



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 11, Issue 29 August 25, 2018

If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir

## Trisaetum Winery: An Artist Crafts Distinguished Oregon Pinot Noir

Many claim that those who make wine are artists, while others consider winemaking more of a craft. At Trisaetum Winery in Newberg, Oregon, Proprietor and Winemaker James Frey fulfills both roles as an artist and craftsman.

Despite the excellence of the Pinot Noir (and Riesling, but that is another story) produced at Trisaetum, beginning in 2005, the winery has been somewhat under the radar of publicists. You won't find the winery mentioned in John Haeger's *Pacific Pinot Noir* (2008), Cole Danehower's *Essential Wines and Wineries of the Pacific Northwest* (2010), photographer Andrea Johnson's *Spectacular Wineries of Oregon* (2014), or in *The Wines and Wineries of Oregon's Willamette Valley* (2017) by Nick Wise and Linda Sunshine. That is all the more reason to read this interesting untold story about Trisaetum Winery and vintner James Frey.

James grew up in Santa Cruz, California and matriculated from UC Berkeley before going to graduate school at the University of Arizona. He earned a master's degree in Exercise Physiology and an MBA. Like so many successful winemakers, he did not grow up thinking about winemaking as a profession and learned to make wine by doing it. He began by planting an acre vineyard in his backyard almost twenty years ago and started making wine on his patio (a sort of outdoor garagiste). James and his spouse, Andrea, who he met at the University of Arizona, did an internship in Oregon while in graduate school, and both realized that Oregon was where they wanted to raise their family.

In 2003, James and Andrea, along with their young children Tristen and Tatum moved to Oregon. They bought a piece of land in the eastern foothills of the Coast Range mountains and planted the first of three vineyards that now make up Trisaetum.



James attached himself to notable mentors in Oregon's winemaking community, including Josh Bergstrom (2003-2008), who was an important advisor while James was constructing his winery. Over the past five years, he has been fortunate to have Louis Jadot's iconic vigneron, Jacques Lardière, produce his Resonance wine at Trisaetum, allowing him to work alongside Jacques during harvest. James has also had a Walla Walla project (18401 Cellars) for the past five years where he worked with winemaker Chris Figgins of Leonetti and Figgins fame, and a sparkling wine project (Pashey) working with winemaker Andrew Davis, formerly of Argyle Winery. So, despite not having a degree in enology, he has had extensive real world winemaking experiences over the past 13 vintages.

James' winemaking philosophy is refreshing. He doesn't follow a recipe, preferring to experiment along the way. "I have made mistakes along the way (by experimenting), and sometimes I'm smart enough to not repeat them year after year." He tastes frequently, preferring to make wines that he likes personally. In the end, He hopes that his wines reflect a sense of place. "The worse thing you could write about my winemaking is that my wines all taste the same. The better wine is the distinctive wine. Complex and well made, but unique."

In the field, James dry-farms all three estate vineyards. All of the stems, skins and seeds from harvest go into a compost pile and are returned to the vineyard. The three estate vineyards include the 17-acre Ribbon Ridge Estate planted to Pinot Noir and Riesling in the Ribbon Ridge AVA with predominantly marine sedimentary soils, the 23-acre Coast Range Estate planted to Pinot Noir and Riesling in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA with diverse sedimentary and volcanic soils, and the 11-acre Wichmann Dundee Estate planted to Pinot Noir in the Dundee Hills AVA, with volcanic Jory soils.



In the winery, the grapes are 100% hand-harvested and hand-sorted. The use of sulfur is kept to a minimum. With Pinot Noir, either significant whole cluster or 100% de-stemmed fermentations are chosen based entirely on how the stems taste. In riper vintages, the percentage of whole cluster can be as high as 70%. Each ferment starts with native yeasts and if fermentation progresses to his liking based on smell and taste, the fermentation stays native. After harvest, James tastes every ferment each morning at 6:30 a.m. and determines what needs to be done based on this tasting (a Jacques influence). Fermentations that are close to finishing get tasted throughout the day.

In addition to James' role as proprietor and winemaker of Trisaetum Winery, he has long been an accomplished abstract expressionist artist. His winery houses a 1,500-square-foot gallery displaying his works. Over the past decade, over 300 of James' paintings have been sold to collectors and corporations throughout the world. His art is displayed nearby at The Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg, and faraway at The Clarion Post in

Gothenburg, Sweden, Maison Louis Jadot in Beaune, and the Masters of Wine offices in London. View the 2018 James Frey Collection at <http://www.jamesfreycollection.com/work#/2018-collection/>.

Trisaetum ("Tris-say-tum") is a Latinized version of the names of James; son Tristan and daughter Tatum. The Trisaetum Tasting Room and Art Gallery at 18401 NE Ribbon Ridge Road, Newberg, OR, is open daily from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Three flights are offered daily, each with five wines. The tasting fee is \$20 per person refundable with purchase of a bottle per taster. The showcase winery has a dramatically lit underground wine cave in addition to the art gallery.

Trisaetum wines, including Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling, are distributed throughout the U.S. Several Wine Club options are available with significant discounts. For more information, visit the winery website at [www.trisaetum.com](http://www.trisaetum.com).

I previously glowingly reviewed the 2015 vintage Trisaetum Pinot Noir lineup - [www.princeofpinot.com/winery/737/](http://www.princeofpinot.com/winery/737/) - and the 2016 wines reviewed here are also stellar.



**2016 Trisaetum Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., 3,800 cases, \$36. Released April 2018. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of purple berries, earthy flora and sawn oak. Bright, mid weight flavors of Bing cherry and boysenberry framed by reserved oak. Nicely balanced, with modest tannins and some finishing persistence. A delightful everyday wine. 89.*

**2016 Trisaetum Wichmann Dundee Estate Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.7% alc., 525 cases, \$49. Released July 2018. Old vines planted in volcanic Jory soil. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of cherry and toasty oak. Very juicy, clean and silky on the palate, with middleweight flavors of dark red stone and berry fruits. Impressive harmony, with buried tannins and a modest but welcome finish. This wine is true to its Dundee Hills origins. 92.*

**2016 Trisaetum Coast Range Estate Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., 600 cases, \$49. Released July 2018. This 22-acre vineyard is planted on the site of the Frey family home. A mix of marine sediment and volcanic soils. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Soft in the mouth, even seductive, with vibrant flavors of purple and black fruits in a mid weight plus style, offering sleek tannins and well-balanced oak. This wine has the Yamhill-Carlton sinew yet is a very sexy wine. 93.*

**2016 Trisaetum Ribbon Ridge Estate Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., 625 cases, \$49. Released July 2018. This 17-acre vineyard is on the same site as the winery and planted on a rare combination of high-quartz sandstone soils. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Ever-expanding aromas of blueberry, ripe strawberry and spice lead to a mid weight plus and affable core of darker fruits framed by noticeable, but congenial tannins. Somewhat reserved, with an earthy tone and a modest finish. 92.*



**2016 Trisaetum Estates Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., 520 cases, \$69. Release September 2018. This wine represents the most prized barrels from the three estate vineyards. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Somewhat brooding aromas of dark fruits. Strikingly flavorful fruit delivered in a mid weight plus style of sappy boysenberry, purple grape and black raspberry fruits touched by enticing spice and a hint of vanilla. The mouthfeel is very soothing as a result of amendable tannins. Somewhat moody at this stage, but the fruit still pops on the palate. Great potential here in future years, yet delicious now with decanting. 94.*



**2015 Trisaetum Family Reserve Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.3% alc., 120 cases, \$100. Released August 2018. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass (lightest colored wine in the 2016 lineup). A striking departure from the Estates Reserve. Aromas of red berry, spice cabinet and sandalwood. While the Estates Reserve is burly, this wine is delicate and feminine in character. Sleek, refined and juicy with filigree tannins, this mid weighted wine veers toward red fruits and is more Dundee Hills in temperament. The wine picks up intensity and interest when tasted several hours after opening. 93.*

# Tasting at Ten Acre Winery

I recently wrote a glowing feature on Ten Acres Winery Ritchie Vineyard Chardonnay ([www.princeofpinot.com/article/2077/](http://www.princeofpinot.com/article/2077/)) so I was intrigued enough to meet winemaker Michael Zardo in person in early August and taste his current releases. A sunny morning 15 minute drive north along West Dry Creek Road from Westside Road to Bella Vineyards & Wine Caves in Dry Creek Valley, the home of Ten Acre Winery, is quite a bucolic experience, although dodging bikers is a bit of a challenge. There isn't a more picturesque wine road in Sonoma County other than Westside Road.

Michael told me he grew up in Salinas, California and went to high school with Mark and Jeff Pisoni. All three attended Fresno State at the same time. Michael had intended to major in computer science, but the Pisoni brothers talked him into taking an enology class and he never looked back.

Michael now has 18 vintages under his belt and knows what he is doing. For Pinot Noir, he employs native fermentations with small amounts of whole cluster inclusion depending on the vintage and vineyard. A 5 to 7-day cold soak precedes fermentation and there is no post-fermentation maceration. 30% new oak is employed in the Sonoma Coast bottling and 40%-45% in the other Pinot Noir wines. The style is robust and full-bodied, but not heavy or compote-like. The 2016 Pinot Noirs are still quite young and have not shed their compliment of oak as yet.

The Chardonnays are native yeast and barrel fermented with lees stirring during primary fermentation and once a week during secondary fermentation. 100% malolactic fermentation. The wines all receive approximately the same modest new oak exposure (40% new), and are bottled unfined and unfiltered.

Ten Acre has offered wines since 2008 and Michael Zardo has been the winemaker since 2010. All grapes for the winery's Pinot Noir are sourced from Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast vineyards, including Stephens, Cummings and Jenkins. The founders of the winery are the husband-and-wife team of Scott and Lynn Adams, who became winegrowers more than 15 years ago. They acquired their first estate vineyard in 1995, and four years later, established Bella Vineyards and Wine Caves in Dry Creek Valley, a winery devoted to producing Zinfandel and Rhone style wines.

The Adams have sold Pinot Noir and Chardonnay fruit from their ten acre vineyard located a mere two miles from Rochioli vineyards. In 2008, with a growing passion for Burgundian varietals, they established Ten Acre Winery to focus on tiny lots of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. They named the winery "Ten Acre" after their home property.

Ten Acre wines are available for tasting at Bella Vineyards and Wine Caves. For more information, visit [www.tenacrewinery.com](http://www.tenacrewinery.com).



**2016 Ten Acre Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., 250 cases, \$35. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of black cherry, cocoa, and floral spices holding up in the glass over time. Flavorful darker fruits are blessed with integrated oak in a forward drinking mid weight style with some finishing length. 89-90.*

**2016 Ten Acre Jenkins Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc.. Release planned for fall 2018 or spring 2019. Vineyard planted by noted grower Charlie Chenoweth. Clones 115 and 667. 15% whole cluster. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Leading off are aromas of black cherry, pomegranate and chocolate. Darker, sappy fruits are featured in a bold style with a touch of spice. Still young, but showing nicely integrated tannins and acidity, predicting potential greatness ahead. 92-93.*



**2016 Ten Acre Earl Stephens Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., 150 cases. Unreleased. Vineyard is located south of Forestville on a steep hillside. Clones are Pommard, 115 and 777. Some whole cluster inclusion. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Exuberant black cherry aroma with accompanying oak-driven notes of caramel and cocoa. The wine's luscious black cherry fruit fills the mouth with goodness. The fruit is well-ripened but not over ripened. The tannins are well managed and their is noticeable supportive oak to go along with the sexy texture. I took the opened*

bottle with me after the tasting and sampled it 4 days later after it had traveled inside my car over several miles, and the wine held up beautifully, even showing much better than when first opened. **93-94.**

**2016 Ten Acre Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., 175 cases. Unreleased. Aged in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of dark red fruits and underbrush. Very silky on the palate, with vivacious mid weight flavors of cherry and raspberry. There is no sense of oak in this wine. Approachable now with commendable balance.* **92-93.**

**2016 Ten Acre Three Perch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., 175 cases. Unreleased. The 8-acre vineyard is located just outside Occidental. Very small clusters, low yields, producing an intense wine. Always the last vineyard harvested at Ten Acre. Clones are Pommard and 777 and a Calera selection. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Penetrating aromas of blueberry-pomegranate fruit along with underbrush. Full-bodied and boldly sappy, featuring purple and black fruits. A fruit-laden, big boy with a long, fruity finish. Nicely composed and not overly heavy with integrated tannins.* **91-92.**



**2016 Ten Acre Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.3% alc., 300-400 cases, \$30. *A solid entry offering with aromas and flavors of pear, lemon and green apple. Crisp, bright and clean with an arrow of acidity.* **89.**

**2016 Ten Acre Bools Block Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.4% alc., 200 cases, \$38. A blend of Ritchie Vineyard young vines and Big River Ranch Vineyard fruit. *Subdued, but pleasing aromas of citrus, white stone fruits, and a “mineral” character. The flavors echo the aromas with a backbone of virile acidity and a quenching finish of some length.* **90.**

**2016 Ten Acre Green Acres Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., 135 cases, \$48. Old Wente clone grapes from a Sangiacomo Vineyard in Carneros. *Very bright aromas of citrus and wet gravel. Flavors of lemon, kiwi and peach are forward and powerful. Spirited acidity adds freshness and a clean finish.* **92.**



**2016 Ten Acre Ritchie Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.4% alc., \$55. September 2018 release. *Sourced from an old vine block previously used by Mark Aubert along with a young vines block. There are probably Ritchie, Hyde and Muscat clones in the vineyard. The aromas of citrus, stone fruits and brioche leap from the glass - Wow! Perfectly balanced and sleek in style, with dreamy flavors of lemon and white peach. One doesn't think of oak when sampling this beauty.* **96.**



**2014 Ten Acre Ritchie Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.4% alc., \$48. The inaugural Chardonnay from Ritchie Vineyard for Ten Acre. A combination of 40-year-old and young vines. *Amazing aromas of exotic stone and tropical fruits with an edgy, stony guise. A beautiful combination of richness from the old vines and aromas and acidity from the young vines. Plenty of viscosity and weight to satisfy, with a sleep texture and appealing harmony. Flat-out exceptional, mildly aged wine.* **97.**



# Recently Tasted California Pinot Noir

## Black Kite Cellars, Santa Rosa

Black Kite Cellars was founded by Tom and Rebecca Green Birdsall to showcase the individual Pinot Noir blocks that comprise the family's 12-acre Kite's Rest Vineyard in Anderson Valley. In addition to estate Pinot Noir, Black Kite Cellars produce small lots of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from similarly expressive vineyards in both the Sonoma Coast and Santa Lucia Highlands. The bold Pinot Noirs typically feature ripe fruit and high extraction, generous new oak aging, and adequate acidity for balance.

**2016 Black Kite Kite's Vineyard Rest Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.64, 1,625 cases, \$50. Dijon 114 and 115, and Pommard clones. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Reserved, but pleasant scents of dark berries, balsam and vanilla. Blessed with copious and well-ripened purple and black berry fruits. The fine-grain tannins are arrested, and the wine finishes with graciousness and length. There is more oak evident than balance would dictate, but otherwise a very enjoyable wine. 90.*

**2016 Black Kite Sierra Mar Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.60, 200 cases, \$45. Pisoni "clone." Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The oak dominates the aromatic profile with scents of spice, vanilla and ash, but there is enough blackberry fruit aroma to satisfy. A wine for fruit hedonists with a boisterous core of blackberry and cassis flavors underlain with toasty oak. Suave in texture with very modest tannins, finishing long but with slight astringency. When tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, there was more integration of oak but the noticeable tannins persisted on the finish. 90.*

**2016 Black Kite Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.59, 268 cases, \$45. Pisoni "clone." Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of roasted coffee beans and toast with no fruit input. Mid weight plus in style, with flavors of toast, char and espresso obscuring the underlying black fruits. A brutish wine that finishes slightly hot and bitter. When tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the oak had released its dominance somewhat but the finish was still bitter. 88.*

**2016 Black Kite Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.63, 215 cases, \$60. Dijon clone 777. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Leading off are aromas of blackberry syrup, black plum and oak barrique. Bold and rich in a mid weight plus style, with expansive boysenberry, blackberry and pomegranate fruit flavors. Nicely balanced, with deft oak and tannin management. Along with the glorious fruit, the wine's most outstanding feature is the suave mouthfeel. Still shot through with pleasure when tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*



## Jackson Estate, Santa Rosa

These two wines are vinted and produced by Kendall-Jackson Vineyards & Winery.

**2016 Jackson Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 15.0% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.52, 5,025 cases, \$38. 80% Boone Ridge Vineyard, 12% Sable Mountain Vineyard and 8% Philo Vineyard. Multiple clones including 667, 777, "828, " 115, Pommard 5, Wädenswil 2A and a Calera selection. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 28% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Very demure nose, offering subtle aromas of black cherry, fertile earth and toasty oak. The mid weight core of blueberry and black cherry fruit plays alongside flavors of cola and toast. The tannins are nicely balanced, the alcohol is integrated, and there is some finishing purpose. Certainly drinkable, even somewhat enjoyable, but this wine lacks aromatic and flavor intrigue. 87.*

**2016 Jackson Estate Outland Ridge Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 15.5% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.51, 973 cases, \$42. Vineyard is located at 1500-1700 feet elevation. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. Outland Ridge is a remote vineyard located on a high eastern ridge with Goldridge soils. Clones 667,

“828,” 777 and Pommard 5. Aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of black cherry and blueberry-pomegranate juice. Fuller bodied in style with copious amounts of boysenberry and blackberry fruit accented with notes of char and dark chocolate. More sap and structure than the Anderson Valley bottling, with good oak enhancement, yet this wine is rugged rather than suave. The high alcohol sends shivers up my spine, but even at this prodigious alcohol level, the wine does not taste over ripe or roasted, or alcoholic.* **89.**

## Morgan Winery, Salinas

**2016 Morgan Rosella’s Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.59, 99 cases, \$64. Pisoni “clone” and Dijon 777. Vineyard planted in 1996 and benefits from the fog and breezes from its eastern exposure at the Santa Lucia Highlands bench land location. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in open-top tanks. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Complex aromatic profile that includes scents of dark cherry, spice, and fertile earth. Forward-drinking in a middleweight style featuring dark red and blue toned fruits and spice. The wine sports non obtrusive tannins and a lip-smacking finish. I prefer versions from this vineyard that are more feminine and red fruited, but this wine has class. A little more giving when tasted on the second day after opening.* **92.**

**2016 Morgan Garys’ Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.64, 93 cases, \$64. The 50-acre Garys’ Vineyard was planted in 1997 to the Pisoni “clone” of Pinot Noir. Grapes were 100% de-stemmed and fermented in open-top tanks. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Deep aromas of black cherry, spice, vanilla and earthy mulch. The core of darker fruits offers expanding flavor in the mouth, and extends its grandeur through a graceful finish. Excellent harmony, with regal tannins, a silky texture and a pleasing oak underpinning. A very soothing wine.* **93.**

## Sojourn Cellars, Santa Rosa

These wines were tasted with winemaker Erich Bradley in April 2018 and again in my usual fashion at home.

**2016 Sojourn Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.60, 900 cases, \$42. Released spring 2018. A blend of five vineyards, primarily Wohler Vineyard with some Riddle and Pratt vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, open-top fermentation using native yeast after a 5-day cold soak. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of ripe Bing cherry, ripe strawberry and oak barrel. Mid weight plus flavors of well-ripened dark stone fruits, black raspberry, cola, dark chocolate and dark toffee. The fruit is rich and mellow, with accompanying streamlined tannins and a modest finish. A good introduction to a bolder style of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.* **89.**

**2016 Sojourn Wohler Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.62, 600 cases, \$48. Released spring 2018. This Forestville Vineyard within sight of the Wohler Bridge was replanted in 2006. Young clones of 2A, “828,” 115 and 667 in Goldridge soil. 100% de-stemmed, open-top fermentation using native yeast. The clones were fermented separately. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas of red berry jam, Bing cherry and dusty oak. A pleasant enough, mid weight styled wine with fruit flavors of black cherry and strawberry framed by a compliment of oak. Juicy, but with taut tannins and a somewhat shallow attack and mid palate presence. Unchanged when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **89.**

**2016 Sojourn Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.60, 325 cases, \$69. Released spring 2018. This vineyard is located between Graton and Forestville just off Highway 116. It was planted in 2000 to a Calera selection and two suitcase Vosne-Romanée selections in Goldridge soil. 100% de-stemmed, open-top fermentation with native yeast. Selections were fermented separately. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Complex nose revealing aromas of dark cherry and berry, spice, incense, earth and oak. A classy wine with engaging mid weight flavors of blackest cherry, black raspberry, pomegranate and dark chocolate. A*



wild savory note adds interest. The wine offers a noticeable, but not imposing tannic backbone, and an opulent finish. **93.**

**2016 Sojourn Ridgetop Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.58, 350 cases, \$59. Released spring 2018. Vineyard is located on a remote site in the true Sonoma Coast near Annapolis. Small cluster size and tiny berries. Clones 115 667 and 777 were fermented separately in open-top tanks with native fermentation and then blended. The wine was aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Appealing aromas of blackberry fruit, animale, spice and sous bois. Lush fruit and plush mouthfeel are the wine's two most outstanding features. Engaging, full-bodied flavors of blackberry and black raspberry carry over to the generous finish. A concentrated but spirited wine with deft oak management.* **93.**

## More Wines

**2014 Carpenter Old Road #3 Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 13.6% alc., 325 cases, \$40. Swan and La Tache selections, Pommard clone. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A lighter styled wine that starts out strong upon opening, but becomes less appealing over time and when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. Aromas of black cherry, spice and oak barrel. Flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and subtle raisin with energetic oak support, modest tannins and a short finish.* **87.**

**2016 Cobden Wini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.61, 125 cases, \$50. Released January 11, 2018. Minimal sulfur used in vinification. Lots were inoculated by proprietary yeasts. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of earth-dusted Bing cherry and cola. Discreetly concentrated spiced black cherry goodness with a hint of tobacco oak in the background. Silky and refined on the palate, with gentile tannins and a lengthy, cherry-laden finish. This wine is not a blockbuster, but is more in line with what most prefer in a Pinot Noir. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **91.**

**2016 Dutton Estate Karmen Isabella-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.59, 952 cases, \$46. Release October 2018. Named for Joe and Tracy's youngest daughter who tends to be highly expressive - a perfect Pinot Noir descriptor. Grapes selected from Thomas Road, Marty's and Manzana Dutton Ranch vineyards. clones 115 and "828." The two clones were destemmed and fermented separately until the final blending. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. Filtered upon bottling. Winemaker Terry Adams. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Soaring aromas of ripe strawberry, muddled black cherry and flattering oak. Luscious in the mouth, but rounded and light on its feet. The mid weight, juicy flavors of black cherry and ripe strawberry are caressed by a touch of oak. I particularly enjoyed the satiny mouthfeel of this wine. Thoroughly enjoyable now.* **93.**



**2016 Kendric Vineyards Petaluma Gap Marin County Pinot Noir** 13.1% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.60, RS <20 g/L, 300 cases, \$38. This is essentially an "Estate" bottling but for the technicality that the vineyard and winery (crafted by winemaker Stewart Johnson at Treasure Island, San Francisco) are in separate AVAs. 8.5-acre vineyard planted in 2002 to clones 37 (Mt Eden), 115 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 23.0°. Yields were 1.8 tons per acre. 100% whole cluster into open-top fermenters, indigenous yeast fermentation. One half of lot pressed at dryness after 14 days and the other half of the lot went 38 days on the skins. Press and free-run juice combined. Aged 19 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 30% new. Egg white fined, unfiltered. *Light garnet color in the glass. The nose opens over time in the glass to reveal aromas of cherry, spice and timber. Light in color, yet possessing excellent weight on the mid palate, with juicy flavors of red cherry and cranberry and a touch of spice. Energetic acidity provides freshness and lift and integrated tannins allow for easy drinking. A delicately styled wine that can be enjoyed slightly chilled.* **91.**





**2017 Reichwage Sonoma Coast Rosé of Pinot Noir** 13.3% alc., 70 cases, \$22. Released May 1, 2018. Whole cluster pressed after foot treading in the bin. Aged 6 months on the lees in neutral oak barrels. *Delicate salmon color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of strawberry, peach and dried herbs hold up over time in the glass. Equally appealing on the palate, with bright flavors of peach, strawberry, red cherry, kiwi and blood orange The finish is clean, dry and thirst quenching. Chill out with this beauty this summer. 90.*

**2016 Reichwage Winery Twin Hills Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir**

13.6% alc., 200 cases, \$N/A. Unreleased. Vineyard is located in Western Sonoma County and is organically farmed by owner Max Reichwage who also sells about 50% of the vineyard's production to Littorai (since 2015). 15% whole cluster, native fermentation. Aged 18 months in 20% new Francois Frères 3-year air-dried medium toast French oak barrels. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Restrained aromas of purple berries and plum sauce pick up intensity over time in the glass. Very enjoyable and giving mid weight flavors of boysenberry and purple grape with the right touch of spicy oak in the background . The plush, fine-grained texture is particularly appealing as is the finish that displays some persistence. Still stellar when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 91.*



**2016 Sarah's Vineyard Santa Clara Valley Pinot Noir**

13.7% alc., 1,380 cases, \$25. Estate grown in the Dwarf Oak Vineyard. Whole berry fermented in small lots and aged 11 months in French oak barrels. The winery's entry level Pinot Noir. Clones 667, 777, 115 and a DRC selection. 100% de-stemmed whole berries, cold soak, native and inoculated yeast fermentation, hand punch downs. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with fresh scents of cherry and strawberry. Light to mid weight in character, with layers of red cherry and red berry fruit. Very pleasant to drink, with refreshing juiciness, gossamer tannins and some finishing length. A subtle earthy/herbal savory component to the flavor profile allows the wine to rise above a simple, fruity drink. A great everyday Pinot. 90.*



# Recently Tasted California Chardonnay



**2016 Metzker Ritchie Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., 275 cases, \$65. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon, white flower blossom and complimentary oak that are quite seductive. This is a wine from happy grapes, showing vivid flavors of lemon, white peach and toast. The texture is suave, there is a congenial grip of acidity, and plenty of aromatic fruit on the very long finish. Still terrific when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle the following day. 95.*



**2016 Sojourn Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay** 14.3% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.64, 450 cases, \$48. Released spring 2018. Old Wente clone from both old vines planted in the 1990s and young vines planted in 2009. Whole cluster pressed, native yeast fermented, and aged in French oak barrels, 40% new. 75% malolactic fermentation. Bottled unfiltered. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Scents of citrus fruits, warm nuts and brioche. Sleek and slightly oily on the palate with well-defined flavors of lemon, pineapple, and grapefruit with oak in the background. Energetic, with good vitality and a mouthwatering finish. 92.*

**2016 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay** 14.5% alc., pH 3.24, TA 0.70, 914 cases, \$42. Vineyard certified organic in 2002. Clones are Wente 4, Dijon 96 and 95 and Hillside. Whole cluster pressed, fermented in French oak barrels, 15% new and a combination of one and two-year-old barrels. 90% malolactic fermentation with lees stirring. Aged 10 months. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Inviting aromas of lemon oil, salted yellow apple, lemongrass and fig. Discreet body and intensity, offering enticing flavors of citrus, apple and honey. No intrusion of oak in this wine. Suave but not viscous on the palate, with a bright, clean finish. 92.*

**2016 Dutton Estate Kyndall's Reserve-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay** 14.5% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.66, 906 cases, \$42. Released May 2018. This wine is named for Joe and Tracy's oldest daughter who works at the winery. Select lots from Dutton Palms (Wente clone), Sebastopol (Robert Young clone) and Mill Station (44-year-old, dry-farmed, heritage clones) vineyards. Whole cluster pressed, 40% concrete egg and 60% oak barrel fermentations with twice monthly lees stirring. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. The wine was cold stabilized and filtered prior to bottling. Winemaker Terry Adams. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of lemon curd, white-fleshed fruit and seasoned oak. Discrete richness and noticeable ripeness, with flavors of Golden Delicious apple, lemon butter, toast and caramel. Slightly oily in the mouth, with a lemon-infused finish. 90.*



**2016 Morgan Highland Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay** 14.2% alc., pH 3.22, TA 0.72, \$28. Fruit sourced from Double L Vineyard (30%), Tondre Grapefield, Leavens Vineyard, McIntyre Vineyard and Quail Vineyard. Dijon 93, 96, 76, Wente 4, 15, 17 and Musqué clones. Grapes were whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented. Partial malolactic fermentation. Aged 8 months in French oak barrels, 26% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon peel, white grapefruit, peach, candle wax, flint and toast. Clean flavors of lemon-lime, pear and dried herbs. A bit shallow on the mid palate but with good acidic verve and a quenching finish. 89.*

## More



**2017 Dutton Estate Kylie's Cuvée-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Sauvignon Blanc** 14.5% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.72, 826 cases, \$27, screwcap. Released May 2018. First release by the winery's new winemaker, Bobby Donnell. Named after Joe and Tracy Dutton's middle daughter., a recent graduate from University of Arizona who will be assuming her new role as Dutton Estate Brand Ambassador. Grapes are harvested from Dutton Ranch's sustainably farmed Shop Block and Mrs. George vineyards. The musqué clone was specially chosen from Shop Block and Mrs. George vineyards. Shop Block fruit was aged in neutral French oak barrels (50%) and Mrs. George fruit was aged in stainless steel tanks (50%). The two lots were then blended together

after 4 months. This wine carries the Sonoma County logo and “sustainably farmed grapes” on the label as part of the new initiative from the Sonoma County Winegrowers Association. *Moderately light golden yellow color with slight carbonic fizz in the glass. A grassy, herbaceous style of Sauvignon Blanc, combining aromas of fresh hay, gooseberry and chalk with flavors of grass, green apple, lime, subtle peach and herbs. Sleek in the mouth with bracing acidity.* **90.**

# Domaine Nicolas-Jay

Burgundian winemaker Jean-Nicolas Méo and visionary music entrepreneur Jay Boberg met over thirty years ago while attending the same university in the United States, and they remained friends through the ensuing years.

Jean-Nicolas took over as winemaker for his family's Domaine Méo-Camuzet in Burgundy, where he was mentored by legendary winemaker Henri Jayer, a leaseholder at the Méo-Camuzet estate. Jean-Nicolas' style of finesse and balance and fruit and elegance rather than stalkiness and tannin, catapulted Méo-Camuzet to fame.

Meanwhile, Jay carved out his own success as co-founder of the indie record label IRS Records, and later as president of MCA/Universal Records. As he began winding down his full time role in the music industry, he approached Jean-Nicolas about starting a winery together in the Willamette Valley. In 2012, the two friends partnered to form Domaine Nicolas-Jay.



Why would Jean-Nicolas be intrigued by this offer? The French are interested in opportunities in Oregon because they can take their knowledge from vinifying Pinot Noir in Burgundy and apply it to a newer region. They enjoy more freedom to experiment such as blending grapes from different vineyards. There is also the attraction of building something meaningful from scratch, since there are very few opportunities in Burgundy to launch and grow new projects. The cost of vineyards is still affordable in Oregon compared to prime Burgundy plots. Finally, Oregon has a consistently sunny summer, offers less concern about botrytis, rain and essentially no threat of hail, three common challenges in Burgundy.

Domaine Nicolas-Jay is focused on Pinot Noir using grapes from the estate Bishop Creek Vineyard located in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA, as well as grapes from top Willamette Valley vineyards including Nysa, Momtazi and Zenith.

Jean-Nicolas now spends nearly two months each season in Oregon, traveling to the region throughout the spring, summer and harvest to oversee the viticulture and winemaking. Jay spends up to six months a year in

Oregon working in the vineyards and winery alongside Jean-Nicolas and the winery's associate winemaker, Tracy Kendall, a former enologist with Adelsheim where the Nicolas-Jay wines are vinified.

The 13.5-acre Bishop Creek Vineyard, located just north of the town of Yamhill, sits on a 66-acre plot of land, and is planted predominantly to mostly own rooted Pinot Noir clones Wädenswil and Pommard, the majority of which was planted in 1988 and 1990. There are additional young vines, Pinot Noir clones 777 and 667, dating to 2002. Elevation ranges from 399 to 616 feet. Soils are ancient marine sediments (Willakenzie). Since the vineyard was acquired in 2014, it has been farmed organically, and is certified LIVE, Salmon-Safe and Certified Sustainable.

A personal, guided tasting is available by appointment at the winery's tasting house in Dundee (\$30 per person, waived with a 6-bottle purchase of wine). The wines are sold on the web site but Confrérie Wine Club members receive many worthwhile benefits. For example, the first 100 Confrérie Wine Club members will have unprecedented access to highly-allocated Domaine Méo-Camuzet wines.

**2016 Nicolas-Jay Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.58, 3,000 cases, \$65. Release September 2018. Fruit is sourced from almost every AVA in the Willamette Valley and vineyards are almost exclusively biodynamic, organic and LIVE certified. Harvest Brix 23.4°. Aged in French oak barrels, 33% new and 67% neutral.

*Moderate garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of black cherry, black raspberry, earthy flora and a touch of oak. Ravishing mid weight fruit flavors of dark cherry, blueberry and boysenberry that are forward and giving. Very silky in the mouth, with gentle tannins and a generous, juicy finish. This is a wine of freshness and transparency that has no rough edges and aims to please. 92.*



**2016 Nicolas-Jay Bishop Creek Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.0% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.60, 150 cases, \$100. Release spring 2019. Harvest Brix 23.6°. Aged in French oak barrels, 50% new and 50% neutral. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Slightly shy aromas of dark berries, spice, potpourri and underbrush. Broad and sappy flavors of dark berries and pomegranate in a mid weight plus style, backed by discreetly vigorous tannins and a complimentary barrel presence. The very long, fruit-laden finish is aristocratic. Built for the cellar, this wine is a bit impenetrable now, but the charming mouthful of fruit, the bold structure and the excellent balance predicts a promising future. It should be more amendable by the time it is released next spring. Stash this wine in your cellar and drink the Willamette Valley bottling now. 94.*

# Pinot Briefs

**A Push to Require “Willamette Valley” on all Wines from Willamette Valley** A recent Town Hall meeting was held at which David Adelsheim and Ken Wright pushed for legislation to require Willamette Valley be listed on a wine’s label if it is produced in the Willamette Valley, even if from one of the sub-AVAs. Also, they want to pass legislation to require Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the Willamette Valley to be 100% of the grape variety if Pinot Noir or Chardonnay is on the label.

**Oregon Wine Experience** The 2018 Oregon Wine Experience in Jacksonville, Oregon, kicks off with the Oregon Wine Competition® August 4-5, with the winners announced at a celebratory soiree on August 23 (admission \$200). The Founders’ Barrel Auction (admission \$100) will be August 23 featuring barrel tastings of exclusive blends and auction of custom crush and wine futures. The Miracle Auction and Salmon Bake will follow on August 25. The Miracle Auction will include both live and silent auctions as well as an opulent dinner, entertainment and tastings from award-winning wineries (admission \$275). The Grand Tasting will be held on August 26 (admission \$100) and will be a community tasting featuring more than 100 Oregon wineries. Visit [www.theoregonwineexperience.com](http://www.theoregonwineexperience.com) for more information, to preview auction items and wine futures and obtain tickets.



**2018 Harvest on The Coast Weekend** San Luis Obispo Coast Wine Country will hold its Grand Tasting & Wine Auction as part of the larger Harvest on The Coast weekend celebration on Saturday, November 3 at Avila Beach Resort. The night before will be the “Crafted on the Coast” collaborative winemaker dinner at the Casitas Estate and catered by Flora and Fauna. On Sunday, November 4, “Surf’s up Sunday” will offer open houses throughout the region (complimentary to all who attend Saturday’s Grand Tasting). For more information and tickets, visit [www.slowine.com/events/harvest-on-the-coast.php](http://www.slowine.com/events/harvest-on-the-coast.php).

**Wine Tours in Santa Ynez Valley** The Santa Ynez Valley is home to more than 100 wineries spread across six distinct communities. Wine tour operators have experienced a resurgence in this region as they can enhance the wine-tasting experience. Many are experts in the Santa Ynez Valley wine industry and know the wineries and winemakers intimately and have vetted them in advance. Choices include Breakaway Tours & Event Planning, Classic Wine Tours of Santa Barbara, Compass Wine Tours, Grapeline Wine Tours, Los Olivos Limousine & Wine Tours, Santa Barbara Wine Country Tours and Stagecoach Co. Wine Tours. Visit [www.visitsyv.com](http://www.visitsyv.com) to research wine tours along with events, attractions, activities and lodging options.

**Devil’s Gulch Ranch for Sale** Owners Mark and Myriam Pasternak have decided to sell their ranch located in Marin County. The ranch’s vineyard is well known to Pinot Noir aficionados who prize wines made from Devil’s Gulch grapes by Dutton-Goldfield, Sean Thackrey and others. For further details email Mark at [mark@DevilsGulchRanch.com](mailto:mark@DevilsGulchRanch.com).

**Documentary About Minority Winemakers in Oregon** A new documentary, ‘Red, White & Black,’ by filmmaker Jerry Bell Jr., portrays the obstacles that Oregon’s minority winemakers face in their quest to become respected and successful winemakers. For screenings, visit [www.redwhite-black.com](http://www.redwhite-black.com). Also, a related article is the lead story in the August issue of *Oregon Wine Press*: “Breaking Down Walls - Mexican-Americans build up community with mentorship. Visit <https://www.oregonwinepress.com/breaking-down-walls>.

**Brewer-Clifton Tasting Room** The winery’s satellite tasting room, opened three months ago, is located in Los Olivos at 2367 Alamo Pintado Ave., and is open daily.

**Cooper Mountain Vineyards Celebrates 40th Anniversary** Cooper Mountain Vineyards, located in the northern Willamette Valley just outside Beaverton, is marking 40 years this fall by a celebration on Saturday, September 8, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. with grape stomping, wine tasting, organic food vendors and live music. Cooper Mountain Vineyards, which now produces 20,000 cases annually of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and five other varietals, was the first winery in the Pacific Northwest to earn Demeter® Biodynamic certification in 1999. The winery was founded in 1978 by Dr. Robert Gross (pictured), who had a keen interest in holistic farming. For more information on the winery's ruby anniversary, visit [www.copermountainwine.com](http://www.copermountainwine.com).



**Wine In Cans Challenges Drinking in Moderation** The rise in popularity of canned wine is remarkable. Nielsen claims a 125.2 percent increase in sales of canned wine in the past year. Of concern, however, is that a typical can contains 375 ml, or 12 ounces, the equivalent of three standard 4-ounce drinks. Tallboy wine cans contain almost the equivalent of a 750 ml bottle. Drinkers are used to polishing off a couple of 12 ounce cans of beer, but drinking two cans of 375 ml wine would be equal to an entire bottle of wine!

**Winemaker Video Series: David and Jasmine Hirsch** Skurnick wine distributors have posted a lengthy video on David and Jasmine Hirsch of Hirsch Vineyards located in the West Sonoma Coast. To view the video, visit <https://www.skurnick.com/american-winemaker-video-series-jasmine-hirsch-of-hirsch-vineyards/>.

**California Wine Month Specials from California Inns** In celebration of California Wine Month in September, several members of the California Association of Boutique & Breakfast Inns (CABBI) are offering wine packages for guests. Many of the specials run through November and some are valid year-round. For Pinot Noir fans, consider Sonoma County's **Farmhouse Inn**. Guests can save up to 20% and receive \$100 toward the inn's newest farm-to-fork "food truck" concept. The FARMSTAND special applies for any midweek stay of two or more nights, now through November 30, 2018. Guests receive a concierge-curated, personalized tasting itinerary to some of the inn's top winery partners. Another option is the **CourtWood Inn** in the Calveras wine country town of Murphys. I stayed here recently for three nights and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The owners, Chris and Larry Parker, opened their cedar log lodge in 2014 on a 5-acre hilltop just over a mile outside of the quaint town of Murphys. The lodge has five distinctive rooms with a tennis theme and has two tennis courts. The hosts, who are extremely personable, are offering 10% off on the cost of the CourtWood Wine Tasting Tour. The tour includes van transportation with flexible scheduling, a personalized wine tour itinerary, a winery guide, all winery tasting fees, a picnic lunch, chilled beverages, and two souvenir wine glasses. Thirty-eight grape varieties (one winery even grows Pinot Noir!) thrive in twelve microclimates across a 3,000-foot change in elevation in Calveras County wine country. Picturesque vineyards and wineries are nestled in the rolling hills throughout the region. Call 209-728-8686 to arrange a stay and wine tour.

## Top 10 Premium-Plus Table Wine Brands in the U.S.:

Top 10 Premium-Plus Table Wine Brands in the U.S. by Retail Value <sup>1</sup> (millions of dollars)					
Rank	Brand	Company	2016	2017	Percent Change <sup>2</sup>
1	Kendall-Jackson	Jackson Family Wines	\$572.7	\$541.9	-5.4%
2	Ménage à Trois	Trinchero Family Estates	442.1	455.9	3.1
3	Chateau Ste Michelle	Ste Michelle Wine Estates	452.5	434.6	-4.0
4	Apothic	E. & J. Gallo Winery	386.1	432.5	12.0
5	Josh Cellars	Deutsch Family Wine & Spirits	238.5	337.7	41.6
6	La Crema	Jackson Family Wines	320.8	322.7	0.6
7	Meiomi	Constellation Brands	285.1	320.4	12.4
8	Bogle	Bogle Vineyards	320.9	319.3	-0.5
9	Clos du Bois	Constellation Brands	323.1	318.1	-1.6
10	J. Lohr Estates	J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines	264.3	274.8	4.0
<b>Total Top 10<sup>3</sup></b>			3,606.1	3,757.8	4.2
<b>Other Brands</b>			8,442.5	9,034.6	7.0
<b>Total Premium-Plus</b>			\$12,048.6	\$12,792.4	6.2%
<p>1 at least \$10 per 750ml bottle, on average                  2 based on unrounded data                  3 addition of columns may not agree due to rounding</p>					
<p>Source: IMPACT DATABANK</p>					

**Alcohol Intake and Risk of Alzheimer Disease** A recently published study in the *British Medical Journal*, “Alcohol consumption and risk of dementia: 23 year follow-up of Whitehall II cohort study,” <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k2927>, was reviewed by the International Scientific Forum on Alcohol Research who thought this was a well-done analysis. The study showed a decreased risk of dementia for moderate drinkers. The results support the findings from most well-done prospective cohort studies. The main results indicated that abstinence in middle life is associated with a significantly higher risk of dementia than the risk among moderate drinkers, while subjects reporting the intake of larger amounts of alcohol or evidence of an alcohol use disorder are at increased risk of dementia. The Forum felt that the study further shows, in terms of the risk of dementia as well as cardiovascular disease, middle-aged and older individuals who are consuming alcohol moderately and without binge drinking should not be advised to stop drinking.