



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir*

## California Wine Sales Still Trending Upward

According to a May press release from the California Wine Institute at [www.wineinstitute.org](http://www.wineinstitute.org), sales of California wines have increased for the sixth year in a row, climbing to a retail value of \$35.2 billion in 2017. The growth in sales came primarily from premium wines priced over \$10, indicating consumers are trading up to higher-priced premium wines.. The data was culled by the BW166 and the Wine Institute.

In 2017, California wineries shipped 241 million cases to the U.S., a 60% share of the U.S. wine market. Total U.S. wine exports were \$1.5 billion, over 90% from California. California continues to be the #1 wine producing state in the U.S. and the world's 4th largest winemaker.

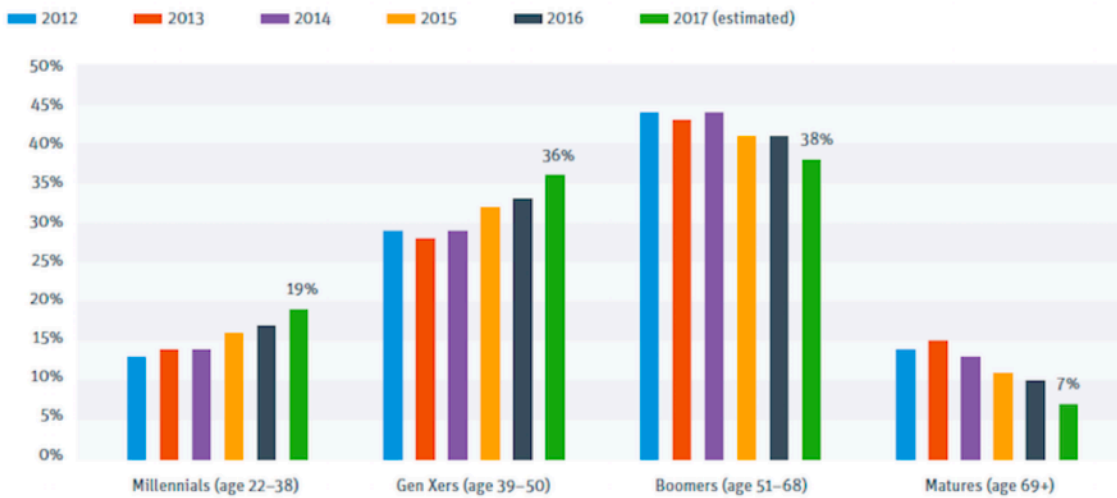
**CALIFORNIA WINE SHIPMENTS<sup>1</sup>**  
(In millions of 9-liter cases)

Year	California Wine Shipments to All Markets in the U.S. and Abroad <sup>2</sup>	California Wine Shipments to the U.S. Market <sup>2</sup>	Estimated Retail Value of CA Wine to U.S. <sup>3</sup>
2017	277.9	240.7	\$35.2 billion
2016	279.7	239.1	\$34.3 billion
2015	278.2	233.7	\$32.6 billion
2014	273.0	229.7	\$31.3 billion
2013	263.8	221.2	\$29.7 billion
2012	250.4	210.8	\$29.0 billion
2011	265.5	224.3	\$28.5 billion
2010	246.1	206.3	\$28.5 billion
2009	253.2	213.8	\$27.6 billion
2008	255.3	208.8	\$26.1 billion
2007	241.2	198.3	\$24.8 billion
2006	235.8	196.9	\$24.4 billion
2005	231.6	194.1	\$23.0 billion
2004	226.3	182.4	\$22.2 billion
2003	211.9	177.0	\$20.8 billion
2002	195.4	168.3	\$21.5 billion

The continued increase in sales is thought to be due to increasing numbers of the population reaching legal drinking age, the popularity of winery tasting room and direct-to-consumer sales that accounted for almost \$2.7 billion in retail value and 5.8 million cases in 2017, and the increase in number of successful wine selling locations including gourmet grocery stores, drug stores, theaters, bars and on-premise outlets. The trend is in defiance of the aging of the Boomer generation who have driven premium wine sales and the failure of the Millennial generation to buy their share of wine.

## Reality Check: Millennials are no where near Boomers or GenX for share of wine purchased

Figure 16: Cohort share of wine purchased



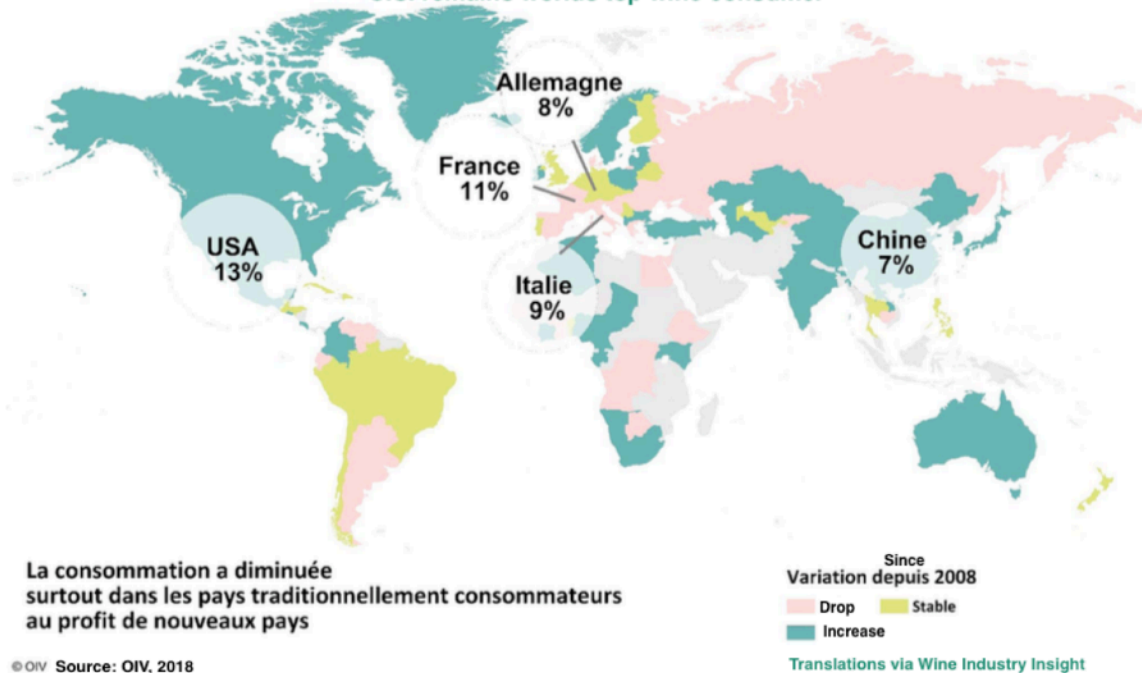
Source: SVB 2016 Direct-to-Consumer Survey

Source: Silicon Valley Bank 2018 Wine Industry Report

According to Nielsen, top-selling varietals in the off-premise category by volume are Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Blends, Pinot Grigio/Gris, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Moscato/Muscat, Rosé and White Zinfandel.

Interestingly, while wine consumption increases in the New World, with the U.S. as the world's top wine consumer, wine consumption is decreasing in the Old World.

## Wine consumption is decreasing in the Old World and increasing in the New U.S. remains worlds top wine consumer



# Recently Tasted California Pinot Noir & Chardonnay

## Brief Summary of This Issue

The following wineries made impressive debuts in the *PinotFile*: **Friedeman Wines, Kitson Wines, and Metzker Family Estates.**

An unusual number of high scoring wines are reviewed in this issue: **2015 Calera Reed Pinot Noir (94), 2015 Calera Jensen Pinot Noir (96), 2016 Cattleya Donum Pinot Noir (94), 2016 Cattleya Pratt Chardonnay (94), 2015 LaRue Rice-Spivak Pinot Noir (94), Metzker Terra de Promissio Pinot Noir (94), 2016 Paul Lato Drum Canyon Pinot Noir (95), 2016 Paul Lato John Sebastiano Pinot Noir (94), 2016 Paul Lato Gold Coast Pinot Noir (94), 2016 Paul Lato Pisoni Pinot Noir (95), 2016 Paul Lato Sierra Madre Chardonnay (94), 2016 Paul Lato Duvarita Chardonnay (95), 2016 Tongue Dancer Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (95), 2016 Big Table Farm Earth Pinot Noir (94), 2016 Big Table Farm Elusive Queen Chardonnay (97), 2016 Coehlo Coehlo Vineyard Pinot Noir (94), and 2016 Coehlo Zeitoun Vineyard Pinot Noir (94).**

## Anaba Wines, Sonoma

Winemakers are Ross Cobb (Cobb Wines) and Katy Wilson (LaRue Wines). The tasting room is a restored 100-year-old farmhouse situated amongst estate vineyards in Sonoma. The winery website is [www.anabawines.com](http://www.anabawines.com).

**2015 Anaba Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.34, TA 0.64, 505 cases, \$42. Grapes sourced from vineyards in the Green Valley (Kozlowski Vineyard) and Carneros (Los Brisas Vineyard). Pommard, 115, Swan, 777 and 667. Harvest Brix 24.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 4 to 6-day cold soak, fermented separately by clone. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose makes its mark with aromas of black cherry, bark, graphite and a hint of smoke. Rather simple but satisfying, with mid weight flavors of black raspberry, black cherry and strawberry framed by gentle tannins. The acid-fueled finish offers pleasing sweet cherry aromatics. More appealing when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **90.**

**2015 Anaba Westlands Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.64, 258 cases, \$54. This wine is intended to capture the essence of the West Sonoma Coast. Grapes sourced from O'Connor Vineyard, Barlow Lane Private Vineyard and Mariani Vineyard. Pommard, Swan and 115 clones. Harvest Brix 22.2°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, fermented separately by clone, 30% whole cluster. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light garnet. Gracious aromas of dark cherry, rose, and milk chocolate lead to a middleweight styled wine offering flavors of dark red cherry and berry and blueberry with a bit of herbal oak in the background. Elegant and streamlined, with quenching acidity and a mildly astringent finish. Unchanged when sampled the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **89.**

**2015 Anaba Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.64, 148 cases, \$52. Pisoni selection. Harvest Brix 23.8°. 100% de-stemmed, 4 to 5-day cold soak, fermented in stainless. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Extremely shy nose offering subtle aromas of cherry, sandalwood and oak vanillin. On the palate, the wine offers good depth and length of red and black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors. The sleek texture is appealing due to milky tannins. The finish is modest but satisfying. Unchanged when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. A delicate interpretation of this vineyard.* **90.**

## Calera Wine Company, Hollister

This winery is one of the historic icons of California Pinot Noir along with Hanzell and Mount Eden. The 2015 vintage represents the winery's 40th vintage anniversary. The winery was founded by Josh Jensen in 1975 at the site of a turn-of-the-century limestone kiln ("Calera" in Spanish) in the remote Gavilan Mountains of California's Central Coast. Today, the Mt. Harlan estate includes 85 planted acres spread across six small Pinot

Noir vineyards, along with estate plantings of Chardonnay, Aligoté and Viognier. The estate vines are situated at about 2,200 feet elevation and are some of the oldest vines on the Central Coast. Calera is one of the only wineries in the world to “own” its entire appellation.

The combination of limestone soils and high elevation are the defining characteristics of the Mt. Harlan AVA. The very cool climate keeps the vines stressed so that yields average well-under 2 tons per acre. The resulting wines have remarkable depth and character.

All of Calera’s vineyards on Mt. Harlan have been organically certified by CCOF since 2008.

The winemaker for the past decade has been Mike Waller. He employs native yeast, whole clusters, minimal racking and extended aging in relatively modest new oak to achieve the Calera terroir-driven style. The individual vineyards are allowed to express themselves and over many years of tasting these wines, I can clearly associate each vineyard with its terroir-expression.

Calera has a tasting room open daily at 11300 Cienega Road outside Hollister. Reservations are not required but always appreciated. Visit [www.calerawine.com](http://www.calerawine.com).

The wines reviewed here represent the winery’s spring releases, in March 2018.



**2017 Calera Central Coast Vin Gris of Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., 1,000 cases, \$22. Sourced from Flint Vineyard in San Benito County. Grapes were harvested at lower Brix, specifically to produce a dry Vin Gris. Aged 4 months in 100% stainless steel. *Moderate salmon color in the glass. Aromas of yellow peach, cranberry, strawberry, blood orange and algae are echoed in the flavors in a refreshingly crisp and vibrant style that is a superb example of this Pinot Noir genre. 90.*

**2016 Calera Mt. Harlan Chardonnay** 14.5% alc., 1,800 cases, \$50. Vines planted in 1984 and 1998. Aged 15 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 30% new, 20% second vintage and 60% neutral. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The nose is flat out gorgeous, featuring aromas of white peach, honey, buttery brioche and dried seaweed. Very satisfying flavor intensity and length, in a riper, full-bodied style with luscious flavors of Golden Delicious apple and lemon. One doesn’t think oak at all when drinking this wine. An under appreciated offering from Calera more known for Pinot Noir. 93.*

**2015 Calera de Villiers Vineyard Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$60. Vineyard planted in 1996, 1997, and 2001. Yields 0.39 tons per acre. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% new, 10% second vintage and 60% neutral. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose offers penetrating aromas of black fruits, fertile earth, toast, burnt tobacco and a hint of vanilla. The wine’s texture is seductively smooth and the mid weight plus flavors of blackberry, black raspberry and cassis are enviable. The fruit is spirited and fresh and the wine is seamlessly composed. Wines from this vineyard always taste like this and that reflects deft winemaking. 93.*



**2015 Calera Reed Vineyard Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 165 cases, \$75. Vineyard planted in 1975 (4.4 acres) and 2012 (1.54 acres). Yield 0.59 tons per acre. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 30% new, 10% second vintage and 60% neutral. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Wines from this vineyard tend to be more red-fruited and elegant. Aromas of red cherry, spiced berry, dried rose petal and burnt tobacco reflect the whole cluster inclusion. The mid weight flavors of dark red fruits are accented with a hint of spice and caramel. The fruit is succulent yet refined and the overall impression is graciousness. Slick in texture, with a really long, mesmerizing finish. 94.*



**2015 Calera Jensen Vineyard Mt. Harlan Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., 495 cases, \$90. Vineyard planted in 1975. Yield 0.44 tons per acre. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels, 30% new, 10% second vintage and 60% neutral. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of black cherry, exotic spices and underbrush. The first taste tells you this wine is special. The mid weight essence of black cherry fruit is long and intense, yet refined. The fine-grain tannins provide the perfect backdrop and the satiny texture is mesmerizing. The finish offers a good grip of acidity and uncommon generosity. This wine is always the Prima Donna among the Calera wine stable. 96.*

(Note: I took all the unfinished bottles of these wines to a group of twelve people at a social gathering the same day and although all of the wines were highly enjoyable by all, the Jensen grabbed the most attention).



## Cattleya Wines, Rohnert Park

Proprietor and winemaker Bibiana González Rave is part of the latest wave of young and talented winemakers who are making their mark with California Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Born in Columbia and trained in France, she moved to California in 2007, gained experience at La Crema, Peay Vineyards, Au Bon Climat, Qupé and Lynmar before becoming the current winemaker for Wayfarer and Pahlmeyer as well as her limited-production label, Cattleya Wines. Her Cattleya wines are on my Top 10 list of exceptionality in California.

The small production wines are sold through a mailing list. Get on board and you will be very pleased. The winery's website is [www.cattleyawines.com](http://www.cattleyawines.com). The Cuvée Number One Pinot Noir is released and the Donum Vineyard Pinot Noir and Pratt Vineyard Chardonnay will be released in the fall 2018.

**2016 Cattleya Wines Cuvée Number One Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 112 cases, \$50. Sourced from Lakeview Vineyard in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Pommard and clone 115 fermented in separate tanks. Aged in French oak barrels. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose elevates over time in the glass, reaching a crescendo with aromas of blackberry, cassis, spice, violets, vanilla and a hint of toasty oak. Mid weight plus in style, with an energetic attack of purple and black fruits with underpinnings of spice, earth and oak. Veers to ultra-ripeness but does not cross the line. The tannins are tucked in, the texture is refined and silky, and the finish is juicy. Still terrific when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **93.**



**2016 Cattleya Wines Donum Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 65 cases, \$70. Sourced from the West Slope block containing the vineyard's oldest vines. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black raspberry, dried dark rose petal and spice are enticing. Deep, dark and mysterious, with a generous amount of sappy black fruits touched by oak and supported by sleek tannins. Very polished, with a sexy, plush texture, and finishing long and dry. A bit reserved upon opening, showing off more when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **94.**



**2016 Cattleya Pratt Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., 75 cases, \$70. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Spirited aromas of lemon zest, white peach, graphite and flint holding court for a long time in the glass. This is a spiritual wine with caressing refinement, offering flavors of lemon zest, yellow grapefruit, flint and subtle toast that drape the palate. The composure is seamless and the tight-wound acidity provides brightness and crispness. Every year, this beauty is one of my favorite California Chardonnays. Pratt Vineyard is an exceptional site for Chardonnay.* **94.**

## Cosa Obra Wines, Santa Rosa

Proprietor Gregory Hayes offers Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and other varietals from select vineyards of the North Coast. Consulting winemaker is Kent Humphrey (Eric Kent Wine Cellars). Cosa means “thing” and Obra means “a hand-crafted body of work,” so “This is our thing, this is what we do, our hand-crafted body of work.” The wines are available on the winery website at [www.cosaobra.com](http://www.cosaobra.com).



**2017 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Rosé of Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$18. *Moderate salmon color in the glass. Attractive aromas of white peach, strawberry, white flower and bark. Sleek and slightly creamy in the mouth, with satisfying flavors of blood orange, wild strawberry and watermelon with a thread of oak in the background. Bright acidity makes for refreshing drinking.* **89.**

**2016 Cosa Obra Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$32. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Revealing aromas of black cherry, earthy flora and burnt tobacco. A wine with modest intentions, featuring mid weight flavors of black cherry, darkest strawberry, cola, tobacco and toast. Easygoing tannins make for comforting drinking, but the toasty oak is too pervasive for full enjoyment.* **88.**

**2015 Cosa Obra Founder's Reserve Sonoma County Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., \$N/A. Aged in 60% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose starts out with fresh black cherry fruit aromas, but transitions to musty, stewed fruit aromas. Full-bodied, ultra ripe and somewhat sweet flavors of black cherry, blackberry, and cassis. The wine leans heavily on oak although the prodigious fruit can hold up to it.* **89.**

## Fallon Place Wines, San Francisco

UC Davis graduate Cory Michal is the proprietor and winemaker. The name of the winery comes from the stairway in San Francisco where he originally started producing wine in a garage fashion with some friends. Order wines at [www.fallonplacewine.com](http://www.fallonplacewine.com).



**2016 Fallon Place Heritage Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.65, 110 cases, \$38. Single clone. Aged 18 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Upon opening, aromas of cherry, baking spices, earth and dust lead off. Light to mid weight in composure, featuring a core of red berry and cherry fruits with a sidecar of spice and herbs. Very easygoing, with a silken texture and gentle tannins. More appealing when tasted later in the day from a previously opened bottle.* **91.**



**2016 Fallon Place La Cruz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 13.9% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.65, 75 cases, \$38. Aged 12 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Terrific nose with bright aromas of lemon creme, pineapple, yellow apple and butter. Nicely composed with a welcoming core of lemon fruit accompanied by complements of pineapple and blonde caramel. Somewhat unctuous and suffused with California sunshine, with a steeliness on the finish that is appealing.* **92.**

## Friedeman Wines, Healdsburg

The short story behind this winery begins with proprietor Brooks Friedeman, a self-taught winemaker who started his journey along with his spouse in their Walnut Creek garage in 2011. They now live in Freestone with a small plot of Calera selection hand planted in 2014. Currently, the couple source grapes from vineyards on ridges between Freestone and Occidental and produce 1,500 cases per year. They only work with vineyards where they have long-term contracts and can control the farming.

The full story is as follows. Brooks and Jessica started dating in college and were married in 2011. He proposed to her at a spectacular vineyard on a trip to Healdsburg. His work in the solar industry took him California's East Bay and he started home winemaking in his garage. In 2012, Brooks started working out of a custom crush winery in Sebastopol initially producing wine with five tons of grapes. He juggled work and winemaking while trying to connect with famed viticulturist Ulises Valdez, who farmed every one of Brooks' favorite vineyards. He eventually met him and they have been friends ever since. Ulises agreed to sell Brooks two tons each of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Lancel Creek Vineyard and this source of grapes has continued to the present. By 2014, the Friedemans had increased production to about 500 cases and decided to make wine production their future. They sold their East Bay home, bought a house with about three plantable acres in Freestone, and immediately planted Calera selection on 420A rootstock, spaced 1 meter x 1 meter. Brooks farms the vineyard himself while consulting with Ulises on farming practices at other sites. Production increased to 1,500 cases, and a tasting room was opened in the Barlow in Sebastopol. The couple still work their day jobs, spending every night and weekend grinding to try and make their winery a success, hoping to someday create a family legacy business.

Brooks' winemaking style is as follows. He picks at very different Brix across his portfolio and treats every vineyard differently. Pinot Noir wines are fermented with native yeast after varying numbers of days of cold soak, and most of the fruit is fully de-stemmed. Chardonnays are 90% fermented in barrel with weekly to bi-weekly lees stirring and zero sulfite addition until dry and malolactic fermentation is finished. Barrels are topped every 48 hours to keep the wines reductive. He says, "I shun dogmatic ideals, and do so with each wine."

Friedeman Wines Tasting Room is located in the Barlow in downtown Sebastopol. The website is [www.friedemanwines.com](http://www.friedemanwines.com).

**2016 Friedeman Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.61, 165 cases, \$45. Released May 31, 2018. Sourced from Campbell Ranch, Lancel Creek and Terra de Promissio vineyards. 60% 115, 20% 777, 20% Calera. 4 to 5-day cold soak, 5 to 7-day native fermentation, aged on the gross lees in French oak barrels, 50% new for 11 months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Complex aromatic display featuring scents of black cherry, earthy flora, bark and cardamon spice. The juicy mid weight cherry cola core makes an impression as does the glossy texture. A wine for upfront enjoyment that has a bit more tug of oak at present than I prefer.* **92.**

**2016 Friedeman UV Lancel Creek Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.61, 102 cases, \$60. 50% Pommard, 30% Calera and 20% 777. Average harvest Brix 24.7°. 4-day cold soak, 6-day native fermentation, aged on the gross lees in French oak barrels, 50% new for 11 months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of black cherry, black raspberry and underbrush. More sap and richness than the Sonoma Coast bottling and better oak integration. The silken mouthfeel is cordial as are the gentle tannins. The mid weight flavors of dark cherry, black raspberry and blackberry are infused with a compliment of toasty oak. The wine finishes with a seductive grip of cherry.* **93.**

**2016 Friedeman Terra de Promissio Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.1% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.69, 47 cases, \$60. 90% 115, 10% 777. 5-day cold soak, 7-day native fermentation, aged 15 months on the gross lees in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Subdued aromas of cherry and savory herbs are echoed on the light to mid weight styled palate. Rounded, polished and rather elegant, but this wine lacks flavor impact and seems a touch underripe. The wine picks up a little fruit intensity over time in the glass and discreet tannins make for easy drinking.* **90.**

**2016 Friedeman Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.66, 170 cases, \$35. Released March 31, 2018. Sourced from Lancel Creek and Catie's Corner vineyards. Clones are Montrachet, Rued and Robert Young. Average harvest Brix 23.2°. Whole cluster pressed to 33% new French oak barrels for native fermentation and aging. Lees stirred bi-weekly. Full malolactic fermentation. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of yellow stone fruits, pastry cream and baking spices lead to a modestly flavored wine featuring yellow apple and subtle citrus highlights. The oak treatment is quite agreeable and the finish is cordial.* **88.**

**2016 Friedeman UV Lancel Creek Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.4% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.66, 107 cases, \$50. Release April 30, 2018. Montrachet and Rued clones. Average harvest Brix 23.2°. Whole cluster pressed to 67% new French oak barrels for native yeast fermentation and aging. Lees stirred weekly. Full malolactic fermentation. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. A classy offering with aromas of lemon, graphite, cold steel and toast. Richly fruited with flavors of citrus and pear fruits and a subtle petrol note. The fruit is energized with good acidity and the wine's comforting texture makes for a pleasurable experience.* **91.**

## Joseph Phelps Vineyards, Freestone

This winery started out as Freestone Vineyards, becoming Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards with the 2010 vintage. Planting initiated in 2000. There are three distinct properties: Pastorale Vineyard (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) surrounding the 40,000 square foot winery on Freestone Flat Road, Quarter Moon Vineyard (Pinot Noir) and Ferguson Vineyard (Pinot Noir), the latter farmed under a long-term lease.

For several years, the winery operated a Guest Center at the corner of Bohemian Highway and Highway 12 but this has been closed. Tasting is now available at the Joseph Phelps Tasting Room in St. Helena. Visit [www.josephphelps.com](http://www.josephphelps.com). The winery was chosen as a Featured Winery at the 2017 International Pinot Noir Festival.

**2016 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., 3,015 cases, \$60. Estate grown. 51% Pastorale and 49% Quarter Moon vineyards. Aged 13 months in 38% new and 62% two-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderate dark garnet color in the glass. A melange of dark fruit aromas and oak-driven toast and tobacco. Mid weight in style, with flavors of purple and black fruits that flood the palate with goodness. A fruit-driven wine with silken tannins and a modest finish. Not particularly challenging but not every wine needs to be. Enjoy this wine for its beautiful fruit. When tasted the following day from a previously opened*

and re-corked bottle, the wine had not surpassed its opening character and a little more oak infusion was evident. **90.**



**2016 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., 2,725 cases, \$60. 100% estate grown from Freestone vineyards. Aged 13 months in 35% new and 65% once-used French oak puncheons and barrels. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The nose wows you with aromas of lemon pie, buttery croissant, apple and pear. Well-endowed with flavors of lemon, yellow grapefruit and pineapple that are lifted with a backbone of crisp acidity. A deft touch of oak is pleasing, as is the tightly wound, citrus-driven finish that offers some aromatic persistence. A classic cool-climate Chardonnay.* **94.**

## Kitson Wines, Napa

After a career in Silicon Valley, Brad Kitson was looking for a new career path. He returned to school to obtain a master's degree in Viticulture & Enology at UC Davis. While in school, he began to work at Farella Vineyard in the Napa Valley. Brad next became the consulting winemaker for Napa Valley estate winery Georg Rafael Vineyards.

The image of the car used on the winery's logo and label has special meaning to the Kitsons. The car photo was taken at a parade in San Francisco, circa 1916 or 1917. The car was a Hudson Super Six. Brad's grandfather, Hugh "Hud" Huddleston was the driver. Hud made his way to wine country, not to grow grapes, but to open the first car dealership in Napa.

Kitson wines are reasonably priced and sold on the winery's website at [www.kitsonwines.com](http://www.kitsonwines.com).



**2016 Kitson Wines North Coast Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.55, 120 cases, \$32. Double Gold Medal winner San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. Harvest Brix 23.0°. A blend of three vineyards in the Anderson Valley, Sonoma Coast and Coombsville appellations. 60%+ Pommard with the remainder Dijon 777, 115 and Swan selection. 10% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 10 months in previously used French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Appealing scents of cherry, spice, redwood and pine. Lighter in style, with easygoing flavors of red cherry and berry with a forest thread. Forward drinking with silky tannins and commendable balance. Like a Model T - simple but reliable.* **89.**



**2016 Kitson Wines Black Knight Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.558, 123 cases, \$36. Harvest Brix 24.0°. The vineyard, situated in the southeast region of the Sonoma Coast due east of the Petaluma Gap, is organically farmed. Clones 777, 667 and 115. 100% de-stemmed into open-top fermenters. Cold soak followed by slight inoculation of wine yeast. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Deeply aromatic, featuring cherry, sandalwood and feral aromas. Elegantly styled, soft and satiny in texture, with mid weight flavors of black cherry and dark red berries. Very sleek, like an Aston-Martin, with deft balance and plenty of aromatic cherry goodness on the finish. The wine reaches new heights over time in the glass indicating age ability.* **93.**



**2016 Kitson Wines Haynes Vineyard Coombsville Napa Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.56, 117 cases, \$36. Haynes Vineyard, located in the cool southeast corner of the Napa Valley in the Coombsville AVA, was originally planted in 1966 under consultation from Napa legend Andre Tchelitscheff. Swan and Dijon 115 clones used in this wine were added to the mix subsequently. Harvest Brix 23.8°. 100% de-stemmed in to open-top fermenters. Slight inoculation of wine yeast. Aged in French oak barrels, 17% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Fresh aromas of cherry, baking spices and piney oak. Deeply flavored core of red cherry, cranberry and spice. Very gracious and elegant like a Bentley, with impressive harmony. Tre Pinot.* **92.**

## LaRue Wines, Sonoma

The latest spring 2018 offerings from proprietor and winemaker Katy Wilson are stellar as usual. These highly sought after wines are sold through a mailing list at [www.laruewines.com](http://www.laruewines.com).



**2015 LaRue Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., 240 cases, \$60. Released October 2017. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels 20% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is joyous, with aromas of cherry, pipe smoke, spice, and dried rose petal bringing more intensity over time in the glass. The core of cherry and pomegranate fruit flavors have impressive intensity and length and finish with uncommon generosity. Sleek, silky and balanced, finishing with juicy acidity. All you can ask for in an appellation wine. 93.*

**2015 LaRue Coastlands Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 12.4% alc., 50 cases, \$80. Released October 2017. 20% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 30 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Light garnet color in the glass. The nose is quite savory, featuring aromas of earthy flora, cigar box and toasty oak. Light to mid weight in composure, with dark cherry and dark berry fruit flavors that have an earthy and feral quality. Oak adds more seasoning than I prefer. The fine-grain tannins are evident but not intrusive and there is only modest finishing length. I re-tasted this wine several hours after opening and the following day and still felt the oak treatment dominated the delicate fruit. 90.*



**2015 LaRue Rice-Spivak Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 12.8% alc., 150 cases, \$70. Release fall 2018. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels 33% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of black cherry, BBQ spice rub and floral perfume. Refined and gracious on the palate, with an amazingly generous core of black cherry fruit that seems to persist on the finish for minutes. A bit of spice and tobacco flavor adds intrigue. Not perfect, as some tannin shows up on the slightly tart finish, but this is still a very compelling wine. This vineyard is always my paramour among the LaRue stable of wines. 94.*

**2015 LaRue Thorn Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 12.9% alc., 100 cases, \$70. Released March 2018. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Both red cherry and red berry fruit aromas along with earthy flora and mushroom aromas combine beautifully on the inviting nose. Comforting in the mouth, with good harmony, in a mid weight style featuring dark red fruit and savory herb flavors. The very long finish is notable for its generosity and refreshing cut. 93.*

**2016 LaRue Charles Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., 50 cases, \$60. Released March 2018. Barrel fermented in once-used French oak barrels and aged for 17 months. *Moderately light but bright golden yellow color in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon, stone fruits and alfalfa set the stage. Crisp and fresh in the mouth, with engaging flavors of lemon, white peach, buttered toast and pastry cream. Nicely composed, with some lingering fruit charm on the impressive finish. 92.*

## Lombardi Wines, Santa Rosa

This winery was founded in 2013 by Tony and Christine Lombardi. The label honors a rich family history of wine. Some of you may know Tony because he was the Brand and Public Relations Director at Kosta Browne in 2010. The winemaker is Cabell Coursey, who crafts small lots of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from Sonoma Coast vineyards. The website is [www.lombardiwines.com](http://www.lombardiwines.com). Note: Tony and Christine Lombardi along with Cabell Coursey are hosting a 7-night Rhine cruise aboard the AmaPrima. For information, contact Expedia CruiseShipCenters at [wineclub@cruiseshipcenters.com](mailto:wineclub@cruiseshipcenters.com).

**2016 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.676, 227 cases, \$48. Sourced from Griffin's Lair and Sonoma Stage vineyards. Clones 667 and Calera. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Slightly confected cherry and oak aromas are featured. The middleweight core of cherry and raspberry fruits are nicely framed with oak barrel treatment. The mid palate is a bit shallow, the fruit is slightly confected, and the cherry-driven finish is slightly tart. 88.*

**2016 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.9% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.667, 148 cases, \$44. Sourced from Boudreaux and Orsi vineyards. Barrel fermented and aged 15 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of lemon creme, pineapple, yellow grapefruit and straw. Robust flavors of lemon-lime, yellow peach, creme brûlée and vanilla. Very slight tannins, with a soft texture. The higher alcohol is folded in nicely. 91.*

## Mansfield-Dunne Wines, San Francisco

This boutique winery's proprietor is John Peterson and the winemaker is veteran Ed Kurtzman. The wines are sold through an allocation list at [www.mansfield-dunne.com](http://www.mansfield-dunne.com).

**2016 Mansfield-Dunne Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.55, 288 cases, \$36. Released June 1, 2017. Clones 667, Pommard 05, 115 and 777. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Light garnet color in the glass. The nose leads with hi-tone aromas of cherry and spice with a hint of guaiacol. Lighter styled, with a core of cherry fruit underlain with a smokiness suggesting smoke taint. Silky in the mouth, with juicy acidity and a slightly tart cherry-driven finish.* **88.**

**2016 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.59, 240 cases, \$48. Release September 1, 2018. Clones "828," 667, Pommard 05, 115 and 777 from Peterson Vineyard. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of muddled black cherry and spice, with more subtle aromas of potpourri, briar and smoke. Very similar flavor profile as the Santa Lucia Highlands bottling but with more concentration, more flavor intensity and more savoriness. The wine builds in appeal with time in the glass, offering a deft touch of nutty oak, a silky mouthfeel, integrated tannins and some finishing length.* **90.**

**2016 Mansfield-Dunne Cortada Alta Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.59, 141 cases, 150 cases, \$58. Released June 1, 2018. Clones "828," 23, Pommard 05, 667 and Swan. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Very pleasant and enticing aromas of black cherry, dark rose petal and seasoned oak. Mid weight plus in style, offering a melange of flavors including black cherry, black raspberry, plum, cola and spice. The fruit is ripe but not too ripe. Polished in demeanor, with good length in the mouth and a pleasing finish.* **91.**

**2016 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.68, 47 cases, 50 cases, \$45. Released September 1, 2017. Hyde clone. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate golden yellow color with mild unfiltered haze in the glass. Aromas of lemon-lime, pear, parchment and toasty oak. Rich and ripe in a full-bodied style featuring flavors of grilled lemon, grilled yellow peach, pear and blonde caramel. Syrupy in texture with cautious vibrancy and a thread of toasty oak in the background.* **89.**

## Metzker Family Estates, Napa

Melissa Apter Castro introduced herself to me as the winemaker for the new brand, Metzker Family Estates. Proprietor Mike Metzker founded this winery in 2014, realizing his lifelong dream of creating a California wine brand. A California native and alumnus of UC Davis, he relocated to Texas to receive his PhD in Molecular and Human Genetics. He founded two biotech companies and teaches graduate students at Baylor College of Medicine.

Bringing his talents of scientific training to the process of creating exceptional wine, Mike teamed with his son, Cameron, and fellow UC Davis alumnus, Melissa Apter Castro, to seek out fruit from prestigious vineyards in the Napa and Sonoma counties.

Melissa, a San Francisco Bay area native, trained with the Antinori Family at Tignanello Estate in Tuscany, Italy, before becoming the head winemaker at Antica Napa Valley. She joined Metzker Family Estates in December 2016. [napavalley.com](http://napavalley.com) named Melissa one of "Napa's Seven Most Exciting Winemakers in 2016."

Metzker Family Estates produces less than 600 cases of single vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and a single vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon from the Spring Mountain district of Napa Valley.

The Metzker Family Estate logo reflects Mike's training in the field of genetics. Similar to the astrological star chart, the Genetic Code circle flows outward from the center to decode the very building blocks of life. Revealed within the circular seal is an homage to ancestry, founders and the mapping of new journeys.

I was very impressed by the two wines reviewed here and recommend seeking them out through a mailing list at [www.mfewines.com](http://www.mfewines.com).

**2016 Metzker Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 310 cases, \$55. 75% Wädenwil 2A and 25% clone "828." 100% de-stemmed and fermented in tank, aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose offers an appealing marriage of black cherry fruit aroma and oak characters of old wood chest and spice. Mid weight plus in composure, featuring attacking flavors of black raspberry, black cherry, cola and tobacco holding court through a satisfying mid palate and strong finish. The tannins are under wraps, and the wine is quite approachable. 91.*



**2016 Metzker Terra De Promissio Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., 145 cases, \$75. The winery's first reserve wine. 50% clone 777 and 50% clone 115. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in tank, aged 14 months in French oak puncheon barrels, 70% new, for 14 months. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely scented with aromas of burnished cherry, blueberry and spice. A very saucy and sexy wine, with a sleek and smooth demeanor, and enticing flavors of black cherry, cola and spice. Satisfying out of the chute with impressive mid palate intensity, deft oak treatment, integrated tannins and a ravishing cherry pie filling finish of uncommon length. The pedigree of the vineyard shows through in this beauty that wraps you in silk pajamas. 94.*

## Migration Wines, Hopland

This label is part of the Duckhorn Wine Company stable. Tasting is available at Goldeneye Winery in Philo in the Anderson Valley (reservations preferred). The website is [www.migrationwines.com](http://www.migrationwines.com).



**2016 Migration Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 23,000 cases, \$40. With this vintage, the winery switched their flagship Russian River Valley Pinot Noir to the Sonoma Coast AVA, sourcing more fruit from cooler vineyards. 25% of the grapes were sourced from Bloomfield Vineyard in the Petaluma Gap AVA. Russian River Valley sites are 40% of the blend. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new, 60% neutral. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of cherry, raspberry and sandalwood lead to a mid weighted core of cherry, spice and cozy oak flavors. Silky textured with restrained tannins, and a finish infused with cherry goodness. 90.*



**2016 Migration Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., \$40. Sourced from Running Creek Estate, Charles Heintz, Orsi, Sullivan and Jewell vineyards. 75% malolactic fermentation. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new and 65% neutral. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of canned peaches, honey, butter, yeast and toasty oak. Modest flavors of lemon-lime and pineapple, with a clean mouthfeel, a touch of oak and spirited acidity. 89.*

**2016 Migration Running Creek Estate Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., \$55. A selection of the best blocks and barrels from this site. 75% malolactic fermentation. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new and 65% neutral. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Shy aromas of white peach, jasmine and ocean breeze. Slightly creamy on the palate, with bright acidity and a quenching, lemony finish. The bright flavors of lemon and pineapple are nicely integrated with oak seasoning. 91.*

**2016 Migration Charles Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.5% alc., \$55. A cool, high elevation site with Goldridge sandy loam soils. Old clone 4 vines planted in 1982. 75% malolactic fermentation. Aged 10 months in 90% French oak barrels, 35% new and 65% neutral. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. The aromas arrive slowly in the glass with air exposure, revealing lemon curd, yellow apple and artichoke. A flashy wine with vivacious flavors of lemon, pineapple and nori. Nicely composed with energetic acidity, folded in oak, and some pleasing aromatic persistence on the finish. 92.*

## Paul Lato Wines, Santa Maria

Paul Lato is a Polish-born, Canadian-educated sommelier who arrived in California in 2002 and is now in his 14th year of winemaking in the Central Coast. His wines are highly allocated and are served in the best restaurants in the United States, Europe and Japan. His wines have won blind tastings in Japan and France against some of the best wines of the Old World. Join the mailing list at [www.paullatowines.com](http://www.paullatowines.com).

The 2016 vintage in Santa Barbara was ideal. Rain in February prepared the vines for a fruitful growing season. Early bud break was followed by ideal weather during set, followed by a warmer than usual growing season. An early harvest was delayed by an especially cool August. Cool, even ripening with no heat spikes prevailed as harvest proceeded. These wines can be enjoyable relatively early while still possessing excellent aging potential. All Pinot Noir wines are bottled unfiltered.



**2016 Paul Lato “The Contender” Drum Canyon Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., \$75. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of plum, blackberry jam, mushroom, floral bouquet and a hint of oak. A stunning wine from the get-go with mid weight plus flavors of black fruits with accents of spice, licorice and a subtle oak shadow. Remarkable explosiveness on the mid palate. Silken in texture with a cordial balance, finishing really long and fruited. So tasty you can’t turn away. 95.*



**2016 Paul Lato “Atticus” John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., \$75. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose is mainly red fruited with added aromas of rose petal, spice and forest. Beautifully ripened strawberry, black raspberry and black cherry fruits are long in the mouth and unusually juicy. This debutante is refined and silky, with balanced tannins and complimentary oak and baking spice accents. The amazing finish lasts at least a minute. 94.*

**2016 Paul Lato “Seabiscuit” Zotovich Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$75. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Initial aromas of damp earth, flora, and sawdust give way to fruit aromas of cherry and boysenberry over time in the glass. Seemingly disjointed and uninteresting upon opening, exhibiting reserved mid weight flavors of strawberry and cherry. Considerably better on the palate the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, with more juicy fruit expression. Reserved aromas of cherry and oak spice persisted and this wine undoubtedly needs more time in the cellar. 92.*



**2016 Paul Lato “Duende” Gold Coast Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., \$70. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Cordial aromas of cherry, crushed strawberry, rose petal and spice. Very tasty mid weight cherry core with an honorable spice accent. Good energy and composure, very silky with drop-dead elegance and refinement. Not a big-fruited bombast of a wine, rather one of charming delicacy. 94.*

**2016 Paul Lato “Suerte” Solomon Hills Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$80. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is both fruity and savory, combining aromas of black raspberry and spiced black plum with aromas of dried herbs and tobacco. The savory theme continues on the palate that features mid weight purple and black berry fruits that are permeated with earthy and herbal flavors. The wine has a very soothing texture and a fine, but not noteworthy finish. Unchanged when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*



**2016 Paul Lato “East of Eden” Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., \$80. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Exuberant aromas of black cherry, rose and exotic spices holds up over some time in the glass. The most tannic wine in the 2016 lineup and what you would expect from this vineyard, but the tannins are supportive without being intrusive. Amazing attack of sweet blackberry, black raspberry and pomegranate fruit flavors that are expansive in the mouth and boldly expressive on the finish. The alcohol is tucked in nicely. Even more seamless and glorious when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The pedigree of this vineyard as well as its terroir shines in this wine. 95.*



**2016 Paul Lato “Belle dé jour” Duvarita Vineyard Santa Barbara County Chardonnay** 14.5% alc., \$70. *Light golden pear color in the glass. Enticing aromas of pear, lemon zest, pineapple and wet cement really gain expression over time in the glass. Very friendly on the palate, with great energy and balance, featuring flavors of green apple and lemon-lime backed by spritely acidity. A high-collared wine with an edge character that combines delicious fruit with energetic acidity in a harmonious blend. 95.*





**2016 Paul Lato “Le Souvenir” Sierra Madre Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay** 14.3% alc., \$75. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The nose reveals more charming aromas over time in the glass, offering notes of lemon curd, wet soil, pear, honey, 7-Up, toasty brioche and vanillin. Richly composed and textured, yet sleek, with mid weight plus ripe flavors of pineapple, yellow apple and grapefruit. The fruit really clings to the long finish and the oak skips along in the background. Even more enjoyable when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with uncommon length of finish for Chardonnay.* **94.**

## Roadhouse Winery, Healdsburg

This winery was founded by Pinot Noir enthusiast Eric Hall in 2010. He developed his winemaking skills at Papapietro Perry Winery, but his style of Pinot Noir is riper, bolder and more hedonistic.

The winery’s tasting room is located in downtown Healdsburg. Production is just over 2,000 cases annually, primarily from vineyards in Sonoma County. Visit [www.roadhousewinery.com](http://www.roadhousewinery.com). The wines reviewed here have been released.

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Platinum Label Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Mendocino County Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc (label), 14.2% alc. (tech sheet), pH 3.95, TA 0.50, 200 cases, \$75. Romanee-Conti selection and Wädenswil 2A clone. Harvest Brix 23.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGR yeast for primary fermentation. Aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Very reserved nose with only a hint of briar and oak aromas even over extended time in the glass. A fruit-driven wine featuring black cherry and raspberry fruits with toast and licorice in the background. The tannins are well integrated, but the wine’s low acidity leads to a lack of freshness. The finish is notable sweet.* **87.**

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Pink Label Leras Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc., pH 3.90, TA 0.60, 325 cases, \$69. Martini clone planted in 1973. Harvest Brix 25.2°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGR yeast primary fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The nose lacks charm, offering only vegetal and cooked cherry aromas. Plush and velvety on the palate with very ripe, even stewed-tasting dark fruits with oak plying the background. The alcohol is tucked in on the modest finish.* **86.**

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Black Label Nunes Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc. (label), 15.4% alc. (tech sheet), pH 3.84, TA 0.67, 300 cases, \$69. Clones 114, 115, 667, 777 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 24.2°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGR yeast primary fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels 20% new, 60% a blend of 1 and 2-year-old. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Gold medal San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Very shy nose offering aromas of black fruit compote, spice box and a whiff of vinegar. Mid weight plus flavors of blackberry, black raspberry and cassis that really push the ripeness envelope such that a prune flavor also shows up. Acidity seems to be in respectable balance and there is some length of finish.* **87**

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Yellow Label Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 15.4% alc., pH 3.85, TA 0.66, 325 cases, \$59, Clones 115, Wädenswil 2A, 777 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Clones 115, Wädenswil 2A, 777 and Pommard sourced from multiple vineyards along River Road. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGR Merit yeast primary fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 40% new and 60% blend of 1 and 2-year-old. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Challenging to find any describable aromas other than oak on the nose. Elegant composed in a mid weight style with very sweet, extremely ripe dark fruit flavors complimented by a whisper of oak. So sweet the wine seems to have residual sugar. The wine finishes with a sweet and sour tone suggesting acidulation.* **86.**

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Blue Label Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.73% alc., pH 3.90, TA 0.67, \$59. Swan, 777 clones. Harvest Brix 25.0°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGR yeast primary fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 40% new and 60% a blend of 1 and 2-year-old. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas of blackest cherry and black raspberry. The mid weight core of sweet blackest cherry is accented with notes of red licorice and spicy oak. Balance is respectable with a pleasing finish of some length.* **87.**

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Green Label Sangiacomo Roberts Road Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.73% alc., pH 3.90, TA 0.67, 400 cases, \$69. Pommard, Swan and 777 clones. Harvest Brix 24.8°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGY, Merit and Assmenhausen primary fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 20% new and 60% a blend of 1 and 2-year-old. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Very shy nose without discernible fruit character. Mid weight flavors of blackest cherry, blueberry and blackberry framed by modest tannins. The wine finishes with a sweet and sour tone suggesting acidulation.* **87.**

**2016 Roadhouse Winery Purple Label Silver Pines Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir** 14.9% alc., H 3.83, TA 0.60, 300 cases, \$69. Pommard, "828," and 23 clones. Harvest Brix 25.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, BGR yeast primary fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 40% new and 60% blend of 1 and 2-year-old. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of prune and raisin lead off. Extremely ripe and compote-like fruit in a mid weight plus style featuring flavors of raisin, cassis, blackberry and dark chocolate. Fruit driven and monotone with a sweet-fruited finish and a hint of alcoholic warmth.* **86.**

## Sonoma-Loeb, St. Helena

This label is a vision of two great winegrowing families, the Loebes and the Chappellets. Ambassador John Loeb Jr. founded Sonoma-Loeb in 1990 focusing on Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. He sought out winemaker Phillip Corallo-Titus, who was also the winemaker at Chappellet. In 2011, Sonoma-Loeb became part of the Chappellet family. Titus instituted changes in the years since, including switching many of Sonoma-Loeb's contracts to acreage contracts, harvesting earlier to preserve more acidity, and judiciously reducing oxidative techniques like lees stirring and prolonged malolactic fermentations.

The winery's website is [www.sonoma-loeb.com](http://www.sonoma-loeb.com). These wines represent outstanding value. The winery's tasting room is in downtown Sonoma.



**2016 Sonoma-Loeb Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.83, TA 0.59, \$34. Grapes sourced from Dutton Ranch, Sangiacomo Vineyard and Calesa Vineyard. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of blueberry, blackberry, baking spices, toast, BBQ and vanillin. Generously endowed in a mid weight plus style with the whole gamut of fruit ripeness ranging from dark red to blue to black. Oak notes of char and tobacco dance in the background. Well oaked but the fruit load can handle it.* **90.**

**2016 Sonoma-Loeb Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.58, \$45. Clones 667, 777 and 115. Harvest Brix 25.5°. Fermented using yeast strains from Burgundy and Germany. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Muted, but pleasant aromas of black fruits. Full-bodied array of purple and black fruits are backed by a muscular tannic backbone. Sleek in texture with a very long, fruit-driven finish. A little less charming than the Sonoma Coast bottling. A succulent Pinot Noir for fruit hedonists that could only be produced in California.* **89.**

**2016 Sonoma-Loeb Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., \$34. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The nose is bright and fruity upon opening, offering scents of lemon curd, yellow apple, warm brioche and a whiff of honey and vanilla. Mid weight flavors of pineapple, guava and spice in a ripe-fruited style with a mildly creamy mouthfeel. The wine becomes less appealing over time in the glass both on the nose and palate, wants for acidity, and there is the slightest sense of alcohol on the finish.* **88.**



**2016 Sonoma-Loeb Sangiacomo Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.58, \$30. Grapes sourced from several of Sangiacomo's best blocks. Harvest Brix 23.5°. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. A classic Chardonnay nose displaying aromas of lemon, pear, slate and ocean breeze. Bright and crisp in the mouth with a satiny mouthfeel and a clean finish. The flavor profile centers on lemon lime. Energetic, with refreshing acidity and good cut. This wine has edges.* **92.**



**2016 Sonoma-Loeb Envoy Carneros Chardonnay** 14.1% alc., pH 3.48, TA 0.58, \$38. Grapes sourced from Sangiacomo Vineyard with a focus on Hyde and Robert Young selections. Harvest Brix 23.0°-25.0°. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Compelling aromas of lemon creme, wet lawn and sandalwood. Generous and engaging in the mouth, with a rich and viscous texture. Bold flavors of lemon and lime underlain with a steely acidity, finishing with appealing aromatic pep and energy.* **92.**

## Tongue Dancer Wines, Healdsburg

Winemaker James MacPhail left his namesake winery to produce intimate quantities of Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Chardonnay under the Tongue Dancer label along with the assistance of spouse Kerry. Their senses of humor embellish the wines with character and James' 20+ years of winemaking experience shows in the excellence of Tongue Dancer wines. The wines sell out quickly to mailing list members. Visit [www.tonguedancerwines.com](http://www.tonguedancerwines.com).



**2016 Tongue Dancer Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.7% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.59, RS 1.2 g/L, 223 cases, \$49, white wax cap. Released March 8, 2018. A blend of three Sonoma Coast AVA vineyards. Clones 115, 667, 777 and a suitcase clone. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 16 months French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Exuberant and seductive nose offering aromas of black cherry and spice. The gorgeous charge of Bing cherry, black raspberry and spice flavors really hit home on the mid palate and cling through a generous finish. Sleek in texture with a subtle complement of toasty oak and nicely integrated tannins. A real charmer that is both harmonious and on pitch. You won't be able to take your eyes off the glass.* **95.**

## More Wines

**2015 Freeman Vineyards & Winery Ryo-Fu Green Valley of Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.3% alc., 615 cases, \$40. A multiple vineyard blend (Keefer Ranch, Heintz Ranch, Black Emerald, Searby and Dutton Mill Station vineyards). Aged 15 months on lees in French oak barrels, 12% new and 88% used. Apparently full malolactic fermentation. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of buttered toast, lemon curd, honey, pineapple and slight matchstick initially. Rich and ripe fruited in a highly flavorful style that retains good vibrancy. Flavors of lemon, pineapple, yellow peach, burnt caramel and vanilla build over time in the glass. Slightly creamy in mouthfeel with some finishing length. The label says, "Burgundian-style," but this wine is clearly California in style.* **91.**

**2015 Goldeneye Ten Degrees Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., 1,175 cases, \$125. The winery's finest lots of the vintage. Sourced from all four of the winery's estate vineyards. Aged 16 months in 100% new French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Engaging aromas of blackest cherry, blackberry, oak and vanillin lead off. Discreetly concentrated core of black cherry fruit is accented with toasty oak. A wine with serious intentions with a firm tannic backbone and a long, cherry-blessed finish. Considerably more open and enjoyable when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine is not as extracted and opulent as usual in this vintage, but is a better table wine as a result.* **93.**



**2015 Peake Ranch Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 250 cases, \$40. Proprietors John and Gillian Wagner, winemaker is Paul Lato. 100% John Sebastiano Vineyard grapes. Clones 667, 115 and Swan. 3-day cold soak, RC 212 yeast, 17 days on the skins, aged in French oak barrels, 40% new. Fined with egg whites, unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. A boisterous wine featuring aromas and flavors of blackberry, black current, earth and oak. Good attack and follow through with some finishing length. Appealingly silky in texture with integrated tannins. More enjoyable when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **91.**



**2016 Trader Joe's Platinum Reserve Lot #79 Carneros Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., \$14.99. Vinted and bottled by Carneros Cellars, Napa, CA. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is quite charming, offering aromas of wild strawberry, rose petal, cherry, raspberry and pine. Light to mid weight in style, and very open and giving, featuring an array of dark red fruit flavors. A slightly earthy, mushroom vibe is typical of Carneros. There is favorable juiciness and able oak management (unlike many Reserves that lean heavy on oak). Still perfectly fine when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Incredible value.* **90.**

**2015 Wait Cellars Devoto Garden Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., \$N/A. Release summer 2018. Double Gold at 2018 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. The vineyard is a cool and windy site above Sebastopol with vines planted in Goldridge sandy loam. Native fermentation, 10% whole cluster 115 clone and 20% whole cluster "828" clone. Aged 10 months on lees with lees stirring through the winter in French and Hungarian oak barrels, 20% new and 33% once-filled. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of muddled cherry, underbrush, toast and dark chocolate. Mid weight flavors of black cherry, blueberry and pomegranate assembled in a classic style with some breadth of finish that includes a modest rush of tannins. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the tannins had assimilated and the wine had persistent and pleasing fruit pep.*

**91.**



# Recently Tasted Oregon Wines

## Big Table Farm, Gaston

Brian Marcy and Claire Carver moved to Oregon from Napa in 2006, after Brian had been making wine for ten years. They started very modestly, producing 150 cases with their first vintage in 2006.

Today, they own and manage 70 acres in the northern Willamette Valley, where they raise animals and produce seasonal vegetables. On a visit, you will find free-range hens, pasture-raised pigs and grass-fed cows. Their goal is to have a healthy, sustainable and diverse farm.

The art on the labels is drawn by Clare and is unique for each vintage and bottling. The labels are made by using a letterpress and thick printmaking paper. After each label is applied by hand, Clare's team wraps each bottle in tissue to preserve the letterpress paper's texture and beauty. There is a product code on the bottom of each bottle so you don't have to unwrap them to identify the wines.

Tasting is available at the farm in the owner's house by appointment only. Visit [www.bigtablefarm.com](http://www.bigtablefarm.com).



**2016 Big Table Farm Earth Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 105 cases, \$105. Released April 17, 2018. 100% whole cluster fermentation. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The name of this wine is appropriate because there is an appealing earthiness that pervades the experience. A bit of whole cluster goodness shows up on the nose that offers aromas of black raspberry, blackberry, exotic spices, rose petal and burnt tobacco. The mid weight core of black cherry and black raspberry fruit provides plenty of vim and vigor. There is a seamless quality to the wine with perfectly integrated oak and t n'a. A subtle smokiness belies some fruit from Pelos-Sandberg Vineyard in this wine. More ostentatious when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94.*



**2016 Big Table Farm The Elusive Queen Willamette Valley Chardonnay** 13.3% alc., 104 cases, \$85. Released April 17, 2018. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Light golden yellow color and unfiltered clarity in the glass. Exhilarating aromas of lemon, pineapple, baking spices and buttered toast light up the nose. Delicious flavors of pear, lemon, yellow grapefruit, hazelnut and spice offered on a sleek platform. Impeccably balanced with a finish that is really tenacious. I could try to go on about this dreamy wine, but sometimes greatness defies adequate description. 97.*



## Coehlo Winery, Amity

Coehlo farms three vineyards in three sub-AVAs of the Willamette Valley. Coehlo Estate Vineyard is in the soon-to-be-approved Van Duzer Corridor AVA, Delfina Vineyard is in the McMinnville AVA, and Zeitoun Vineyard is in the Eola-Amity Hills. The wines are all estate grown and bottled with Diam cork.

The wines are available at the winery, on the website and in high-end retail stores. Visit [www.coehlowinery.com](http://www.coehlowinery.com). These stellar wines represent the best value in this issue.



**2016 Coehlo Coehlo Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.58, RS 0.3 g/L, 94 cases, \$45. 50% 777 and 50% Pommard clones. Harvest Brix 22.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 3 to 5-day cold soak, 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new for 14 months and in stainless steel for 2 months. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Soaring aromas of black cherry infused with gentle oak-driven notes of spice and vanilla. The luscious fruit veers to the ripe side, but the flavors of black cherry, pomegranate and blackberry are captivating. Silky in the mouth, with impressive intensity and length and a giving finish. This wine was considerably more harmonious when tasted from an opened bottle later in the day. The richest of the three 2016 Pinot Noirs. 94.*

**2016 Coehlo Delfina Vineyard McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 12.8% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.59, RS 0.1 g/L, 97 cases, \$45. 25% 667, 50% 777 and 25% 115. Harvest Brix 22.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 3 to 5-day cold soak, full malolactic fermentation. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 25% new, and 2 months in stainless steel. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Upon opening, this wine was not particularly appealing. Subdued aromas of black cherry and oak vanillin led to a rustic palate of sweet dark red and black fruits with a noticeable backing of citrusy acidity. Quite a change when tasted later in the day from a previously opened bottle when the wine exhibited considerably more harmony, showing adept oak management and a persistent finish. 92.*



**2016 Coehlo Zeitoun Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.55, RS 0.4 g/L, 95 cases, \$45. Unknown clones. Harvest Brix 23.0°. 100% de-stemmed, 3 to 5-day cold soak, full malolactic fermentation. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 50% new and 50% neutral. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of a range of dark fruits and a hint of vanilla. Clean, polished and impeccably balanced in a mid weight style featuring an array of perfectly ripened purple and black fruits blessed with adroit oak input. A flat-out gorgeous wine that slides through the mid palate and finish likes its lubricated. 94.*

## Rain Dance Vineyards, Newberg

Rain Dance Vineyards is a newer producer with an Oregon agricultural and hospitality legacy dating to 1859. Ken and Celia Austin of Newberg, Oregon, founded the winery in 2009 and debuted their first vintage in 2013.

Rain Dance is home to 120 acres of farmland including 73 acres of LIVE and Salmon Safe vineyards. A collection of four estate vineyards includes 53 acres of Pinot Noir, 17 acres of Chardonnay, 2 acres of Riesling and 1 acre of Gewürztraminer. The vines are dry farmed sustainably using balanced pruning, careful attention to cover cropping and multiple thinning passes to insure low yields. Vine by vine composting is one particularly unique approach. Vineyard clients include Adelsheim, Alexana and King Estate.

The wines are produced and bottled under the direction of winemaker Bryan Weil of Alexana Winery in a custom crush agreement working closely with Ken and Celia Austin.

The winery's country tasting room is located at 26335 NE Bell Road just minutes from the center of Newberg. Tasting is offered at the tasting bar, or covered porch or outdoor patio. Open daily. Visit the informative website at [www.raindancevineyards.com](http://www.raindancevineyards.com).

**2017 Rain Dance Estate Grand Oak Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Rosé** 14.1% alc., pH 3.36, TA 0.653, 50 cases, RS 0.83 g/L, \$22, screw cap. Released May 5, 2018. Harvest Brix 22.3. 100% Dijon clone 114. Whole cluster pressed with no skin soaking. Cold fermented. Aged in neutral French oak barrels. *Delicate orange color in the glass. Aromas of blood orange, yellow apple, peach and fragrant melon. Slightly creamy in*

*the mouth and reminding of Orange Julius (which I always loved). A lighter styled but flavorful wine that has a savory floral note as well in the background. A terrific table wine that has a very dry, thirst quenching finish. 91*

**2016 Rain Dance Estate Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.51, 164 cases, \$40. Released May 5, 2018. 44% 667, 14% Pommard, 14% Wädenswil, 14% 943 and 14% 115. Harvest Brix 24.4°. 4-day cold soak, aged in French oak barrels, 29% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely scented with aromas of Bing cherry and mocha java. The mid weight core of black cherry fruit is framed by toasty, smoky oak. Elegant in style, with amendable tannins, good juiciness and some finishing purpose. The oak oversteps its role a bit, but overall this is a charming wine. 90.*

# Trader Joe's Touting Charles Shaw Wines Made With Organic Grapes

I like many food products at Trader Joe's markets and some of the domestic Pinot Noir wines are terrific values. But the Charles Shaw Wines, originally known as "Two Buck Chuck," have never interested me because Pinot Noir was never offered. Ostensibly, this was because you just can't make drinkable Pinot Noir at such a low price. Recently, Trader Joe's began to hype Charles Shaw wines made with organic grapes, suggesting these are of higher quality as a result and offered a Pinot Noir along with a Cabernet Sauvignon, Rosé, Chardonnay, and Pinot Grigio, all priced at \$3.99.

Trader Joe's promotion says, "We've been involved in every step of the process - from making sure we got the flavor profile just right to the rather innovative packaging twist of a resealable cork. And of course, with the name Charles Shaw on the label, these wines must be phenomenally priced." Admittedly, I am a Pinot Noir snob, but the Charles Shaw Pinot Noir is an embarrassment for Pinot Noir. The packaging is cool but the wine is nearly unpalatable.

As with all Trader Joe's exclusive wines, little production information is available. At the website, [www.shaworganicwine.com](http://www.shaworganicwine.com), some wine analysis is given. The wine is marketed by Bronco Wine Company and the winemaker is Larry Rocha. ABV is 12.60%, pH 3.80, TA 0.53 and RS 7.1 g/L (\*up to 9.0 g/L is considered dry wine).

This Charles Shaw Pinot Noir back label says, "Vinted and bottled by Charles Shaw Winery in Ceres, CA." The vineyard source is listed on the back label as Cottonwood Creek Vineyards.

**2016 Charles Shaw California Pinot Noir** 12.5% alc., \$3.99, twist-off Helix cork. Made with CCCF certified organic grapes. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Upon opening, the nose offers aromas of cherry and mocha, fading quickly and giving way to aromas of plum, wilted rose, oak and a slight vinegar note. A simple quaff, with a dark cherry fruit core, low acidity, a shallow mid palate and a short, slightly sweet finish. The wine is silky in texture as one expects from Pinot Noir, but there are strange non-fruit flavors, including vegetal and spoiled nut tastes, as well as other unappetizing flavors that are hard to pinpoint. Unappealing, but about what you would expect from a \$3.99 Pinot Noir. 79.*



When I go to Trader Joe's, I see people carting out multiple bottles or a case of Charles Shaw wines so what do I know?



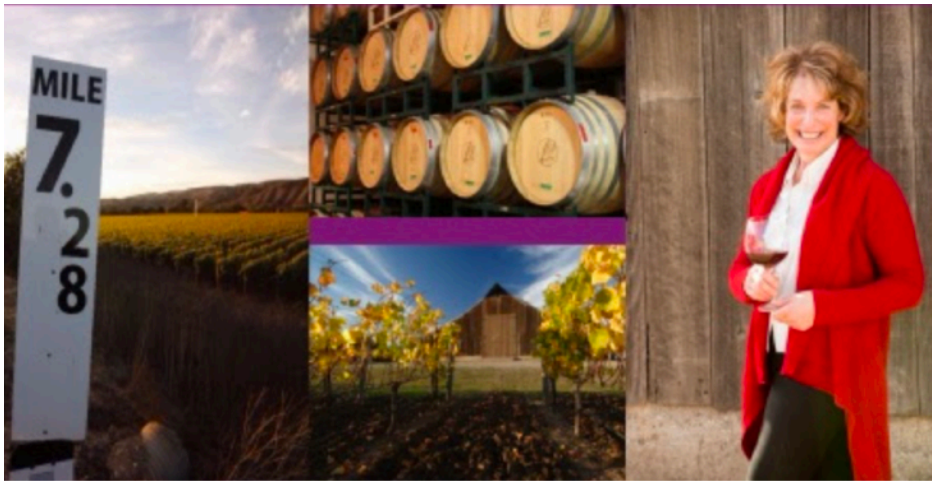
# Pinot Briefs

**CIRQ Act II Debuts** Michael Browne has announced Act II for his personal CIRQ label. After he turned over his winemaking responsibilities at Kosta Browne to his protege, Nico Cueva, he reenergized to pursue his dream of making Pinot Noir from special Russian River Valley vineyard sites. Kosta Browne will be taking over both Treehouse and Bottlegger's Hill vineyards and the wines will be available through the Kosta Browne mailing list. The 2016 vintage will be the last for both CIRQ and Kosta Browne wines from these two vineyards. His future plans include a new estate winery and a tasting lounge in the heart of the Russian River Valley. Signups are now being taken for CIRQ II with an offering to current CIRQ customers.

**Roll Out the Barrels Weekend Celebrates SLO Wines** San Luis Obispo (SLO) Wine Country holds its 28th annual "Roll Out the Barrels" grand tasting celebration with a variety of events, June 21-23. The "Barrels in the Plaza" event will be held on June 21 on the grounds of the historic Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa as an outdoor walk-around affair in downtown San Luis Obispo. On June 22-23 is the "Passport to SLO Wine Country with tasting rooms open for exclusive experiences. See the full schedule and purchase tickets at [www.slowine.com/events/passport-to-slo-wine-country.php](http://www.slowine.com/events/passport-to-slo-wine-country.php).

**Brewer-Clifton Opens New Urban Tasting Room** Brewer-Clifton has opened a new tasting room downtown in Los Olivos. In addition to the Brewer-Clifton lineup of appellation and vineyard-designated wines from the winery's estate, wines from Diatom Chardonnay and Ex Post Facto Syrah will be featured. Founder Greg Brewer announced that the Tasting Room will be open daily at 2367 Alamo Pintado Avenue. The Lompoc winery is open only by appointment.

**Fiddlehead 30th Anniversary** On Saturday, July 28, Fiddlehead will be hosting it's "6th Annual Drink 728 and 7/28 as well as Fiddle Fest 2.0 at Fiddlestix Mile 7.28", which also happens to be Fiddlehead Winery's 30th anniversary. General admission from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. includes a tasty BBQ, vineyard tours and more than 30 wines open for tasting. Fiddlehead will be pouring extensive verticals of all their wines made from the Fiddlestix Estate Vineyard as well as vertical of Sauvignon Blanc and Oregon Pinot Noir. The event is also a fundraiser for the Women's Fund of Northern Santa Barbara County. Tickets purchased before July 16 are \$80. Purchase tickets at [www.fiddleheadcellars.com/drink-728-on-728-2018.html](http://www.fiddleheadcellars.com/drink-728-on-728-2018.html).



**Sta. Rita Hills Wine Alliance Wine & Fire 2018** This event will be held the weekend of August 17, 18, 19, and includes a Friday Night Barn Party at Fiddlestix Barn set amongst 96 acres of Pinot Noir, Saturday Morning Speed Tasting with a Winemaker at Peake Ranch, and Saturday Evening Grand Tasting at La Purisma Mission. For a detailed description of the events and to purchase tickets, visit [www.eventbrite.com/e/wine-and-fire-in-the-sta-rita-hills-wine-country-2018-tickets-4601395](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/wine-and-fire-in-the-sta-rita-hills-wine-country-2018-tickets-4601395).

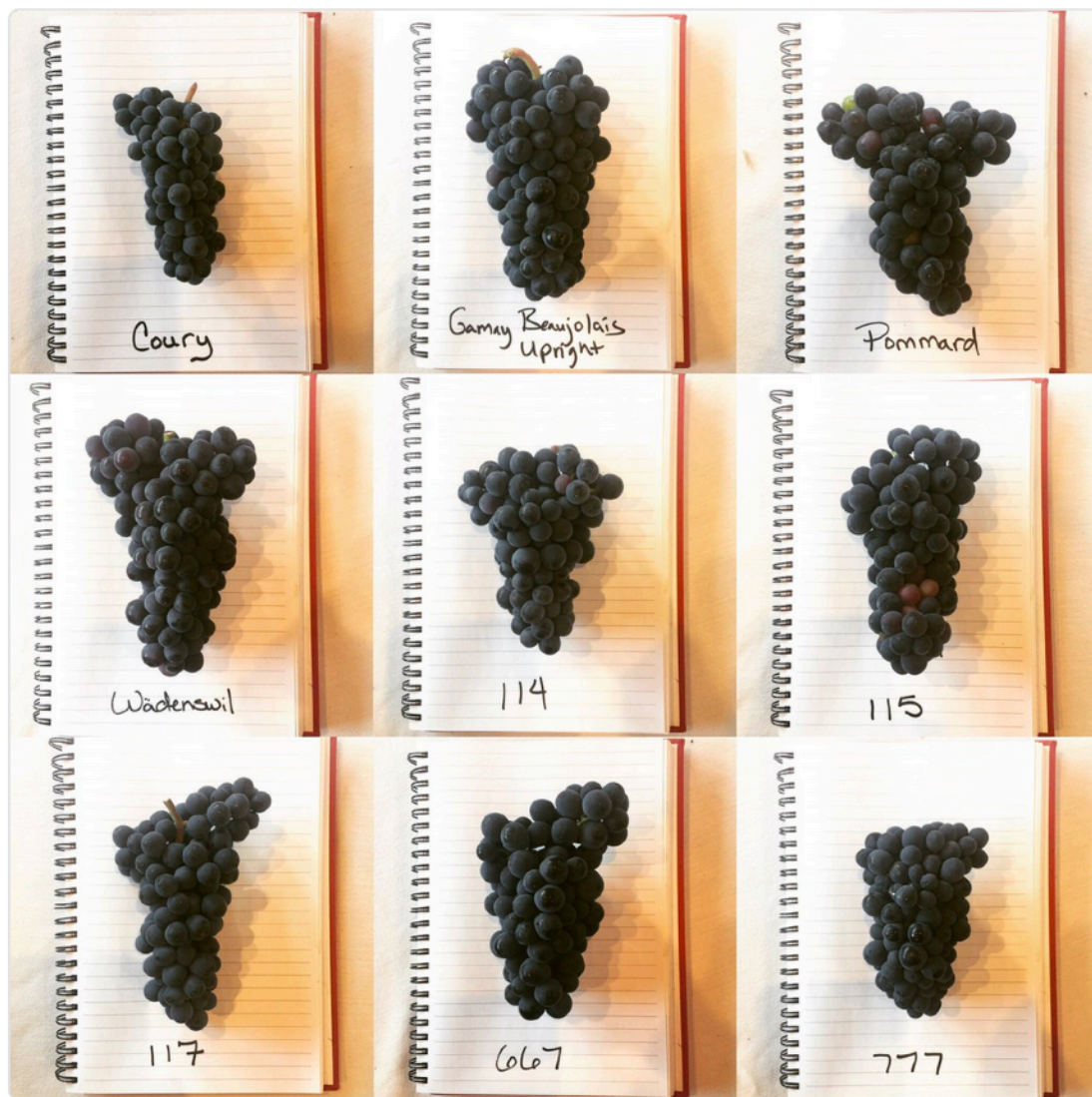
**Lingua Franca Opens Tasting Room** Lingua Franca has announced a summer partnership with McMinnville's farm to table restaurant, Thistle, where the winery will be creating their first walk-in Tasting Room experience. The regular weekly schedule will be Friday through Monday and cost only \$20 per person. Reservations are not required for groups of up to 4 guests. In related news, Lingua Franca has just released

four 2016 wines: AVNI Chardonnay, AVNI Pinot Noir, Bunker Hill Estate Chardonnay, and Estate Pinot Noir. These are the first ever releases of Estate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Visit [www.linguafranca.wine/shop/](http://www.linguafranca.wine/shop/).

**Gallo Purchases Historic Sierra Madre Vineyard** Gallo took over Sierra Madre Vineyard and the nearby Rancho Real Vineyard in May 2018. Sierra Madre Vineyard dates to 1971 and consists of 151 acres of vines, mainly Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Grapes are currently sold to 35 wineries and Gallo says they will continue to honor all grape contracts with existing customers. Rancho Real Vineyard (also known as Murmur Vineyard) has 211 acres planted to multiple red and white varieties and again, Gallo will honor all grape contract.

**Pali Wine Co. Secures Lease on Huber Vineyard** Norman Huber planted his vineyard in 1987-1988 and is one of the oldest vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, the vineyard is a fruit source for several regional producers. There are 8 acres of clone 115 and 3 acres of clone 667 as well as 11 acres of Wente clone Chardonnay. Pali plans a Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyard-designate from Huber Vineyard and will use some fruit in its Summit Sta. Rita Hills cuvée.

**Help Me Find the Source** On April 19, 2018, I came across this excellent photograph of Pinot Noir clones on the web. I made a screen shot but did not document the source. I believe it was from a wine blog. If anyone knows the source, please contact me as this is a valuable reference source but needs attribution.



**Who Has Better Wine Tasting Ability?** An interesting article was published May 10 on the wine blog Winespeed at <https://winespeed.com/blog/2018/05/women-or-menwho-has-better-wine-tasting-ability/>. In honor of mother's day, the author interviewed seventy winemakers and vintners to get their opinions and the

latest sensory research was reviewed. The conclusion was, "It appears that women (especially of childbearing age) do indeed have sensory skills that on average give them an advantage over men in wine tasting. But much depends on the individual. And as every good wine taster knows, tasting with someone else who's driven to excell sensorially (woman or man) is the most exciting kind of tasting of all."

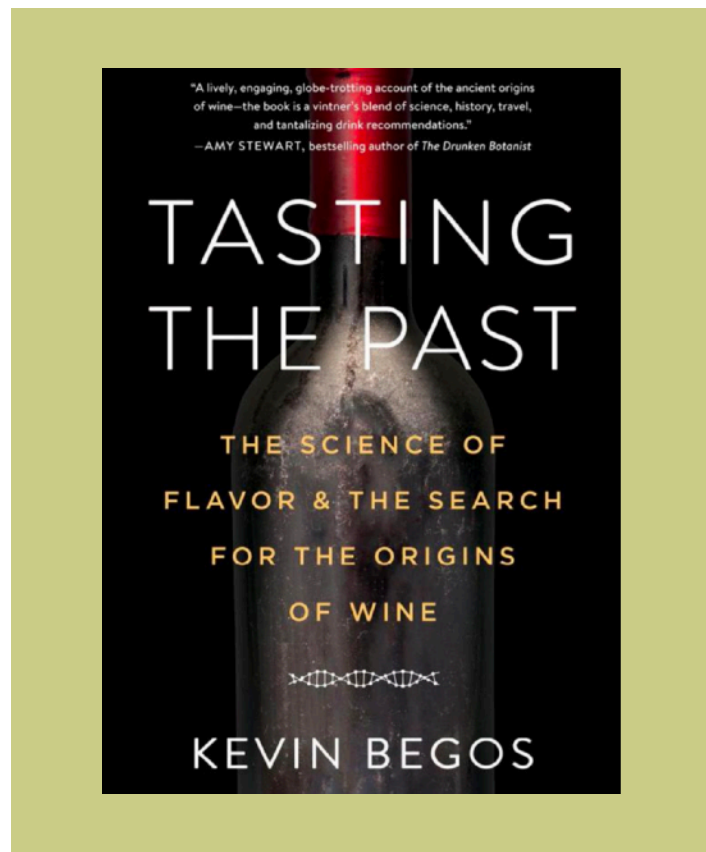
**Paso Pinot an Oxymoron?** A recent article in *Wines & Vines* describes vintners who have found cool pockets for growing Pinot Noir in the Paso Robles AVA. Read about Windward Vineyard, Haas Vineyard, and Sculterra Winery at <https://www.winesandvines.com/news/article/199334/Vintners-Find-a-Place-for-Pinot-in-Paso>.

**Oregon's Knudsen Family Featured** A tribute to the Knudsen Vineyards family appears at <https://www.thedailymeal.com/drink/love-land-legacy-knudsen-familys-wine-roots-run-deep-oregon>.

**UPS Next Day Air®** Apparently UPS has a new wine shipping service ideal for summertime shipping. For the same cost as ground, wines leave a winery in the afternoon and arrive at the buyers business or home in the late morning the next day. Wines shipped by UPS Next Day Air® can be delivered on business days, Tuesday-Friday mornings. I noted that Inman Wines in Santa Rosa is offering this shipping option. On another note, the shipping center I use locally in Orange County, California, now offers shipping of wine to many states. Previously, one needed a license to ship wine legally in the US.

**FOOD: What The Heck Should I Eat?** This book really changed my thinking about eating certain foods. Bestselling author Mark Hyman, M.D., has written an invaluable guide that clearly breaks down all the science and gives a plausible roadmap of what we should eat for our health. This may be the **most important** book you can read if you care about your health. My only disappointment is that Hyman only devotes two out of 334 pages of text to wine under the heading, "The Bottom Line on Wine." After reviewing a couple of studies, he says, "Taken as a whole, the research suggests that alcohol in small amounts can be good for you. That's especially the case for red wine....The key - and this cannot be emphasized enough - is moderation." He thinks beer is off-limits since it is loaded with carbs (one can of beer has about the same amount as a slice of white bread) and gluten. He also discourages sugary cocktails and feels beer alternatives such as hard cider are not any better than beer. Stick with water, green tea, coffee in moderation, and red wine in moderation.





## Book Review: Tasting the Past

This book depicts a fascinating journey of the author whose chance encounter with a bottling of an obscure grape from a little-known winery in a hotel room in Israel sparked an investigation of historical yet esoteric wine grapes and extensive research into the historical origins of winegrowing and winemaking.

Begos realized how little was known about the origins of wine and obscure varieties of wine grapes. This set him off on a scavenger hunt that took years and encompassed the original wine routes from the Republic of Georgia and Caucasus Mountains where grapevines are believed to be first domesticated 8,000 years ago, to Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Italy, France and America. As he notes, “The hotel room ultimately set me off like a viticultural Quixote, traveling ancient wine routes, championing obscure grapes and railing against the glut of famous French varieties.”

A former MIT Knight Science Journalism Fellow, Begos is an accomplished writer who enlightens with insights about the spread of winemaking throughout the world, the search for the “Mother” wine grape whose DNA is linked to almost all vineyards of the world, about DNA decoding of wine grapes, how native grapes are being rediscovered and promoted, and the joy of unexpected grape variety experiences that go beyond the established varieties such as Cabernet, Pinot Noir, Riesling and Chardonnay. The science presented in the book is easily understandable.

Begos makes a case for the importance of reviving and maintaining ancient vines varieties. With Pinot Noir, for example, he quotes José Vouillamoz who says, “Pinot Noir grapes in Burgundy are already out of the optimal window for cultivation because of increasing heat. So if you want to keep Pinot you can do adjustments, but at some point you will need some more help. That means tweaking the Pinot variety, perhaps with heat-resistant genes from some obscure ancient vine.”

There are a number of suggested wines featuring ancient and obscure grapes that the author has enjoyed.

Algonquin Books, published June 12, 2018, hardcover \$26.95, 288 pages. Score **95**.