Pommard 4 and 5, 114, 115, 777 and 23. Aged 17 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A very classy wine that impresses from the get-go with aromas of dark cherry and underbrush and flavors of blueberry, boysenberry and spice in an elegantly styled wine with good oak integration, filigree tannins and a long, sleek finish. This wine stands out among the 2014 lineup of MacPhail Pinot Noir wines tasted on this date.* **92.**



2014 MacPhail Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.3% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.60, 145 cases, \$45. Harvest Brix 23.9°. Release fall 2016. Clones are Dijon 76 and 96. Barrel fermented, native fermentation, 100% malolactic fermentation, lees stirring once weekly through primary fermentation. Aged 17 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 15% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of fresh-squeezed lemon and honeycomb lead to flavors of citrus, poached yellow apple, vanilla cream and caramel. Slightly creamy in texture, with integrated acidity and finish filled with caramelized apple flavor.* **90.**

Navarro Vineyards, Philo

The two Pinot Noirs reviewed here from Navarro offer a very instructive contrast. At Navarro, no sulfur dioxide is added to crushed grapes or juice, so they assume spoilage yeasts (*Brettanomyces* - the Greek word for “British fungus” as it was causing spoilage in English ales around 1900) might appear in the winery. Therefore, they take extra precautions to keep the winery sanitary and each barrel is carefully monitored. Typically the Pinot Noir is sold after it has been in bottle a year or two and during this time a second fermentation can occur due to *Brettanomyces*. Navarro prefers not to filter Pinot Noir as it strips the wine of some of its richness, so before bottling, each wine is checked for potential spoilage yeasts. Normally the winery’s unfiltered Pinot Noir is limited to a few hundred cases each vintage to keep potential losses at a minimum, but the 2014 Pinot Noirs seemed generally free of problem yeasts, so they bottled 40 percent of the 2014 *Méthode à l’Ancienne* Pinot Noir unfiltered. Both the filtered and unfiltered versions of this Pinot Noir were vinified in an identical manner including aging for nearly a year in French oak barrels, 30% new. A total of 4,526 cases of the wine in its two configurations were produced. Tasting the two wines side-by-side, it is easy to discern noticeable differences, and I much preferred the unfiltered version of the same wine.

2014 Navarro Vineyards *Méthode à l’Ancienne* Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (Filtered) 13.9% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.65, \$32. Harvest Brix 24.9°. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, cranberry and raspberry mix with dried herb scents. Light to mid weight styled and cherry driven, with accents of spice and dried herbs. Sleek and elegant, but somewhat shallow on the mid palate, finishing modestly. The wine seems stripped of its character compared to the unfiltered bottling. 88.*



2014 Navarro Vineyards *Méthode à l’Ancienne* Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (Unfiltered) 13.9% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.65, \$35. Harvest Brix 24.9°. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Considerably more aromatic than the filtered wine, with soaring aromas of darker cherries, spice and earthy flora.*

Fuller, weightier and more round shouldered on the palate with beguiling fruit flavors of black cherry and black raspberry. A subtle thread of savory herbs plies the background. The texture is very soothing and the wine offers more fruit and length on the finish than the filtered twin. Still quite enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 91.



2014 Navarro Vineyards *Première Reserve* Anderson Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.76, 827 cases, \$27. Harvest Brix 24.0°. After a leisurely fermentation, the must was racked to French oak barrels, 28% new, underwent full malolactic fermentation, and aged 10 months on the lees. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. The nose attracts interest with scents of lemon oil, pomelo, nutty oak and garrigue. Flavors of lemon, pineapple, honey, almond and toast blend nicely and are lifted by prime acidity. The wine leaves a good impression with a clean, bright finish displaying good cut. 90.*

Sojourn Cellars, Sonoma

I had the opportunity to taste these wines on my own as well as with winemaker Erich Bradley. It is always extremely helpful as a wine critic to taste with winemakers because I get a feel for what the winemaker is trying to accomplish stylistically, why they chooses certain vineyards to work with, and what challenges they face. I am reminded of the quote from Tim Atkin MW, “I believe the place where a wine was made, not to mention the character, ambition and talent of the person who made it, is highly relevant to how that wine tastes. I want to know about these things, just as I want to know about vintage conditions, personal eccentricities and a winemaker’s take on the world. All these things make wine different: all these things make wine special.” When a winemaker talks more about vineyards and viticulture than winemaking, like Erich does, I know the wines have a better chance of excellence.

The 2015 vintage on the Sonoma Coast was outstanding for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, although yields were lower than average. Bud break was early and drought conditions prevailed throughout the growing season.

Harvest was one of the earliest on record. Vines produced loose clusters and smaller berries with ripe tannins. Erich noted, "The resulting wines display tremendous finesse, depth and aromatic intensity."

All the vineyards Erich works with are very cool sites with extended growing seasons, yet the grapes are able to reach phenolic maturity without high Brix levels. Erich looks for gracious Pinot Noir that has enviable textures. He carefully matches his choice of cooperage with each vineyard to best pull out the most desirable characteristics and expression of the vineyard.

The wines reviewed here were bottled in July and August, 2016, (Chardonnay) and at the end of August (Pinot Noir), 2016, and are just now beginning to be expressive. They will be released at the end of January 2017, but the vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs are still immature without full oak integration and will surely offer more pleasurable drinking with another 6 to 12 months of cellaring. 2015 vintage case production was 7,450 cases of Pinot Noir and 1,667 cases of Chardonnay. Tasting is available by appointment at the winery's tasting room in the town of Sonoma. Visit www.sojourncellars.com.

2015 Sojourn Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 2,280 cases, \$39. A blend of grapes from eight vineyards in the Sonoma Coast AVA, ranging from Occidental to the Petaluma Gap. Key components are Gap's Crown, Sangiacomo, Rodgers Creek and Walala vineyards. Pinot Noir clones 115, "828," 667, Pommard and Wädenswil 2A. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Highly aromatic upon opening, with scents of cherry, pomegranate, spice, earthy flora and peat. Highly satisfying from the get-go, with mid weight flavors of cherry, pomegranate, black raspberry and Damsel plum fruits accented with enviable spice. Nicely balanced with oak adding interest in the background and finishing with good generosity. You won't find a better Sonoma Coast appellation Pinot Noir in the marketplace. 90.*

2015 Sojourn Rodgers Creek Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.61, 774 cases, \$48. Release spring 2017. Since 2008, Sojourn has worked with this vineyard sits high on a ridge in the Petaluma Gap, taking the full brunt of wind and thick fog that define this cool climate zone. Soils are volcanic ash on steep inclines. The foundation of the wine is Pommard clone that underwent 15% whole cluster fermentation, with some clone 777 that was de-stemmed. Barrels from the Bertranges forest was used to offer earthy umami characteristics that enhance the earth and mushroom notes of the Pommard clone in this wine. Open-top fermentation with native yeast, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of earthy cherry fruit with a hint of stem and sandalwood. Inviting marriage of ripe black cherry and blackberry fruits with savory hints of earth and mushroom. Noticeable, but not intrusive velvety tannins, with a welcome touch of toasty oak, and a finish with emphatic length. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 93.*



2015 Sojourn Sangiacomo Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.60, 1,020 cases, \$59. Release spring 2017. This vineyard is located on Roberts Road at the western base of Sonoma Mountain. The base of this wine is clone 115 with small portions of 777 and Swan clones added in for complexity. Extremely low yields. 100% de-stemmed, open-top fermentation with native yeast, and aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Persistent aromas of black cherry, spice, purple grapes and oak shavings lead to a mid weight treasure of purple berry and black cherry goodness that has impressive depth of flavor and a remarkably plush and luxurious mouthfeel. Not a powerhouse like the Gap's Crown, but nimble and texturally mesmerizing. Needs a little time to fully integrate the oak. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94.*



2015 Sojourn Walala Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.65, 328 cases, \$69. Release spring 2017. Inaugural vintage from this vineyard formerly owned by Premier Pacific and now owned by Bill Price. The vineyard sits on a spectacular ridge located 1,200 feet above sea level, just inland from the Pacific Ocean near the coastal town of Annapolis. Clones 113, 115, 777 and "828," are planted in gravelly loam soils. The vineyard rarely is warmer than 80°F but the elevation gives the vines ample sunlight and there has not been a problem getting grapes to ripen. 100% de-stemmed, open-top fermentation with native yeast, aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A standout in this lineup of excellent 2015 Pinot Noirs, offering*



aromas of cherry, strawberry, cranberry and spice with a forest floor accent. Flat-out stunning on the palate with a charge of delicious black cherry fruit that sticks to the mid palate and hangs on through an extraordinarily long and graciously fruity finish. Beautifully composed, with dry well-proportioned tannins and a satiny mouthfeel. This wine breathes new life into the promise of Pinot Noir that winemakers dream about. **96.**

2015 Sojourn Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.64, 768 cases, \$69. Release spring 2017. This vineyard is located on Roberts Road just above the Sangiacomo Vineyard yet the wines it produces are completely different. The base of the wine is clone 115 and 667, with small amounts of "828" that was whole cluster pressed and blended in for an overall total of 10% whole cluster. The 667 grown here produces very small berries and potent concentration so it is used judiciously. The vineyard typically delivers fruit richness, robust tannins and ample acidity and Erich must fight to tone the wine down. In 2015, tiny berries resulted in high levels of concentration. Clones fermented separately and aged separately before blending. Small amount of whole cluster. Open-top fermentation with native yeast and aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Hi-tone aromas of purple berries, spice and earthy flora soar from the glass with swirling. A mid weight plus core of luscious boysenberry and blueberry fruits brings the palate to attention. Very juicy and sappy with slightly astringent tannins and a hint of oak, welcome textural fluidity, and finishing with lasting generosity. This one will stand up to a good steak.* **92.**

2015 Sojourn Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.36, TA 0.67, 591 cases, \$38. Release spring 2017. Whole cluster pressed, fermented in French oak barrels with native yeast, complete malolactic fermentation, and aging 11 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. Bottled Unfiltered. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. This wine is intended to please those who prefer a ripe, more buttery style of Chardonnay. Aromas of yellow stone fruits and lemon are echoed in the flavors with added tropical and buttery oak notes. Nicely balanced, slightly viscous in texture, with a pleasing fruit intensity and a good cut on the finish.* **90.**

2015 Sojourn Sangiacomo Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.70, 348 cases, \$45. Release spring 2017. The wine is a combination of clone 95 from Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard and Old Wente clone from Sangiacomo Vella Ranch and Green Acres. Whole cluster pressed, fermented slowly in French oak barrels using native yeast, lees stirring the first three months, and aged in French oak barrels, 30% new. Malolactic fermentation allowed to progress as far as it desired. Bottled unfiltered. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. This wine is styled in a more vibrant, bright style. Aromas of lemon and grapefruit lead to a crisp and clean palate that is citrus driven. Vivid flavors, with oak playing a minor role, and finishing on a spirited note with a juicy, cleansing attitude.* **92.**

The Withers Winery, Santa Rosa

2014 The Withers English Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 347 cases, \$48. 8.5-acre vineyard planted in 2005. Located 9.2 miles from the Pacific Ocean in Occidental at 652 feet in Goldridge soil. Clones are Vosne-Romanee, 115 and 667. 35% whole cluster and feral yeast fermentation after a cold soak. Aged in French oak barrels, 15% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly ripened fruit aromas combined with notes of mesquite, stem and mocha java. Mid weight flavors of oak-kissed black cherry with an earthy, savory herb undertone. Plush in the mouth, with soft, merged tannins, spice notes, and some finishing goodness. This wine will benefit from more time in bottle to fully harmonize.* **89.**

2014 The Withers Peters Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., 319 cases, \$44. Vineyard was planted between 1991 and 1996. Located just southwest of Sebastopol. Clones are Pommard, 115 and 777. 35% whole cluster, feral yeast fermentation after a cold soak. Aged in French oak barrels, 15% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is very shy even with vigorous swirling, revealing only scents of earthy flora and oak. Much better on the palate, with flavors of cranberry, cherry and raspberry in a sleek, mid weight styled wine that has appealing fruit juiciness and vibrancy. Somewhat simple, yet strives to please, with balanced tannins and a very satisfying, red fruit driven finish.* **89.**

The Withers Charles Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 361 cases, \$44. A 14-acre vineyard planted in 2001 (10 acres of Pinot Noir). Located in Boonville adjacent Anderson Creek. Pommard, 115 and 667. Extremely well-drained soils. 35% whole cluster, feral yeast fermentation after a cold soak. Aged in French

oak barrels, 20% new. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Dark fruited on the nose with added scents of spice, bark and nutty oak. More inviting in the mouth, with flavors of black cherry and oak spice backed by muscular tannins that rise up on the finish that has good intensity and length. Needs a little more time in bottle to integrate the tannins. 89.*

Final Oregon Wine Reviews of 2016

Broadley Vineyards, Monroe

2014 Broadley Vineyards Claudias'a Choice Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 350 cases, \$50. Estate grown and bottled. Named for Broadley Vineyards co-founder Claudia Broadley. Sourced from a distinct block of the estate vineyard that tends to ripen later and often sets smaller clusters. The result is a big, dark, complex wine. The blend is primarily Pommard clone with some Wädenswil. Wild yeast fermentation. Aged 14-18 months in 40% new and the balance neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color and very bright in the glass. Somewhat moody, with aromas of earthy dark cherry lead to a satisfying mid weight palate of blueberry and black cherry fruit flavors. Very generous, with a silky texture and a saturating fruit driven finish offering a cascade of fruit. The wine is still very young and needs time (like many 2014 Oregon Pinot Noirs) to fully integrate the tannins.* **92.**

2014 Broadley Vineyards Marcile Lorraine Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 150 cases, \$50. Estate grown and bottled. Named for founder Craig Broadley's mother, this wine is produced each year from the same distinctive block of old vine Pinot Noir. A cooler fermentation, tighter-grained wood, and low toast barrels are used in production. A blend of Wädenswil and Pommard with the majority Wädenswil. Wild yeast fermentation in open-top oak fermenter for 14-21 days. Aged 14-18 months in French oak barrels, 40% new and the balance neutral. Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers primarily oak scents with added aromas of ripe cherry, earth and stem. The mid weight plus core of black raspberry fruit is opulent and layered, framed by rigorous tannins and silky acidity. The fruit has that old vine tenacity. Impressive balance and appeal but rather reticent at this stage, finishing with a remarkably long finish. The wine may warrant a higher score after more time in the cellar. **93.**

Cristom Vineyards, Salem

All wines reviewed here are produced and bottled from estate vineyards that are certified sustainable and unfiltered. The excellence of these wines from a venerated producer easily justify the price. You can recognize class when you experience it, and these wines have it. They can be enjoyed now for their youthful fruit, but will develop more intrigue with another few years in the cellar. The wines have discernible terroir-driven differences that adds to their appeal. Highly recommended.



2014 Cristom Marjorie Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 381 cases, \$69. Only vineyard kept when the property was bought in 1992. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a whole cluster delight of black cherry, rose petal, cinnamon, and exotic spice aromas. The whole cluster also embellishes the palate that features a mid weight core of succulent, well-spiced cherry fruit that is flat-out delicious. Welcome balance, with silky tannins and juicy acidity, finishing with a lengthy stream of spiced cherry and raspberry fruits. Even better the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle showing more power and depth and an even more gorgeous finish.* **96.**



2014 Cristom Jessie Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 964 cases, \$59. Vineyard was planted on a very steep, east-facing site. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas are varied and include cherry, rose petal, spice, earth and oak. Noticeable vigor in a mid weight styled wine with flavors of cherry, raspberry, spice and floral goodness. A little more masculine and "grounded" than the Marjorie with a little more structural tannins and perhaps a little less exuberant. The texture is refined and polished and there is noticeable intensity on the finish.* **93.**



2014 Cristom Eileen Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 940 cases, \$59. This vineyard extends to the crest of the Eola Hills and is exposed to the last rays of sunlight each day and the first cooling Pacific Ocean breezes. Unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Seductive aromas of black cherry, exotic spices and sous-bois lead to a sturdy and highly flavorful palate featuring dark cherry and purple grape fruits gently framed by firm but not imposing tannins. Engaging fruit purity and delightful spice with a lingering, juicy finish. You will want to elope with Eileen.* **94.**



2014 Cristom Louise Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 856 cases, \$59. The first vineyard established by Cristom. Densely planted at 2300 vines per acre on the lower slopes of the estate property. Unfiltered. *Light cherry red color in the glass. The aromas of crushed cherry, spice, rose petal, pine sap and vanilla oil draw your nose into the glass. A perfectly ripened core of dark red cherry essence fills every nook and cranny in the mouth and really clings to the finish. There are nuances galore, including accents of cardamom spice, boysenberry juice and subtle oak spices. The wine has noticeable energy and enough tannin for the long haul. Even more giving when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle exhibiting dreamy balance.* **95.**

Ponzi Vineyards, Sherwood

Winemaker Louisa Ponzi is pioneering a viticultural innovation called “clonal massale.” The term refers to a hybrid of clonal selection and massale selection, where over 25 clones of Pinot Noir, selected for a specific site, are mixed and planted randomly in a single block. This technique has evolved over two generations with four decades of evaluation and experience working with many different clones. Ponzi Vineyards now has over 30 acres of vines planted to clonal massale.

Louise notes, “Each clone has a personality. When many are combined in a single block, the multitude of characteristics naturally brings complexity and dimensions to the wines. By planting these clones at random, like wildflowers, it further relinquishes the question of clone and focuses fully on the terroir of site.”

The two wines reviewed below are from vineyards planted to clonal massale. A 2-acre site named Abetina Vineyard was planted on its own roots in 1975 to 22 different Pinot Noir clones as part of a clonal test site for Oregon State University. Each vine was tagged to determine which was best suited to the region. Abetina Vineyard is preserved on rootstock and was planted at Aurora Vineyard in 2005 as Abetina 2, maintaining for the long term this outstanding mix of clones. Abetina 2 is at the same elevation, aspect and on the same soil as the original, and has more than 20 Pinot Noir clones. (Aurora Vineyard was originally planted to 10 acres of Dijon 113, 114, 115, 667 and 777 in 1999)

In 2006, Pinot Noir blocks at Avellana Vineyard were the first planted fully to clonal massale. 5 Dijon clones are blended with 22 heritage clones from Abetina. Planting at this site continued through 2014 and is the most extensive planting of Pinot Noir clones in the United States.

2011 Ponzi Abetina 2 Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.60, 125 cases, \$145. Released September 2013. A single vineyard cuvée crafted from Abetina 2 block at Ponzi’s LIVE Certified Sustainable Aurora Vineyard. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in small lots after a 5-day cold soak. Fermenters were aerated or manually punched down twice a day for 12-20 days before undergoing a 7-day post-fermentation maceration. The wine was aged for 20 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled without fining or filtration and aged in bottle for 5 months before release. *This wine disappoints at this price level except for an incredibly long finish. The nose is oak driven with aromas of char and toast with very little berry fruit, even when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The mid weight core of purple grape and black raspberry fruits have charm and are more expressive on the palate. The barrel treatment is noticeable evident in the background. There is good energy and vibrancy, the tannins are gracious, and the finish is extraordinarily lengthy.* **90.**

2014 Ponzi Avellana Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.73, 110 cases, \$105. Released November 2016. Crafted exclusively from Ponzi’s LIVE Certified Sustainable Avellana Vineyard. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in small lots after a 5-day cold soak. Fermenters were aerated or manually punched down twice a day for 12-20 days before undergoing a 7-day post-fermentation cold soak. The wine

was aged for 20 months in French oak barrels, 50% new, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, and aged 5 months in bottle before release. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, soy sauce and forest floor lead to a delicious core of cherry and raspberry fruits lifted with bright acidity. Very charming in the mouth with a soft texture, spice accents, and an exuberant, showy finish filled with exuberant grape essence.* **93.**

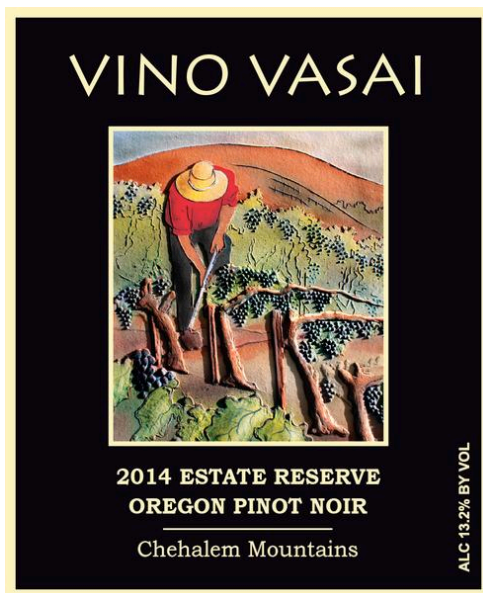
Potter's Vineyard and Vino Vasai Vintners, Newberg

Bill and Sandy Sanchez took over Laura Volkman's estate vineyard in September 2012. Pinot Noir from the estate vineyard are bottled under the Vino Vasai label, "Potter's Wine" in Italian.

2015 Vino Vasai Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir Rosé 10.7% alc., 72 cases, \$18 (sold out). *Moderate pink color in the glass. Delicate aromas of strawberry, blood orange, leafy salad greens and creme fraiche. Highly flavorful, with tastes of strawberry, cherry, raspberry and blood orange offering bright acidity and some intensity on a satisfying finish. For a rosé, this wine has unusual aromatic persistence on the finish.* **88.**

2014 Vino Vasai Dario Estate Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., \$25. From a 3-acre vineyard planted in 2001 in Jory and Laurelwood soils. Aged on the lees in neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of black cherry and underbrush. Fresh and easy to like in an elegant, mid weight styled wine with flavors of black cherry, peppery spice, dried herbs and a hint of smoke. Nicely balanced, with evident but polished tannins, finishing on an upbeat note.* **89.**

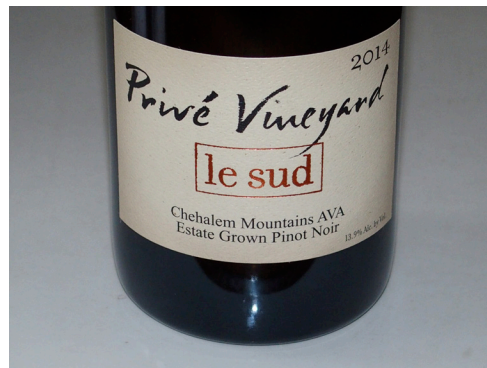
2014 Vino Vasai Estate Reserve Chehalem Mountains Oregon Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., \$45. A barrel selection. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. More fruit concentration and supporting tannins than the Dario Estate bottling deserving of a Reserve designation. Deep black cherry flavor of Pommard has a earthy mushroom note also typical of Pommard. Very classy and seductive on the palate, with enough tannin for age ability. Still solid the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. No need to be in a hurry to drink this beauty.* **92.**



Privé Vineyard, Newberg

Only 950 cases a year from a 2-acre vineyard. A truly boutique winery producing exceptional Pinot Noir that is sold exclusively on futures to a mailing list. These wines have significantly improved since last tasted a year ago and should continue to evolve over the next several years.

2014 Privé le sud Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 100 cases, \$600. Estate grown. 100% Pommard grown on the south block of a southwest facing hillside. Aged 12 months in 100% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Soaring aromas of fresh red cherry, spice and forest floor. Juicy and polished in the mouth, with charming elegance. Mid weight flavors of red cherry and raspberry are complimented by oak seasoning. The tannins are nicely integrated and the overall experience is one of refinement. The wine was much more expressive the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle such that I wanted to finish the whole bottle. Previously reviewed 11/22/15 (90-91). 93.*



2014 Privé Joie de Vivre Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 12 cases, \$90. Estate grown. Etched, hand painted, numbered and signed bottle. Produced from the first few gallons of each press load from le nord and le sud blended and aged in 50% new French oak barrels for 12 months. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Similar to the le sud but with a deeper, more penetrating nose focused on cherry fruit. Plenty of cherry and purple berry sap to delight in a juicy, mid weight styled wine that has admirable oak integration, ample but balanced tannins, and an especially long finish. A high-collared wine that is approachable now, but will age beautifully for years to come. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Previously reviewed 11/22/15 (92). 94.*

Soléna Estate, Yamhill

Soléna is the combination of the French words Solana and Soleil, celebrating the sun and the moon, and the name that owners Laurent Montalieu and Danielle Andrus gave their daughter. Pinot Noirs are offered from the estate Domaine Danielle Laurent Vineyard and Hyland Vineyard as well as purchased fruit from several notable vineyards. A new tasting room is open daily at 17096 NE Woodland Loop Road in Yamhill. To acquire the wines, visit www.solenaestate.com.



2014 Soléna Grand Cuvée Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.67, 7,000 cases, RS 0 g/L, \$30. Released April 2016. Harvest Brix 23°-25°. Aged 8 months in French oak barrels, 22% new. The 2012 vintage of this wine was one of Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wines for 2016. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very appealing when poured in the glass, but loses appeal over time indicating this is an early drinking wine. Aromas of black cherry and woodland spice lead to a middleweight core of spiced black cherry and black raspberry fruits embellished with a compliment of oak. Juicy, with balanced tannins and respectable mid palate intensity and finish.* **88.**

2014 Soléna Zena Crown Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.73, 149 cases, \$48. Released May 2016. Vines planted in 2004. Harvest Brix 25°. Aged 8 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Reticent, but pleasant aromas of a mix of red cherry and berry with a forest under scent. Juicy on the palate with a mid weight charge of purple berry fruit accented with an earthy mushroom note. A little rustic, yet with admirable fruit quality, well-structured with firm fruit tannins.* **92.**

2014 Soléna Guadalupe Vineyard Dundee Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.56, 148 cases, \$48. Released April 2016. Vines planted in 2006. Harvest Brix 25.6°. Aged 8 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of red cherry and berry with a compliment of sous-bois. The typical crunchy cherry of the Dundee Hills is on full display in this wine with good depth and character. A little spice adds to the appeal as does the lingering finish although it leaves a bit of astringency in its wake.* **90.**



2014 Soléna Domaine Danielle Laurent Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., pH 3.70, 517 cases, \$55. Released October 2016. Harvest Brix 23°-25°. Vines planted in 2001, 2004 and 2007. Aged 8 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Beautifully perfumed with aromas of black cherry, dark raspberry coulis, bakery spice and floral bouquet. Luxurious on the palate in a mid weight plus style with waves of black cherry and purple berry fruits that are plush and expressive. Substantial fruit tannins back up the fruit concentration. A high class wine that has staying power in the mouth and finishes with a peacock tail of fruit. The best wine I have had from this maturing vineyard.* **94.**



2014 Soléna Hyland Vineyard Legacy Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., pH 3.73, 25 cases, \$100. Released May 2016. A single barrel selection chosen by Laurent Montalieu to represent the best expression of the Hyland Vineyard in 2014. Vines first planted in 1972 in volcanic Jory soil. Harvest Brix 25°. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely, delicate aromas of fresh black cherries and earthy flora. A light to mid weight style wine with redder fruit flavors and spice galore. The wine hits all the high notes in the mouth and on the finish, flaunting impeccable balance, modest but adequate tannins and the power without weight that only Pinot Noir can deliver. This wine has the harmony to age beautifully.* **93.**

2014 Soléna Willamette Valley Chardonnay 12.9% alc., pH 3.30, TA 0.64, RS 0.9 g/L, 500 cases, \$30. Released November 2016. Harvest Brix 21.5°. Barrel fermented and aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Light golden yellow and clear in the glass. Very inviting aromas of fresh lemon juice and honeyed pear. Bright and crisp on the palate with clean flavors of citrus, pear and the slightest caramel. Very satisfying with great composure, finishing with a delightful crunchy apple sendoff.* **94.**

More Wines

2014 Arterberry Maresh Maresh Vineyard Dundee Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., \$59. Non-irrigated old vines. Unfined and unfiltered. *Light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is primary, with only delicate aromas of black cherry and complimentary oak toast and spice. Light to mid weight flavors of dark red cherry are offered in a very gentle wine with good mid palate intensity and some finishing generosity. This wine won't open your eyes, but has good character and balance. Much better presentation when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The wine could take on more power and nuance with additional time in bottle.* **90.**

2014 Eminent Domaine Reserve Ribbon Ridge Oregon Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 248 cases, \$69. Estate grown on Willakenzie soils. Clones are 115 and Pommard. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass (you can assume the ripeness and concentration from the color). Really deep cherry aroma accented with noticeable oak vanillin and spice. The mid weight, well-ripened black cherry and black raspberry fruits veer to full ripeness, but the wine is well crafted, offering a velvety ride in the mouth through a pleasingly plush finish. There is enough tannin to support the fruit load and lend age ability. This beauty was considerably more appealing with more aromatic fruit when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Atypical in character for Oregon, but reflective of the warm 2014 vintage. Decant if you pop the cork now. 93.*



2014 Résonance Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$35. Maison Louis Jdot's first wine project outside of Burgundy since founding in 1859. Vinified at Trisaetum. A blend of Résonance, Découverte and other vineyards in a Willamette Valley cuvée. (not the Résonance Vineyard designate bottling). Aged 13 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant and giving aromas of cherry and sous-bois. Nicely composed, with inviting flavors of darker cherry and red raspberry in a mid weight style that is quite forward. Refreshing, with impeccable balance, a deft touch of oak, and some finishing intensity. 91.*

2014 Soter Mineral Springs Ranch Yamhill-Carlton Oregon Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 2,400 cases, \$65. Estate grown and bottled. 30% whole cluster fermentation. 30 days extended maceration. Racked only for assembly before bottling. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Gorgeous aromas of dark cherry, spice, rose petal and notable oak input. Somewhat closed and still tannic, but with luscious black cherry and spice flavors in a nicely balanced mid weight styled wine with some length on the juicy finish. Needs time to evolve and integrate the tannins. The wine needs patience and understanding and could disappoint if you pop the cork now. 90-92.*

The Lowdown on Trader Joe's Pinot Noir

Trader Joe's is a remarkably successful grocery store chain that as of October 28, 2016, had 460 stores with half in California (the most located in Southern California), and the rest in 40 other states and Washington D.C.. The original Trader Joe's was opened 49 years ago in Pasadena by Joe Coulombe and named Trader Joe's to evoke images of the South Seas. Today, it is owned by Germany's Albrecht family. Total sales in 2009 were roughly \$8 billion, about the same as the Whole Foods grocery chain and Trader Joe's was number 314 on Fortune 500 list.

Wine was originally a major part of the store's inventory and at one time his store had one of the world's largest stock of California wines. I can remember back in the 1970s when Trader Joe's had a store in Santa Ana, California. The wine department occupied a significant part of the store and many wine aficionados, including myself, shopped there regularly for California wine because of the large selection and reasonable prices. Today, there is a wine department in each store with an extensive collection of domestic and foreign wines, wine tasting bars in some stores (see photo below of store in Costa Mesa, CA), and even a free standing Trader Joe's Wine Shop in New York's Union Square adjacent a Trader Joe's Market that is very busy according to Yelp.



There are still some mass market wines from well-known wineries offered in the wine department at Trader Joe's, but these are usually more expensive, making Trader Joe's own labels seem like better deals.

The biggest selling wine by far at Trader Joe's is Charles Shaw, produced by Bronco Wine in California, with sales over 800 million bottles since it debuted at \$1.99 in 2002. Trader Joe's is the exclusive seller of the Charles Shaw line of varietals (no Pinot Noir) that have become known as "Two-Buck Chuck." The wines are no longer priced at less than two dollars, but are still priced below three dollars a bottle.

Beyond the Charles Shaw wines, that are displayed in case boxes for easy case purchase and take out, and in keeping with the store's emphasis on its own brand names, many of the wines that are now stocked are offered under Trader Joe's own label or private labels with fetching names. Trader Joe's is a négociant that buys wine someone else makes and sells it under its own label. The wine may be declassified by the winery as not meeting their highest standards, it may be excessive wine production in a certain vintage, or it may have been

produced in a manner directed by the négociant for the private label purpose. These private label wines are sold at a significant discount as they are obtained directly from wineries without a middle distributor.

Some examples of private label Pinot Noir at Trader Joes are Cherry Blossom California Pinot Noir (\$3.99, produced by Bronco Wines), Liberté San Louis Obispo County Pinot Noir (\$9.99, Malbec and Syrah added), Moon X Black California Pinot Noir (\$6.99), Cotillion Tri-County California Pinot Noir (\$9.99), Green Fin California Pinot Noir (\$4.99) and VINTJS Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$8.99).

There are also Pinot Noirs bottled under the Trader Joe's name. These wines often carry designations such as "Reserve," "Petite Reserve," "Grand Reserve," and "Platinum Reserve," with Platinum Reserve being the top of the line and the most expensive at about \$15. Reserve, of course, is an unregulated term that has no legal definition and is essentially meaningless.

Like all products in the store offered under Trader Joe's proprietary labels, the producer of the Trader Joe's private label wines is not allowed to publicize its business relationship. As pointed out in a *Fortune* magazine article, www.fortune.com/2010/08/23/inside-the-secret-world-of-trader-joes/, Trader Joe's is secretive about its products including wine. The Albrecht family has never given a major story about their business, and Trader Joe's does not want its shoppers or competitors to know who makes their products.

Labels are important in choosing wine as the more information you can gather, the better your odds of finding a good wine at a good price. The problem is, the labels on Trader Joe's wines offer little useful information other than the region or appellation of origin, the ABV and occasionally the case production. The back label may offer the words, "Vinted and bottled by," and the name of a producer that usually has no physical facility and means that the producer or winery on the label had little or nothing to do with making the wine.

Deciphering the Producer of a Wine

"Produced and bottled by": By law, 75% or more of the wine in the bottle must be made (fermented) by the producer listed on the label at the stated address.

"Made and bottled by": At least 75% of the wine has been made (fermented by) the winery listed on the label at the stated address.

"Vinted and bottled by": The winery on the label may have had very little to do with making the wine at the stated address.

"Cellared and bottled by": The same as vinted in that the company or winery name on the label did not make the wine, only subjecting the wine to cellar treatment before bottling at the stated address. (Note: if a California based vintner makes a wine from the Willamette Valley of Oregon the label must say "cellared and bottled by" if Willamette Valley designated, but the label can say, "produced and bottled by" if the broader Oregon AVA term is on the label!)

"Cellared by or Vinted by": The wine was aged or cellared before bottling. If the label does not have a winery of its own, it can only claim "cellared and bottled by."

"Bottled by": The company listed on the label did not make the wine and only bottled it at the stated address.

"Estate bottled": The winery on the label owns or controls 100% of the grapes that went into the bottle (either the grapes are grown by the producer on its own land or from a vineyard that the winery controls 100% via a long-term lease) and the wine was crushed, fermented, finished, aged and bottled all in the same place and the place has to be located in the same viticultural area that is stated on the label."

"Estate grown": The winery controls all the grape growing on its land but does not ferment or bottle on its property.

Here is some advice regarding purchases of Trader Joe's Pinot Noir (applies to other varietals as well).

- (1) The Trader Joe's labeled wines may carry a "Lot #" designation. You must pay close attention to this number when you are repurchasing a wine you liked as the Lot # will change with each vintage and there may be multiple lots of the same appellation Pinot Noir within a vintage.
- (2) The selection of wines varies from store to store.
- (3) If you find a wine you like, it is advisable to repurchase it soon as stock changes on the private labeled wines frequently.
- (4) You won't find scores on any of the wines, only brief descriptions of the flavor profile on shelf tags. The wines are not submitted for review or reviewed in any of the major wine publications.
- (5) Don't even think about any Pinot Noir priced less than \$9.99 unless you need something to serve relatives who know nothing about wine. The cheaper wines often have generous oak overlay in place of fruit quality.
- (6) The Trader Joe's private label wines are hit or miss. By that, I mean you will be frequently disappointed, but you may occasionally find a good or even very good Pinot Noir in the \$9.99 - \$14.99 range. None of the private label Pinot Noirs can match up with premium Pinot Noir produced by so many domestic wineries, with most Trader Joe's Pinot Noirs falling in the "Good" (80-85 score) category, and occasionally "Very Good" (86-89 score) range. Most often, the Pinot Noirs bottled under the Trader Joe's name have the best chance of pleasing you, particularly the ones priced at \$14.99. I would use the term "innocuous" or "quaffable" for the Pinot Noirs and this is a credit to their QPR ratio.
- (7) The best private label Pinot Noirs are on the first or second shelf in the wine department racks.
- (8) Information on Trader Joe's Pinot Noirs is hard to come by. Online there is the Trader Joe's Wine Insider at www.traderjoes.com/digin/category/WineInsider where a few wines are reviewed but only reflect a typical retailer's enthusiasm for every wine. Those on the Trader Joe's mailing list can receive the monthly Fearless Flyer that also features a description of select wines. This is also available online at www.traderjoes.com/fearless-flyer/category/11. There are also wine blogs such as Trader Joe's Wine Compendium at www.traderjoeswine.blogspot.com. You will not find in-depth information about any of the Trader Joe's private label wines from any source. That may not be important to you if you are only spending \$10 for a quaffable Pinot Noir.

Here are reviews of six private label Trader Joe's Pinot Noirs that I bought at my local store (Tustin, CA) in the past two weeks.

2014 Upper Eden Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$12.99. Produced and bottled by Upper Eden Wines, Soledad, CA. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is not unpleasant but offers little cheer, with only restrained aromas of cherry and rose petal. A simple wine with black cherry and black raspberry flavors in an easily quaffable style with silky tannins and welcome balance. 86.*



2014 Trader Joe's Reserve Lot #109 Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$9.99. Vinted and bottled by Reluctant Wine Co., Arroyo Grande, CA. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Perfumed with aromas of black raspberry, blackberry, spice, and vanilla, picking up more oak notes over time in the glass. Velvety and lush on the palate, with good fruit intensity and drive. Nicely balanced array of purple and black fruits with a hint of oak toast and spice, finishing with good roundness. Impressive harmony. Over delivers for the price. 88.*



2014 Trader Joe's Platinum Reserve Lot #33 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 5,000 cases, \$14.99. Cellared and bottled by The Vine Intervention, Napa, CA. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry and baking spices with a bit of apple core. Silky smooth on the palate in a cherry-driven mid weight styled wine. Easy going, with gentle tannins, a shallow mid palate and a very modest finish.* **85.**

2014 Trader Joe's Platinum Reserve Lot #66 Carneros Napa Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 2,000 cases, \$14.99. Estate grown and produced by Eris Vineyards, Napa, CA. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Blackberry fruit aromas are accented with scents of earthy flora and toasty barrel. Highly flavorful, with plenty of black cherry and exotic spice notes to please. The fruit is nicely framed by silky tannins and there is noticeable length on the finish. A bit too much barrel on the nose, but the oak is better integrated on the palate. Easily worth the money.* **87.**

2015 Trader Joe's Grand Reserve Lot #23 Carneros Pinot Noir 13.9%, \$12.99. Bottled by Carneros Cellars, Napa, CA. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Fruity aromas of black cherry lead to a mid weight core of black cherry fruit framed by modest tannins. Not appreciable depth or nuance, but true to the varietal, balanced and offers a modest but pleasing finish. A decent value.* **86.**

2015 VINTJS Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$8.99. Vinted and bottled by ABJ Wines, Geyserville, CA. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Primarily oak-derived aromas of smoke, mulch and graham with a slight note of cherry. Drinkable in a mid weight style, but little depth of cherry flavor, little complexity, and sparse length on the finish. The muscular tannins are aggressive.* **83.**

Other Pinot Noirs tasted in 2016:

2014 Cotillion California Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$9.99. Vinted and bottled by Ashford Court, Napa, CA. **85.**

2014 Sphere Monterey County Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$6.99. Said to be crafted by "a winemaker with deep roots in California wine country." **87.**

2014 Trader Joe's Grand Reserve Lot #57 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$14.99. Cellared and bottled by DNA Vineyards, Ukiah, CA. **88.**

The best Trader Joe's private label Pinot Noir I have tasted in the past two years is one I reviewed in April of this year. It is still available at Trader Joe's.

2014 Ocean View San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$14.99. This wine was produced and bottled by Sinor-LaVallee in the Arroyo Grande AVA by noted winemaker Mike Sinor. Sourced from Sinor's Estate Ocean View Vineyard (a single vineyard estate bottling). *Engaging aromas of dark red and black berries spice, briar and salinity. A giving and highly satisfying mid weight wine with flavors of blackberry, black raspberry, spice and anise framed by ruddy tannins. Silky on the palate with a good cut of acidity, subtle oak seasoning, and a satisfying finish with some length. This wine could easily bring three times the price.* **90.**



Pinot Briefs

Shadows in the Vineyard: The True Story of the Plot to Poison the World's Greatest Wine

The title describes the theme of this fascinating book, but there is considerably more content than the sinister plot to poison vines in the Romanée-Conti Vineyard for ransom in 2010. The book also details the complex history of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti in a thoroughly researched vivid account that will captivate anyone who has even a passing notion about this revered Burgundy Domaine and its famed proprietor, Aubert de Villaine. I couldn't put the book down. Paperback, 289 pages, 2014, \$16.



2017 World of Pinot Noir All tickets are now on sale for the 2017 World of Pinot Noir, March 3-4, at the Bacara Resort & Spa, Santa Barbara. Taste wines from over 200 wineries hailing from Burgundy, New Zealand, Oregon, and all major Pinot Noir growing regions of California. Two days of tastings, seminars and dinners: Hirsch Seminar and Tasting, Kosta Browne 20th Anniversary Dinner, Louis Latour Tasting & Dinner, Rosé Lunch, Edna Valley Winery Collective Dinner, Sparkling Brunch, Cheese Seminar featuring Sonoma Wines, Vintage Burgundy Dinner with the Guild of Sommeliers, Rock Stars of Pinot Noir featuring Merry Edwards, Hitching Post Vertical Tasting & Barbecue, Friday and Saturday Grand Tastings. Purchase tickets now at www.worldofpinotnoir.com. Weekend passes are \$1,150, but tickets may also be obtained for individual events over the weekend.

Joseph Phelps Vineyards Closes Freestone Guest Center Hospitality efforts have now been focused exclusively on the recently renovated historic winery in St. Helena, Napa Valley. The guest center in Freestone, CA, will close effective January 1, 2017. Phelps is fully committed to the winemaking facility and estate vineyards in Freestone. Joseph Phelps Vineyards in Napa Valley is open seven days a week by prior appointment, offering a variety of wine tasting experiences. Visit the website for information at www.JosephPhelps.com.

2016 Harvest in California Promising The 2016 wine harvest offered average yields but exceptional fruit according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture. The Wine Institute reported a mostly normal yield of exceptional quality throughout the state. Welcome winter rains helped to minimize the impact of the drought on wine grape crops. The state's 2016 wine grape crop is expected to be about 3.9 million tons. Like vintage 2015, the harvest started early and finished early. California shipped an all-time high of 229 million cases to the rest of the United States, representing a 60% share of the United States wine market. An additional 47 million cases shipped to global markets, with the European Union being the top destination of wine exports. California wine contributes \$57.6 billion annually to the state economy and \$114 billion annually to the United States economy. (Photo of harvest worker: GRose & CaliforniaWine Institute).

State Regional Total Tons

Source: Ciatti Company at 2016 Wine Industry Financial Symposium



Sunlight Into Wine In the United States, the average 750 ml bottle of wine costs \$15.23 according to SHAREaCAMPER Wine Price Index of 66 countries.

Wine Deal Advisor No one has time to scour the internet for the best deals on wine. That's where Wine Deal Advisor comes in, launched by a long time reader of the *PinotFile*. The website at www.WineDealAdvisor.com provides wine buying advice and wine deal purchase recommendations to consumers. Every day, Rick Dyer and his partner reviews the wine deals available from retailers across the U.S. and then provides analysis of each deal along with recommendations on which deals to buy and which deals to skip and why. Subscribers are also given the capability to search for the exact wine deals they want based on any combination of location, varietal, winery, wine scores, price, or percentage discount. Rick does not sell wine or benefit in any way from what or where a wine is bought so the reviews are totally objective. Subscriptions are priced at \$24.95 for 6 months or \$39.95 for 12 months. A 10-day Free Trial is also available. Besides the subscription service, the site also offers a list of recommended wines, wineries and vintages. It is called "Rick's Picks," and is available to view or download at no charge to anyone who visits the website.



Freeman & August West Wine Cruise Ken Freeman of Freeman Vineyard & Winery and cohost Ed Kurtzman of August West Wines invite friends, family and fans on a Food & Wine Trails 7-day private cruise from Barcelona to Rome aboard Oceania Cruises' Riviera in May, 2017. The cruise will offer private tastings and comparisons of Freeman and August West wines with the wines of Spain, France and Italy. There will also be a welcome reception and winemakers' dinner. Optional wine related shore tours are also offered. For further information or to book your stateroom, call Food & Wine Trails at 800-367-5348.

MacPhail Converts Winery to Custom Crush Facility In late 2016, James announced that he was converting his Healdsburg winemaking facility into a custom crush facility called Grapewagon Custom Crush. At least 13 vintners will produce wine here, including the MacPhail's own Tongue Dancer Wines Pinot Noir brand. James MacPhail no longer works for the MacPhail Family Wines brand that is owned by The Hess Collection. Colin MacLauchlan was hired to oversee crush operations. Colin was previously the cellar master at Littorai Wines and has been an assistant winemaker at Zepaltas Wines in Santa Rosa.

Pali Wine Co. Opens Tasting Room in San Diego Pali Wine Co., a producer of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay premium and value-priced appellation wines from California and Oregon, has opened a tasting room in San Diego's Little Italy district located at 2130 India Street. The tasting room features Pali's diverse lineup of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines, as well as Rhone and Bordeaux varietals from grapes grown in the Central Coast and bottled under the sister label, Tower 15. Also, a rotating selection of eight wines, blended straight from barrel to keg, are available for tasting or for carry out by growler. To accompany the wines, Pali offers creative small plate menu using seasonal and locally sourced produce whenever possible. The new tasting room is open daily. Pali Wine Co. also has tasting venues in Lompoc and downtown Santa Barbara's Funk Zone. The winemaker is Aaron Walker and consulting winemaker is Kenneth Juhasz. Visit www.paliwineco.com.



2017 International Pinot Noir Celebration

The 31st annual International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC) will be held July 28-30 in McMinnville Oregon. The theme will be "The French Adventurers: Burgundians Making Pinot Noir in Oregon." Eric Asimov of *The New York Times* will moderate the Grand Seminar which will include the following panelists: Dominique Lafon (Lingua Franca), Véronique Boss-Drouhin (Domaine Drouhin Oregon), Jacques Lardiére (Résonance), Jean-Nicolas Méo (Domaine Nicolas-Jay) and Alexandrine Roy (Phelps Creek Vineyards). IPNC is an annual rite of pilgrimage for lovers of Pinot Noir who revel in three days of exquisite meals, seminars, tastings and celebrating with fellow Pinot geeks. Early Bird Pricing (\$100 off weekend tickets) ends December 31, 2016. Visit www.ipnc.org to confirm your place at the Celebration and see the featured wineries from North America, Europe and the Southern Hemisphere. Lodging arrangements should be made well in advance as space fills up quickly. See you there!