



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 11, Issue 42 April 10, 2019

*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

WesMar: A Lasting Vestige of the Original Williams Selyem Winery

Pinot Noir lovers will always harbor fond memories of the legendary Williams Selyem Winery started in 1981 by Burt Williams, Ed Selyem and their families. The winery's success was unprecedented given that Burt and Ed went from making wines in a garage to producing world-class Pinot Noir without any formal training or experience in winemaking. Burt was a printing press operator for the San Francisco News Agency and a home grape winemaker, while Ed was a wine buyer and accountant for Speer's Market in Forestville as well as a home beer and fruit winemaker. They began making wine together from Sonoma grapes for their own use in Burt's garage in 1979.

Burt's desire was to make world-class wine, mainly for his own consumption, and Ed's dream was to create a thriving business from the local agricultural bounty. Together, they started with no capital, never borrowed, and grew their business while they continued to raise their families and work at their day jobs.

The pair launched their commercial winery, Hacienda del Rio, in 1981 and their first Russian River Valley Pinot Noir release in 1982 was instantly popular with Burgundy lovers. A complaint from Hacienda Winery led the partners to drop the original name and use their own names. The classic Williams Selyem label first appeared in 1984, designed by a graphic artist, displaying a simple red and black color scheme and adorned with a single dingbat.

Burt and Ed were true "garagistes," crafting their wines from 1983 to 1989 in a rented 2-car garage on River Road in Fulton. In December 1989, they moved to an unpretentious building on Westside Road on the Allen Ranch where Howard Allen, the owner of Allen Vineyard, had built them a winery.



There were two secrets to the success of Williams Selyem. First, they had a knack for sourcing grapes from marquee vineyards in the Russian River Valley, Sonoma Coast and Anderson Valley. Second, their old-fashioned production techniques, which were born out of a lack of capital for investing in equipment, actually benefited their resultant Pinot Noir wines. Their winemaking approach is now widely used in California and Oregon in the production of premium Pinot Noir.

The winery quickly achieved cult status and Ed found it challenging to allocate the wines. He created a mailing list, the first of its kind for domestic wineries, and the winery sold 85% of their wine directly to consumers on the list. I was lucky to join the list in 1989 and communicated often with the highly personable Ed Selyem while ordering wines. The list rapidly filled up and those on the list rarely dropped out necessitating a waiting list that reportedly reached 10,000 names. Lucky newcomers waited at least two years for a small allocation. The winery never had the need for a tasting room.

Unfortunately, although Burt and Ed shunned publicity and desired to remain small with a production of about 8,000 cases annually, they found the management of the business overwhelming. Burt was quoted as saying "I wanted to buy grapes and turn them into good wine. We weren't trying to conquer the world or make millions of dollars. We never imagined that we would become a cult winery capable of selling everything we made." The winery was sold in 1998 for a reported \$9.5 million to New York vintner John Dyson, much to the chagrin of the Williams Selyem loyal following. The selling price reflects the popularity of the brand since the sale only involved the Williams Selyem name. The winery did not own a winery or any vineyards. The last vintage for the original Williams Selyem team was 1997.

Bob Cabral replaced Burt Williams as the winemaker at Williams Selyem and remained at the winery until 2015 when he became the Director of Winemaking for Three Sticks Wines in Sonoma. After the sale of Williams Selyem, Burt Williams established a vineyard in the deep end of the Anderson Valley, Morning Dew Ranch. In 2008, after his non-compete clause had elapsed, he produced a Pinot Noir (197 cases) from his own vineyard. He followed that release with another Morning Dew Ranch Pinot Noir in 2009, which was, in his words, "a wine apart." That was to be the last commercial Pinot Noir crafted by Burt. His Morning Dew Ranch grapes were sold to other wineries including Brogan Cellars, Woodenhead, Williams Selyem, Whitcraft Winery and Drew Family Cellars until the winery was sold in 2015 to Castello di Amorosa of Napa Valley.

Ed Selyem, who has never received enough credit for his winemaking contributions, shunned the limelight and the press following the sale of Williams Selyem, and has cherished his privacy in retirement.

Many former workers at Williams Selyem benefitted from the generosity of Burt and Ed who were always open to sharing their skills, and several became successful winemakers on their own.

Nikolai Stez was an assistant winemaker at Williams Selyem for 17 years. Along with his domestic partner, Zina Bower, they founded **Woodenhead Vintners** which continues to this day. Visit www.woodenheadwine.com. Ross Cobb, the owner along with his family of **Cobb Wines**, worked at Williams Selyem in the 1990s. Today, Cobb Pinot Noir from Coastlands Vineyard and other vineyards in the Occidental area of western Sonoma County are in great demand. Visit www.cobbwines.com. Mac McDonald picked up much of his winemaking acumen from Burt Williams. One of the few African-American winemakers, he currently crafts Pinot Noir under the **Vision Cellars** label in Windsor. Visit www.visioncellars.com. Ben Papapietro and Bruce Perry were pressmen who worked alongside Burt Williams at the San Francisco Newspaper Agency. By 1980, Ben was producing garage wines and Bruce joined him a few years later. Both of them worked harvest with the crew at Williams Selyem. After years of praise for their homemade wines from friends and family they launched **Papapietro Perry** with 75 cases of Pinot Noir in 1995. Visit their tasting room in Healdsburg or www.papapietro-perry.com. George Levkoff left his bond trading job after a Williams Selyem wine epiphany and worked a harvest in 1999 at Williams Selyem. Over the next few years, he continued at Williams Selyem and helped out at Brogan Cellars. He started his own label, **george wine company**, in 2003. The wines are sold exclusively to a mailing list and elite restaurants throughout the U.S. Visit www.georgewine.com.

Family members ventured out on their own and began to produce Pinot Noir in the Williams Selyem style and spirit. Burt's daughter, Margi Williams-Wierenga started her own label, **Brogan Cellars**, with the release of a 1998 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Her 2001 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir won the Red Wine Sweepstakes Award at the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. Margi's production of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Zinfandel and Sauvignon Blanc remained at about 1500 cases annually until her retirement in 2018.

Burt's son, Fred, followed in his father's winemaking footsteps. Along with co-owner Alyssa Barlow, their **Seven Lions** brand was launched with the 1999 release of wines from Russian River Valley fruit. The initial wines were well-received by the press, but tragically Fred passed away in 2003. Margi Williams-Wierenga helped finish the 2002 and 2003 Seven Lions wines that were labeled "Fred's Hands" in his memory.

WesMar (pronounced "Wesmare") is a partnership between domestic partners Kirk **Wesley** Hubbard and Denise **Mary** Selyem. Kirk and Denise were managers at a Northern California Costco warehouse in 1995 when they left the business world to join Ed Selyem and work under his tutelage for a few years. When the Williams Selyem winery was sold, they began planning their own wine venture. They left Williams Selyem in 2000, launching the WesMar label and moving into an old apple processing warehouse in Sebastopol where they have remained to this day.

Within 1500 square feet of space, much like the original garage where Burt and Ed made wine, they set up an artisan, garagiste winery where all phases of wine production are carried out. There is no fancy sign or modern winery accruements. Besides marriage partners, they are equal partners in all phases of winemaking. They strictly adhere to all phases of winemaking that they learned at Williams Selyem, including conducting fermentations in five-ton, double-walled, stainless steel, rectangular, recycled, open-top, former milk shipping tanks acquired from the original Williams Selyem winery (see photo below). These containers maximize surface area relative to height and weight.



WesMar Pinot Noir is vinified as follows. Grapes are largely de-stemmed and the skins lightly pressed. A cleaned-up version of an indigenous strain of yeast from Jackass Hill Vineyard is used, available to winemakers under the Williams Selyem strain name. Caps are punched down by hand. The wines are sent to Francois Frerès barrels by gravity flow after long, cool fermentations. The wines are usually bottled unfined and unfiltered.

The 2016 releases reviewed here mark the 17th vintage for WesMar Winery. This vintage produced bold, richly-fruited Pinot Noir wines that are quite ostentatious now. Denise described the wines as having "exceptional complexity, above average natural acidity, balanced stem structure, deep fruit flavors and extensive finishes."

The wines are sold through a mailing list and the winery's website store at www.wesmarwinery.com. Kirk and Denise welcome visitors for tasting by appointment. Besides these reviewed wines, there is also a 2016 Sonoma County Pinot Noir (\$39) and a recently released 2016 Salzgeber Vineyard Pinot Noir (\$48). Magnums of all releases are available.

2016 WesMar Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$42. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of Bing cherry, exotic spices and subtle oak-driven notes of nuts and vanillin. Rich on the palate, with an intense attack in a mid weight style offering flavors of black cherry, ripe strawberry and cola framed by modest tannins. Slightly sweet, with an abundance of cherry goodness on the long finish. 91.*

2016 WesMar Oehlman Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., \$45. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose opens slowly to reveal enchanting aromas of black cherry, rose petal, spice, fertile earth and mocha java. A flood of well-spiced black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry fruits flood the mid palate. The wine is mid weight plus in concentration, with buried tannins, a thread of oak, and a sweet-fruited, extended finish. Powerful, yet balletic and goes down like mother's milk. 93.*

2016 WesMar Balletto Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$48. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas of black fruits, black tea and toasty oak. Intense and boldly fruited in a mid weight plus style, with flavors of black raspberry and blackberry. A healthy tannic structure offsets the bombastic fruit load. This wine reveals the most oak overlay in the lineup. The finish is very long and intense. 93.*



2016 WesMar Hellenthal Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., \$55. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. This wine takes time to reveal itself in the glass and was considerably better when tasted several hours after opening. Aromas of cherry and rose petal lead to a discreetly concentrated wine featuring riveting flavors of black cherry, kirsch and spice. The satiny mouthfeel is highly seductive and the gracious tannins make for easy access. The wine's harmony and vigor impress as does the waves of fruit echoing on the glorious finish. As good as this wine is now, it will benefit from cellaring for a few years and will last many more. A truly ephemeral wine from a great vintage. 95.*

Hellenthal Vineyard

This vineyard consists of 14.66 acres divided into three blocks and is located adjacent Hirsch Vineyard in the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA on Bohan Dillon Road in Cazadero. It is only five miles inland from the Pacific Ocean at an elevation of 1053 feet. Pommard and Dijon clone 777 are interplanted. The vineyard is a family business owned and farmed by Gard and Lori Hellenthal, and Lori's sister Elisa. Gard and Lori's son, Seth, recently died in a tragic truck crash in Cazadero.

Besides WesMar, wineries that have sourced grapes from Hellenthal Vineyard include MacRostie, W.H. Smith, Radio-Coteau and Banshee Wines.

The Fort Ross-Seaview AVA is defined by its elevation and proximity to the Pacific Ocean. The AVA statutes limit plantings to land 920-1800 feet above sea level or higher. Out of 27,500 available acres (43 square miles), only 555 acres are actually usable. The region arises above the fog line leading to a unique maritime ecosystem that is dry, sunny and warm enough for growing Pinot Noir and Chardonnay

Vineyards within this mountainous terrain are located on seemingly inaccessible hilltops, ridges and gullies. Despite the proximity to the Pacific Ocean, there are few sources of water. Fortunately, winters bring heavy rainfall, allowing many vineyards to reduce or eliminate irrigation between spring and fall when rainfall is minimal. A map of the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA including the location of vineyards and wineries is below.



Fort Ross-Seaview AVA Vineyards & Wineries

Blasts from the Past

I had a number of older vintages of WesMar Pinot Noir in my wine locker so I invited some friends over for a WesMar party. Most of them have little opportunity to taste aged domestic Pinot Noir so they found it enlightening.

Wines tasted: **2004 WesMar Russian River Valley (Magnum), 2007 WesMar Russian River Valley, 2009 WesMar Russian River Valley, 2010 WesMar Russian River Valley, 2012 WesMar Russian River Valley, 2006 Oehlman Vineyard Russian River Valley (Magnum), 2012 WesMar Oehlman Vineyard, 2007 Salzgeber Vineyard Russian River Valley (Magnum), 2012 WesMar Salzgeber Vineyard Russian River Valley, 2004 WesMar Olivet Lane Vineyard Russian River Valley (Magnum), and 2012 WesMar Sonoma Coast.**

Impressions: (1) Magnums really do make a difference in age ability. All wines from the magnums were fresher. Even the 2004 Russian River Valley and Olivet Lane magnums had good color with no bricking and a significant amount of fruit. (2) The Russian River Valley bottlings, 2007-2012, in 750 ml, were all drinkable but

were showing their age and should be consumed now. This bottling is for early drinking while the vineyard-designates can be cellared for several years. (3) The peak drinking window for the vineyard-designates bottled in 750 ml would seem to be 6-10 years. The wines in magnum are capable of aging well into 20 years. (4) Surprisingly, my favorite wine by far was the 2012 Sonoma Coast which is a blend of grapes from Hellenthal and Balletto vineyards. At six years of age, this wine was really singing. I wish I had bought more past vintages of Hellenthal Vineyard Pinot Noir. My second favorite was the 2006 Oehlman Vineyard in magnum format.



Morgan: Crafting Highlands History

I need to give a shout-out to the superb wines of late from Morgan Winery. That is not to say that the wines have not always been of high quality, but the last few vintages have vaulted this winery into the upper echelon of California producers of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

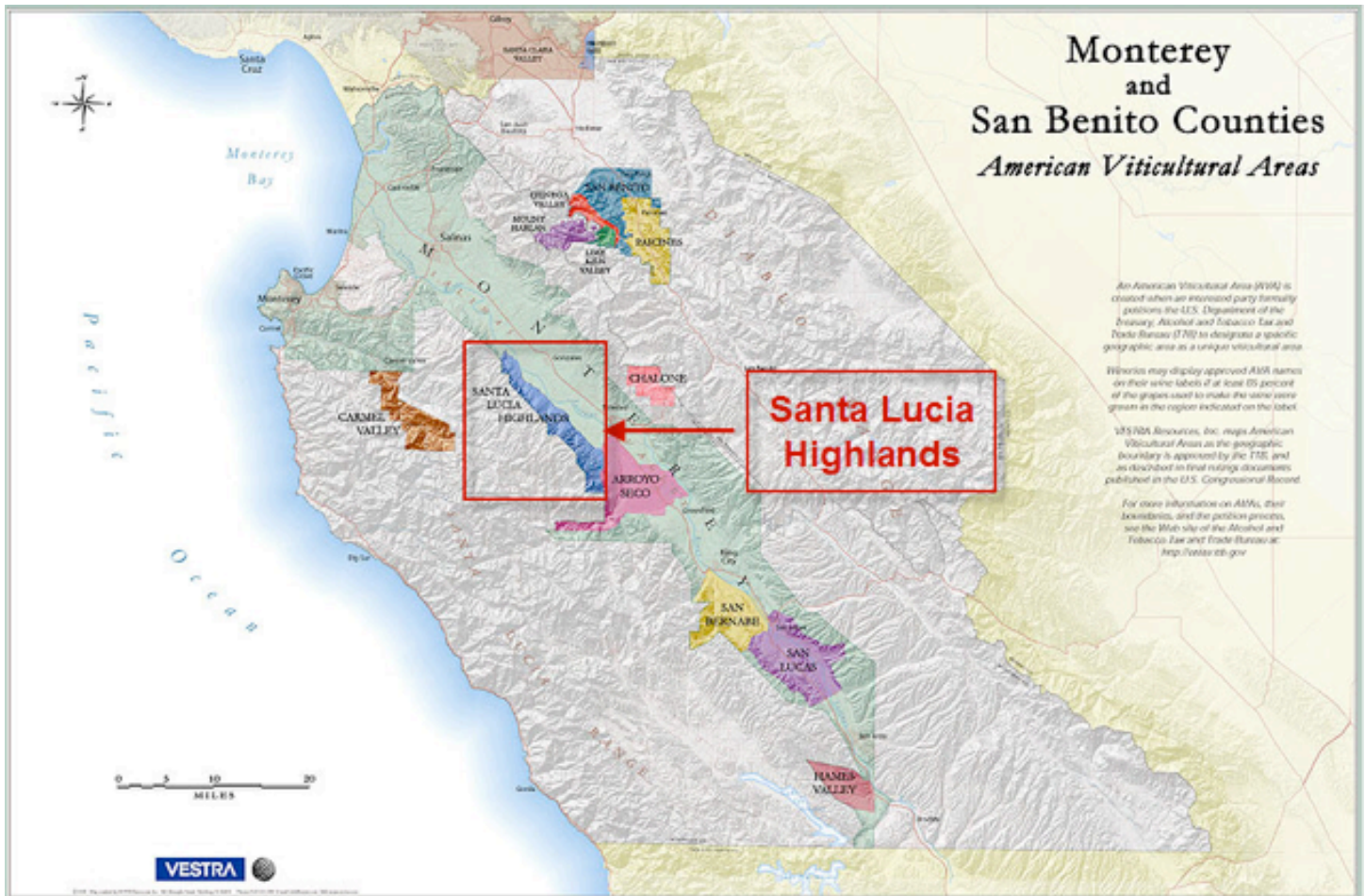
Daniel Morgan Lee attended UC Davis, intent on pursuing a career path in human or veterinary medicine, but after trips to Northern California wine country and enrollment in a wine course, he developed an enthusiasm for enology and viticulture. In my many years of writing about winemakers, I have found that an inordinate number of pre-med majors switch along the way. Both winemaking and medicine combine science with a craft and so are very compatible.

Daniel pursued a master's degree and worked harvests at Cuvaison Winery in Napa Carneros. Upon graduation, a fortuitous job opening at Jekel Vineyards led him to Monterey County. In 1982, while working as the winemaker at Durney Vineyard, he launched Morgan Winery with encouragement from his spouse, Donna. In 1984, the couple moved into their own winery in Salinas and released their first Chardonnay from the 1982 vintage and first Pinot Noir in 1988. The photo below: Tom Leyde/For The Californian.



For the first fifteen years, Morgan sourced grapes from other vineyards in Monterey County and elsewhere but today the winery concentrates solely on the Santa Lucia Highlands. The core of the wine program now is the estate Double L Vineyard, a 48.5-acre mix of different clonal selections of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Riesling. The property was acquired in 1996 and planted to wine grapes the following year. The property had been used for row crops and was no longer alive. Daniel built up the soil organically and the vineyard is now a centerpiece of the winery's production. The vineyard's name is derived from "Double Luck," after Daniel's two twin daughters. Neighbors include Sleepy Hollow, Rosella's and Garys' vineyards.

A variety of Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir wines are offered beginning with the entry-level Twelve Clones Santa Lucia Highlands appellation blend, along with multiple single vineyard wines from Double L Vineyard and several top quality Santa Lucia Highlands vineyards such as Rosella's, Garys', Tondre Grapefield and Boekenoogen.



Daniel has played a major role in Santa Lucia Highlands' modern wine history. He brought notoriety to the Santa Lucia Highlands when he was named "Winemaker of the Year" by wine writer Dan Berger in 2001, and Morgan "Winery of the Year" by both *Wine & Spirits* magazine and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He was the first Board President of the newly formed Wine Artisans of Santa Lucia Highlands organization in 2005. Dan has trained a number of successful winemakers including Joe Davis of Arcadian Winery.

Sam Smith was added to head the winemaking team in 2016. He has worked harvests in Santa Barbara, Australia, the Willamette Valley and the Northern Rhône. He was the assistant winemaker at Margerum Wine Company bookended by experiences with Pinot Noir in Oregon and cool-climate Syrah at Domaine Francois Villard. Daniel thinks the world of him and the 2017 vintage wines show his skill. Patrick Jackson, as the assistant winemaker, and Daniel's daughter, Jackie, fill out the solid winemaking team.

The winery's tasting room is located in the Crossroads Shopping Center off Highway 1 and Rio Road in Carmel. Visit the winery's website at www.morganwinery.com.

The 2017 vintage in the Santa Lucia Highlands commenced with a wet winter with rainfall totals 40% above average. This allowed flushed soils to build up salts and promote healthy root and cover crop growth in the early season. Temperatures were average through August, though September saw three heat waves. The resulting wines have a rich fruit core paired with an elegance from the early and mid-season cool temperatures.

Recently reviewed 2017 wines: **2017 Morgan Double L Chardonnay Clone 15 (92)**, **2017 Morgan Tondré Grapefield Chardonnay (93)**, and **2017 Double L Vineyard clone RC Pinot Noir (94)**.

2017 Morgan Double L Vineyard Pommard 5 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.69, 96 cases, \$65. 100% de-stemmed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose is extremely shy, even after extensive swirling, revealing only a whiff of*

black cherry fruit. Much more engaging on the palate, with flavors of black cherry, boysenberry and black raspberry with a slightly smoky undertone. The silken texture appeals, there is good energy, the tannins are well-balanced, and the finish is modest but compatible. **90.**

2017 Morgan Boekenooogen Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.64, 97 cases, \$65. Clone 115. 100% de-stemmed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromatically pleasing scents of black cherry and potpourri lead to a seductive, light to mid weight styled wine, offering a range of dark red fruit flavors embellished with a thread of oak. The gracious mouthfeel is the best feature of this very elegantly composed wine that freely offers its charms upon opening.* **93.**



2017 Morgan Tondre Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.66, 103 cases, \$65. Clone 777. 100% de-stemmed, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Soaring aromas of dark red cherry, purple berry, spice and peat. Delicious mid weight core of well-spiced black cherry and raspberry fruits with a compliment of toasty oak. Gracious and silky in texture, culminating in a lengthy, generous and lip-smacking finish. This is righteous juice that emotes.* **94.**



Tondre Grapefield

Owners Tondre and son Joe Alarid have nearly a century of farming in the Salinas Valley of Monterey County between them. Joe and family live on the ranch where they nurture their vineyard.

This vineyard, one of more than 50 vineyard properties in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA, was first planted in 1997 on 6.5 acres. Today, there are a total of 104 acres, with 18 acres of Chardonnay, 81 acres of Pinot Noir, 3 acres of Riesling and 2 acres of Syrah. Pinot Noir clones include Pommard and Dijon including 943. The vineyard is SIP Certified.

Besides having the best name for a vineyard, Tondre Grapefield has given me many extraordinary drinking experiences from producers like Morgan, Sonnet, Sarah's Vineyard, Coterie Cellars, Bernardus, Cima Collina and the grower's own label, Tondre Wines.



Recently Tasted California & Wines

Domaine Della Dale, Santa Rosa, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2403/

2017 Domaine Della Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.2% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.67, 250 cases, \$65. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 52% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas of dark cherry and toasty oak. A flourish of confectioned black cherry and purple berry fruits greets the mid palate, carrying over with good intensity on the finish. Easy drinking, with soft tannins, leaving behind a welcome charge of dark cherry goodness. 90.*

2017 Domaine Della Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.61, 250 cases, \$65. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Very shy aromas of wood-kissed black cherry. Light to mid weight in style, offering flavors of red cherry and berry framed by delicate tannins. The shallow, even dilute fruit core doesn't excite and the finish is short and unrewarding. 87.*

2017 Domaine Della Graham Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.60, 150 cases, \$75. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Nicely appointed aromas of cherry, ripe strawberry and purple berry are replicated on the palate with added spice. Very elegant and charming, with gossamer tannins and a juicy finish. Lacks concentration but the finesse-infused fruit appeals. 91.*

2017 Domaine Della Earl Stephens Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.0% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.65, 150 cases, \$75. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas of dark red and purple berry fruits intrigue. The core of purple fruits are stellar and nicely complimented by a deft touch of oak and gracious tannins. Impeccably balanced, with an intensely fruity and explosive finish. Still singing when tasted two days after opening. 93.*



2017 Domaine Della Terra De Promissio Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.60, 150 cases, \$75. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 52% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The exotic nose offers intriguing spice, black cherry and toasty oak aromas. Silky and seductive on the palate, with a mid weight core of spiced dark cherry fruit. Very tasty, with delineated flavors and a modest finish. 91.*

2017 Domaine Della Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.31, TA 0.62, 150 cases, \$65. Sourced from Ritchie Vineyard. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. The nose leads with charming aromas of lemon, warm biscuit and vanilla. The toasty oak infused citrus flavors have good energy and the wine finishes with an upbeat lemon-lime pronouncement. 89.*

2017 Domaine Della Ritchie Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.4% alc., pH 3.31, TA 0.63, 150 cases, \$65. *Moderately light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Enthralling aromas of sea breeze, lemon and steel. Charming flavors of lemon, white peach, pear, spice and toast in a smoothly composed wine that finishes with purpose. The oak is nicely integrated creating a harmonious impression. 91.*

E16 Winery, Santa Rosa (production), Somerset (Tasting Room), www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2396/

2015 E16 Upper Bench - Escolle Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.57, RS 0.01 g/L, 395 cases, \$42. Pommard clone planted in 2008. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of black cherry and pomegranate. A very gracious wine with mid weight flavors of dark red and black cherry and raspberry. Silky, with gossamer tannins and soothing harmony. The wine trails off on the finish with a downy elegance. 92.*

2015 E16 The West End - Conzelman Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.61, pH 0.05 g/L, 350 Cases, \$50. Pommard and 667 clones planted in 2001. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, cassis and vitamin lead to a mid-weighted style offering bold flavors of black cherry, boysenberry, blackberry and marzipan. Silky in the mouth, with an intense, fruit-filled finish.* **89.**

2015 E16 E16 Selection Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.61, RS 0.02 g/L, 335 cases, \$N/A. This wine combines fruit from two Russian River Valley vineyards (Hawk's Roost and Martaella) along with a 13% combined contribution from properties in Anderson Valley, Bennett Valley and the Santa Lucia Highlands. Mariafeld, Dijon and "828," clones. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Black and purple fruits are featured in this modestly concentrated wine that offers good harmony, restrained oak and a modest finish. Solid but not exciting.* **89.**

2015 E16 Trenton 1880 - Martaella Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.61, RS 0.092 g/L, 225 cases, \$45. The 1880 designation acknowledges the year grapevines were first planted in the village of Trenton. Also called, "Trenton Station," the area is located at the northern end of the Laguna Ridge and about eight miles east of where the Russian River empties into the Pacific Ocean. High-density plantings of Dijon clones and "828," planted in 2007 in Goldridge soils. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The nose offers aromas of blackest cherry, blackberry, spice and nutty oak. Rather bold, with significant oak infusion, featuring flavors of black cherry, cola, earth and spice. The velvety mouthfeel and charming fruit are very seductive and the reserve tannins make for easy drinking. This wine shows the most barrel influence in the lineup.* **91.**

2015 E16 Bowland Ranch - Moaveni Vineyard Bennett Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.61, RS 0.07 g/L, 375 cases, \$42. A 10-acre planting of Pommard clone. Three blocks picked at slightly different stages of ripeness and later co-fermented in one tank. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Very shy nose offering delicate fruit aromas along with toast and char. Discrete, oak-kissed array of dark fruit flavors framed by modest tannins, finishing with a charge of purple grape and boysenberry goodness. Impressive balance but without plentiful intrigue.* **89.**

Fogline Vineyards, Fulton, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1418/

2016 Fogline Vineyards Starscape Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.55, \$48. 115, 667, 777 and Pommard clones. Formerly the Floodgate Vineyard. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The fruit veers to the ripe side in this pleasant wine. Flavors of black cherry, strawberry, spice, dark chocolate and marzipan find more traction when the wine was tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Gracious tannins make for easy enjoyment.* **90.**

2016 Fogline Vineyards Hillside Block Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, \$65. Clones are 115, Swan, Mt. Eden and Pommard from the winery's estate vineyard located above Gap's Crown vineyard in the Petaluma Gap AVA. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Super ripe fruits in the black realm on the nose. Full-bodied and velvety in the mouth, with a charge of sweet boysenberry and blackberry fruits accented with spice and tobacco notes. Impressive concentration with immersed tannins and some finishing length, but this wine is hardly recognizable as Pinot Noir.* **88.**

2017 Fogline Zephyr's Block Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.30, TA 0.55, 120 cases, \$45. Old Wente and dijon 76 clones. Barrel fermented with 100% malolactic fermentation. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Reserved aromas of lemon oil and pineapple. Ripe and richly fruited, with flavors of lemon, grilled pineapple and toasty oak. Lacks energy, but delivers plenty of flavor.* **88.**

2017 Fogline Spring Hills Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 13.1% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.80, 45 cases, \$42. Clone 4 grown on a vineyard adjacent the winery. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of white stone fruits, blonde caramel, sea salt, lemon, piquant herbs and buttery brioche. Good energy, and slightly creamy on the palate with flavors of melon, white peach, spiced pear, yellow apple and burnt caramel. Nicely balanced.* **89.**

Fulcrum Wines/On Point, Sonoma, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/455/



2017 On Point Winemaker's Selection North Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 142 cases, \$39. A blend of Donnelly Creek (46%), Gap's Crown (37%) and Wildcat Mountain (17%) vineyards. Pommard, 115, "828," and 667. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 21% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Glorious aromas of purple grape, boysenberry, and oak-driven nuts and vanillin. A generous wine in a mid weight plus style, featuring flavors of blackberry and cassis with hints of vanilla and violet candy. The tannic backbone is well-matched and the modest finish hints at a bit of alcoholic warmth. Resembles the popular Meiomi Pinot Noir in flavor profile.* **89.**

2017 Fulcrum Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 82 cases, \$69. Sourced from Donnelly Creek Vineyard. Pommard clone. 10% whole cluster. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose was quite likable, offering scents of spiced cherry, s'mores, and cardamom. Seamless and seductive on the palate with an array of dark red and black fruits that saturate the mid palate and finish. Harmonious tannin management with a haunting silkiness. The oak presence is a bit aggressive but easy to overlook because of the tasty fruit core.* **91.**

2017 Fulcrum Wildcat Mountain Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 124 cases, \$63. Clones 667, 777 and Pommard. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of blackest cherry, chocolate sundae, exotic spices and vanilla. Light to mid weight flavors of blackberry and black raspberry with a deft touch of oak. A very pleasing gulp of nicely ripened fruit backed by civilized tannins and finishing with good intent. Considerably more appealing when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **92.**

2017 Fulcrum Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 218 cases, \$69. Clones "828," and 667. 10% whole cluster. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Oak-kissed black cherry and fertile soil aromas lead to a mid weight plus mouthful of nicely ripened stone and berry fruits accented with a bit of piney oak. Typical Gap's Crown fruit extravagance but less than the 2016 vintage. The oak overlay is a little daunting but the wine would be ideal with a proper food accompaniment such as a grilled steak.* **92.**



Mansfield-Dunne Wines, San Francisco, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2188/



2017 Mansfield-Dunne Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.58, 600 cases, \$38. Release May 1, 2019. Clones 667, Pommard 5, 115, 777, 2A, Mt. Eden and Calera. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Intriguing aromas of black cherry, fertile soil, tobacco and toast. Mid weight essence of boysenberry fruit with added notes of blackberry, dark chocolate and smoky, charred oak. The wine sports submissive tannins with a modest but satisfying finish.* **89.**

2017 Mansfield-Dunne Cortada Alta Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.79, TA 0.53, RS < 0.1 g/L. 300 cases, \$58. Release May 1, 2019. Clones "828," Mariafeld, Pommard 5, 667, Swan, Calera 2A and 943. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 64% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Blackberry fruit and smoky oak aromas combine on the nose. Mid weight flavors of blackberry and cassis that are overlain with smoky oak. Somewhat brooding, with some drying tannins on the finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, less oak infused the nose but the finish continued to show a slightly bitter, charred character.* **88.**

2017 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.55, RS < 0.1 g/L. 200 cases, \$48. Release May 1, 2019. Clones "828," 667, Pommard 5, 115 and 777. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 75% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose blossoms over time in the glass, revealing welcome aromas of dark red and purple fruits and a compliment of earth and oak cask. Gregarious purple grape, blackberry and black cherry fruit with fortuitous oak enhancement. A trim wine with good energy, a silky mouthfeel and a finish that is ripe, pure and clean with some persistence.* **93.**



2017 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.49, RS 0.61, RS < 0.1 g/L, 50 cases, \$45. Release May 1, 2019. Hyde clone. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light golden yellow with slight haze (unfiltered). Very shy but pleasant aromas of lemon, apple, baking spice, and petrichor. Flavors of citrus, oil, melon, pineapple and pastry creme. Rather austere and only hints at its Chardonnay origins.* **88.**

2017 Mansfield-Dunne Cortada Alta Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.63, RS < 0.1 g/L, 75 cases, \$45. Release May 1, 2019. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light golden yellow with slight haze (unfiltered). Shy aromas of lemon, spice, vanillin and toast. Clean, smooth and creamy on the palate. Richly appointed flavors of sweet caramel nougat, butterscotch and vanilla with a faint thread of citrus.* **88.**

Three Sticks, Sonoma, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/1230/

2018 Three Sticks Castenada Sonoma Coast Rosé 14.1% alc., pH 3.23, TA 0.68, 180 cases, \$45. Stubby port-like bottle. Released April 16, 2019. A blend of primarily Syrah and Grenache with contributions from Marsanne, Grenache Blanc and Viognier. This wine honors Don Juan Casteñada, the first one housed in the Vallejo-Casteñada Adobe built in 1842 and now the winery's tasting room. Vinified in stainless steel. *Dark pink color in the glass. Very appealing aromas of cherry, strawberry, blood orange and botanical elements. The flavors echo the aromas with an addition of persimmon and spice. A botanical green thread adds nuance to flavor profile of the wine. A bold, expressive rosé that is fresh and bright.* **92.**

2017 Three Sticks Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.63, 378 cases, \$65. Released February 20, 2019. Sourced from two estate vineyards located in Green Valley: Alana Vineyard and William James Vineyard. Pommard, 943, Swan and Calera clones. 28% whole cluster. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 46% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Bing cherry, fertile earth and vanillin aromas find traction soon after opening. Mid weight flavors of cherry and dark raspberry are framed by gracious toasty oak. The finish is expansive and appealing, but the wine loses some appeal over time in the glass.* **89.**

2017 Three Sticks Price Family Estates Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.64, 865 cases, \$65. Released February 20, 2019. The core of this wine is from Walala Vineyard with contributions from Gap's Crown, Durell and One Sky. Swan, 115, 667, 777, "828," and Calera clones. 25% whole cluster. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry pie, fertile earthy and dusty oak. A real mouthful of sweet black cherry and blackberry fruit underlain with a thread of gracious oak. Mid weight plus in extraction, with a silken texture, demure tannins and some length on the finish. This wine packs a lot of pleasure.* **92.**

2017 Three Sticks Origin Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.3% alc., pH 3.30, TA 0.72, 181 cases, \$50. Released February 20, 2019. Wente clone from Durell Vineyard. This wine is fermented in concrete eggs and amphoras and aged in stainless steel barrels on the lees 11 months with inhibited malolactic fermentation. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass with a tiny amount of spritz. Aromas of lemon meringue, white peach, olive oil and fig lean to a bright and rather austere wine with flavors of lemon-lime, green apple, and green olive. A prolonged lemon-lime finish is refreshingly clean.* **92.**

2017 Three Sticks Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast

Chardonnay 14.4% alc., pH 3.28, TA 0.73, 250 cases, \$55. Released February 20, 2019. Clones 76 and 124. Barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, and aged 11 months in French oak, 25% new. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Welcoming aromas of citrus, honey, pastry creme, biscuit, fudge and a hint of flintiness. Gorgeous flavors of burnt lemon, apple and toast vye for attention. A flinty note pervades the background and captures the interest. 93.*



2017 Three Sticks One Sky Sonoma Mountain Chardonnay 14.4% alc., pH 3.38, TA 0.63, 440 cases, \$55. Released February 20, 2019. Vineyard is farmed organically and sits at 1,400 feet elevation that is unusually high for Chardonnay. Barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 15 months in French oak, 29% new. *Moderately light golden yellow color with slight spritz and haze in the glass. Fresh aromas of lemon and honeyed biscuit. Discretely rich flavors of lemon, poached apple, toast and caramel in a style with good fullness and body. Silky in the mouth, with some but not a prolonged finish. 92.*

Waxwing Wine Cellars, Belmont, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/800/



2018 Waxwing Delfina's Vineyard Arroyo Seco Pinot Noir Rosé 12.2% alc., 40 cases, \$25. Released April 2019. *Moderate pinkish orange color in the glass. Aromas of pink grapefruit, rose flower water, blood orange and strawberry. A dry, French Provence style, featuring flavors of citrus, cranberry, raspberry and botanical notes, finishing with citrus-imbued red berry goodness. 90.*

2017 Waxwing Deerheart Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 42 cases, \$55. Released March 2019. This newer vineyard is located in a secluded valley just five miles from the Pacific Ocean and exposed to its share of coastal fog in the mornings. It was planted from 2012 to 2016 by owners Bob and Joanne Larson. Winemaker Scott Sisemore takes all the fruit from this vineyard. Clones 667, 777, "828," 943, 459, 2A on a variety of rootstocks. 100% de-stemmed, inoculated with Assmanhausen yeast after a 5-day cold soak. Aged 10 months in once-used French oak barrels and bottled with light filtration. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Alluring aromas of black cherry, blackberry, spice, clay loam and nutty oak. Tasty middleweight plus flavors of blackberry, black currant, brown spice and black tea create a lasting impression on the fruit-filled finish. A hardy, giving wine that is also nuanced. 92.*



Deerheart Vineyard

2017 Waxwing Lester Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 115 cases, \$48. Released March 2019. Sixth vintage from this vineyard first planted in 1998 and sustainably managed by consultant Prudy Foxx. Clones 115, 667 and Mt. Eden. 100% de-stemmed, inoculated with Assmanhausen yeast after a 5-day cold soak. Aged 10 months in once-used French oak barrels and bottled with a light filtration. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The aromas build in intensity over time in the glass, culminating in a force of earth-kissed blackened cherry righteousness. The harmony of this wine is evident upon first sip and the long, intense and haunting finish impresses. Mid weight in style, with an earthy core of black cherry fruit framed by gracious tannins, this wine is somewhat closed in and needs more time in the cellar.* **93.**

Wonderment Wines, Napa, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2533/

2016 Wonderment Dutton-Campbell Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 314 cases, \$44. Released December 15, 2018. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Engaging scents of black fruits, dark rose petal and toasty oak. Generously oaked upon opening, but much better oak integration when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. Mid weight flavors of blackest cherry, black raspberry, blackberry, toast and vanilla. Easily approachable with immersed tannins and an appealingly charming tone to the fruit.* **91.**

2016 Wonderment Dr. Stan's Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 73 cases, \$55. Dijon 115. Released December 15, 2018. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Reserved, but pleasing aromas of black cherry and oak spice. Rather seductive, with middleweight flavors of black cherry, raspberry and cardamom spice. Very gracious, with gentle tannins, a greased mouthfeel, and a noticeably long and gratifying finish.* **93.**



2017 Wonderment Hyde Vineyard Napa Carneros Sauvignon Blanc 14.0% alc., 175 cases, \$30. Released October 15, 2018. Musqué selection of Sauvignon Blanc. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. The nose attracts with generous aromas of citrus, pear, honeydew melon and grass, picking up intensity over time in the glass. Clean and bright on the palate, but not nervy, with delicious flavors of Bosc pear, spiced apple, pastry creme, and a hint of oak along with Sauvignon Blanc's signature gooseberry imprint. The fruit creates a slightly sweet impression although the wine is completely dry. Somewhat creamy*

in texture with some lingering aromatic charm on the finish. I was really taken by this wine! **94.**

Sauvignon Musqué

FPS Sauvignon blanc 30 originated from Arroyo Seco Vineyards via Larry Hyde's vineyards in the Carneros region of Napa County. It is a field selection of a musqué type Sauvignon blanc. The selection was donated to the Foundation Plant Services public collection in 2002 by Larry Hyde. Hyde made the selection from Sauvignon musqué plant material at Arroyo Seco in Monterey County. The vines were labeled 'Sauvignon musqué' in the Hyde Vineyard. The original material completed testing and qualified for the California Grapevine Registration & Certification Program in 2004 as Sauvignon blanc 30. The name of the selection was changed to Sauvignon blanc at FPS because DNA analysis showed that the Hyde Sauvignon musqué matched the profile for Sauvignon blanc.

More Wines

2017 Cuvaison Napa Valley Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.74, TA 0.54, \$42. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Dark berry and plum aromas lead to a mid weighted wine with a core of earthy dark berry fruits accented with hints of mushroom and spice. Round and polished in the mouth, with restrained tannins, a complimentary hint of oak and some finishing boldness. A well-crafted, solid wine.* **90.**



2018 En Garde Sonoma Coast Rosé of Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., \$30. Csaba Szakal says, "It is a wine near and dear to my heart as I modeled it after my grandfather's rosé that I experienced growing up. Grandpa was focused on rosés exclusively and was well known for his wines' special quality in our home town of Jaszbereny, Hungary. He was a fanatical grower and a dedicated winemaker always putting quality over quantity. I make this wine in his honor continuing the family tradition." The grapes were harvested from several vineyards in the Sonoma Coast AVA. After crushing, the rosy juice was bled within the first hour to minimize skin contact. After a couple of days of settling, the juice on top was racked and the thick bottom juice discarded. After a long, cold fermentation, the wine sat on its lees to take on additional complexity before it was bottled February 7, 2019. *Delicate pink color in the glass. Aromas of honey and red maraschino cherry. Slightly creamy and completely dry, with flavors of strawberry, blood orange and pear. Nicely composed with upbeat acidity and a pleasing sense of harmony. This is the type of wine that would go well with almost any food.* **90.**



Csaba Szakal's Grandfather in Hungary



2017 J. Lohr Arroyo Vista Arroyo Seco Monterey Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.38, TA 0.73, RS 0.20 g/100ml, 8,076 cases, \$25. The Arroyo Vista Vineyard was planted in 1988. The backbone of this wine is clone 76. First bottled in 1996, this wine is part of the J. Lohr Vineyard Series and represents the finest expression of the winery's estate vineyards. Harvest Brix 27.6° average. Barrel fermented for an average of 7 days, 100% malolactic fermentation, weekly lees stirring by hand in barrel, aged 14 months in French oak, 46% new. *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of white stone fruits, lemon curd and buttery brioche. Very rich in style, loaded with fully ripened white peach, nectarine and citrus fruit flavors. Robust and mouth filling, with a hint of oak-driven coconut and clove embellishment. Creamy in texture, with a bold, pineapple and lemon infused finish.* **89.**

2017 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 6,700 cases, \$60. A blend of estate grown fruit - 51% Quarter Moon Vineyard and 49% Pastorale Vineyard. Aged 13 months in French oak barrels, 34% new and 66% twice-used. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, sous-bois and fertile earth lead off. Mouth filling goodness with layers of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors accented with a compliment of oak. Nicely balanced, with a seamless blending of fruit with supportive tannins and acidity, finishing long with an array of noble dark fruits.* **93.**

Recently Tasted Willamette Valley Wines

Alloro Vineyard, Sherwood, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/714/

Alloro Vineyard is 110 acres of Laurelwood soil located on a southwest-facing slope in Oregon's Chehalem Mountains. This special place is the heart and soul of Alloro wines and is personally cared for by founder David Nemarnik. The vineyard is LIVE certified, certified Salmon Safe, and IOBC Certified Sustainable, and hosts a diverse mixture of many other crops, plants and animals. Pinot Noir blocks are comprised of clones 777, 667, 114, 115, Wädenswil and Pommard grafted to Riiparia Gloire and 3309 rootstocks. All wines are 100% estate from a single vineyard site. Winemaker and General Manager Tom Fitzpatrick was educated at UC Davis and trained in Burgundy.



2016 Alloro Vineyard Estate Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.53, RS 0.00 g/L, 1,700 cases, \$40. Released November 1, 2018. 33% Pommard, 33% 777, 29% 114, 5% Wädenswil. Grapes were 100% de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak, native inoculum, warm fermentation, native ML, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 27% new.

Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Gracious aromas of purple berry, black cherry, savory herbs and nutty oak. Light to mid weight in concentration, with tasty red and black cherry and purple berry fruit flavors. A little spice and complimentary oak add support. Suave on the palate and easy to cozy up to, with a juicy, quenching finish. 92.



2016 Alloro Vineyard Estate Riservata Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.61, RS 0.00 g/L, 300 cases, \$50. Released November 1, 2018. 23% Pommard, 36% 777, 29% 114, and 12% Wädenswil. Grapes 100% de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak, native inoculum, warm fermentation, native ML, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 49% new.

Moderate garnet color in the glass. A step up in seduction, with hi-tone aromas of cherry and savory oak. Quite elegant but flavor packed, offering cherry and Marionberry fruit flavors with a gregarious spice compliment that wakes up every taste bud. Sleek and seamless, while underscored with an ever-so-subtle savory component. Very fine tannins coat the teeth with grace and the barrel treatment is dazzling. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle when the wine was just about perfect in every way. Dollar for dollar, the best Oregon Pinot Noir I have tasted from the stellar 2016 vintage. 96.



2016 Alloro Vineyard Estate Justina Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.54, RS 0.00 g/L, 300 cases, \$95, wax closure. Released November 1, 2018. 100% Dijon 777. Grapes 100% de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak, native inoculum, warm fermentation, native ML, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 78% new.

This wine is completely different from the Riservata, yet admirable in its own way. Moderate garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas of brooding black fruits. Nearly full bodied in a dense, black-fruited style with somewhat lower acidity and a seductive, velvety mouthfeel. Loads of fruit march with style and grace through the mid palate, culminating in an intense and riveting finish. There is plenty of new oak on this wine but one never thinks oak when drinking it because the fruit load ameliorates it. More enjoyable when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94.



2016 Alloro Vineyard Estate Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.7% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.60, RS 0.00 g/L, 275 cases, \$34. Released September 1, 2018. 50% Dijon 76 and 50% Dijon 96. Whole cluster gently pressed, barrel fermented, full ML, lees stirring, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 20% new.

Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The aromas of lemon oil, pineapple and warm biscuit build in intensity over time in the glass. Joyous flavors of citrus, white peach, and tropical melon are presented in a bright style with a slightly viscous texture and some finishing verve. Recent Oregon Chardonnays continue to impress me. 93.

Bell's Up Winery, Newberg, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2602/

2016 Bells Up Titan Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.58, 131 cases, \$40. Released September 1, 2018. Clones 115 and 77 from a vineyard in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA and Pommard clone from a Chehalem Mountains Vineyard. Harvest Brix 24.2°. Aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 39% new. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Leading off are aromas of red cherry, strawberry and sandalwood. A lighter, gentle and elegant wine featuring red fruits with an ancillary botanical note. Forward drinking, with gossamer tannins, good acidity, and a slightly tart and short red cherry finish. The wine gives the impression of under ripe fruit and displays somewhat shallow extraction on the mid palate and finish. 88.*

Broadley Vineyards, Monroe, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/139/



2017 Broadley Vineyards Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$35. Estate grown, produced and bottled. Composed of a variety of blocks containing newer and older vines, this wine represents a cross section of the flavors produced by this more southern and warmer Willamette Valley site. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Aromas of cherry pie and woodshed lead to a light to mid weight styled wine featuring red fruits and a botanical thread. A bit dilute, yet satisfying, with fine-grain tannins and a crunchy texture reflecting bright acidity. 89.*

2016 Broadley Vineyards Marcile Lorraine Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$55. Estate grown, produced and bottled. Named for founder Craig Broadley's mother. Produced from a distinctive block of old vines. In production, cooler fermentation, tighter-grained wood and low toast barrels are used. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of black cherry, fertile earth and marzipan. Well-ripened fruit profile in a mid weight plus style offering fruit flavors of black cherry and black raspberry. Plenty of lush fruit to satisfy, with oak checking in with a marzipan note. Good overall balance and a full tannic backbone predict age ability. 91.*

2016 Broadley Vineyards Claudia's Choice Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$70. Estate grown, produced and bottled. Named for Broadley Vineyard's co-founder Claudia Broadley. This wine is made from a section of the estate vineyard that produces a distinctive big, dark and complex character. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of cherry, strawberry, syrupy waffle and nutty oak. The delicious cherry core caresses the palate. An accompanying hint of raspberry and nutty oak adds nuance Silky and seamless, with gracious tannins and a noble finish. 93.*



Empyrean Wines, McMinnville, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/3021/

2017 Empyrean LYRA Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$50. Named for heavenly constellation Lyra. Clones 115, 777 and Mt. Eden. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, fertile soil, oak and apple core. Mid weight, earthbound black cherry, black raspberry and spice flavors with toasted oak plying the background. A straightforward wine with modest tannins and an unpretentious finish. 87.*

Knudsen Vineyards, Newberg, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2479/

2017 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.65, 250 cases, \$45, screw cap. A blend from Block 9 planted in 1995 to Dijon 95 and 76 clones and Block 10 planted in 1995 to Dijon clone 76. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 23% new. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Invigorating aromas of fresh lemon and petrichor. Crisp, clean and rousing like a cold shower on a hot day. Flavors of lemon, white peach and pear carry through to a quenching finish. Impeccable harmony. More austere in this vintage but still classy and highly satisfying. 93.*

Lenné Estate, Yamhill, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/779/

2017 Lenné Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., \$48. Estate grown. Barrel fermented in one new and one once-used oak puncheons from Damy. *Comfy aromas of lemon curd, buttery biscuit, warm pear and vanillin. A spirited wine with a welcoming fresh citrus core and delightful harmony. The added flavor of yellow pound cake adds appeal. Soothing in texture with only the faintest oak input and some finishing length. 93.*

Youngberg Hill Vineyards & Inn, McMinnville, OR, www.princeofpinot.com/winery/890/

2016 Youngberg Hill Natasha McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 859 cases, RS 0.00 g/L, \$60, screw cap. The Natasha Block at Youngberg Hill Vineyard consists of 6.6 acres at 600 feet elevation planted in 1989. Marine sedimentary Willakenzie soil. 40% Wädenswil and 60% Pommard. Harvest Brix 24.2°. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 37% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Sensual aromas of blueberry and black raspberry fruits. Soft and polished in the mouth, with a discreet core of dark fruits backed by agreeable tannins, finishing with aplomb. 92.*



2016 Youngberg Hill Bailey McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 197 cases, RS 0.00 g/L, \$75, screw cap. Released September 2018. The Bailey Block at Youngberg Hill Vineyard was planted in 2008. Named for the last name of the winemaker, it is planted to clone 777 at 660-700 feet elevation. Soils are primarily volcanic. Harvest Brix 23.6°. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Lovely aromas of black cherry, rose petal and milk chocolate. Light to mid weight in style with expansive array of purple and black fruit flavors. A slight smoky thread pervades. Easily approachable with mild, dry tannins and a very lengthy finish. 92.*

2016 Youngberg Hill J-Block McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 620 cases, RS 0.00 g/L, \$60, screw cap. The J-Block, also known as the Jordan Block, sits on 4 acres facing south and was planted in 1989. This steep, high slope is more exposed to the coastal breezes each afternoon. 40% Wädenswil and 60% Pommard. Harvest Brix 23.9°. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 37% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of black cherry, fig paste and wood bin. Exhilarating mid weight flavors of black cherry and black berry that saturate the mid palate and hold court through an impressively long and intense sweet cherry finish. Beautifully balanced, with suave tannins and commendable energy. 93.*

Pinot Briefs

Hudson Ranch Expanding Lee and Cristina Hudson have expanded operations to include a state of the art winery and hospitality facility in Napa Carneros. Clayton Kirchoff has joined the team as winemaker. He comes to Hudson with 12 years of winemaking experience and has been involved with the winemaking at Hudson for the past five years. Besides the wines produced from 200 acres of vineyards for the Hudson label, the winery sells grapes to 27 wineries in Napa and Sonoma counties and is perhaps best known for Chardonnay. Visit www.hudsonranch.com.



City of Sonoma Limiting the Plaza to 25 Tasting Rooms The Sonoma City Council recently voted for regulations limiting wine-tasting businesses in downtown. There are about 34 wine rooms in the downtown area all 34 would be grandfathered in, with the number reduced to 25 over time with attrition and relocation. Since 2012 the number of tasting rooms on the Plaza has increased from 17 to 26.

U.S. Wine Industry Outlook A recent summary at www.napavalleywineacademy.com reported that labor costs, grape prices and vineyard land prices are all rising and few vintners are able to raise prices. Sales of luxury wines through wholesale channels have been slowing since 2015. Silicon Valley Bank found that consolidated annual volume growth of wine consumption was close to becoming negative in 2018 for the first time since the early 1990s and price increases on average were zero. Winery costs have been rising far faster than producers could possibly raise prices. Housing costs for winery workers and immigration laws are restricting worker availability. Undaunted, new producers continue to enter the market, with more than 1,100 new wineries added in California since 2013.

Bills Argue for Content Standards of Willamette Valley Wines There are two bills sought by the Willamette Valley Wineries Association that starting in 2030 would require Willamette Valley wines that carry a varietal name such as Pinot Noir to be made entirely from the named grape and grown entirely within the boundaries of the Willamette Valley AVA. The current standards call for 90 percent of the named variety for Pinot Noir and other varieties and 95 percent sourcing from the AVA. David Adelsheim, founder of Adelsheim Vineyard and Ken Wright, founder of Panther Creek Cellars and then Ken Wright Cellars, have been strong supporters of the change. Southern Oregon wineries, many of which supply grapes to Willamette Valley producers, are fighting the legislation and are backed by the Oregon Winegrowers Association. Another wine-related bill is also under consideration that would put new requirements on out-of-state wineries making Oregon—sourced wines (a result of the Elouan-Wagner controversy).

Noted Oregon Wine and Restaurant Writer Lisa Shara Hall Passes Away Lisa began writing about food and restaurants for *Willamette Week* and then for *The Oregonian*. Eventually she became bored with food writing and began reporting on wine tastings and new wineries in Oregon. She eventually gave up food writing in 2000. In 1999 she organized an Institute of Masters of Wine trip for existing MWs to the wine regions of Oregon and Washington and this was to become the model for the annual Oregon Pinot Camp for visiting professionals. She wrote for the *Oxford Companion to Wine*, *Decanter* and the *Hugh Johnson Pocket Guide*, and was senior editor for *Wine Business Monthly*. It was the book, *Wines of the Pacific Northwest*,

published in 2001, that most inspired me. It was the only extensive reference book on Oregon wineries available at the time and I referred to my copy repeatedly through the early years of composing the *PinotFile*.

The F-words: Fining and Filtration An interesting article appeared March 22, 2019, online at www.winetitles.com.au titled “Weighing up the gains and losses from fining and filtration.” Many Pinot Noir producers trumpet the fact that their wine is unfinned and unfiltered as a badge of quality. Fining is a tool that can be used to alter a wine’s clarity, color, aroma or flavor. It can reduce bitter flavors, unwanted aromas, increase a wine’s stability, and add polish to a wine’s appearance. Many winemakers feel that fining should be done only when necessary using low addition rates of fining agents (gelatin, isinglass, egg white, casein, bentonite, carbon and a synthetic polymer PVPP) to avoid influencing aromas, mouthfeel, color and flavors. Similarly, filtration using crossflow, pad, sterile membrane or earth filtration, can lead to undesirable changes in a wine’s character and flavor. On the positive side, filtration can be used to clarify a wine, something many consumers prefer as more aesthetically appealing and ensure that a wine is microbiologically stable, particularly if there is any residual sugar.

Fourth Annual Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction Breaks Records 92 lots of wine sold for more than \$1 million at the fourth annual Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction held at The Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg, Oregon, recently. The average price paid per bottle this year reached \$160, a 29% increase over the previous year, and an 81.5% increase since the inaugural auction in 2016. The auction, open to the media and trade only, featured 86 one-of-a-kind Pinot Noir lots and six collaborative Chardonnay lots from the 2017 vintage, made in quantities of 5, 10 or 20 cases. Lots bringing the highest bids came from Duck Pond Cellars, Domaine Serene, Antica Terra, Alexana Winery and Bethel Heights Winery. Eugenia Keegan, co-chair of The Pinot Noir Auction, said, “Ten years ago we couldn’t have pulled off this auction. The Willamette Valley didn’t have the cachet to do this, nationally or internationally.” The 2020 event will be held on April 3 and 4.

The French Health Agency Urge the French Consumer to Reduce Wine Drinking Health officials in France have recommended no more than two glasses a day and not every day to reduce the risk of alcohol-related diseases. According to the French national health agency, Santé Publique France, almost 25 percent of French adults drink too much alcohol regularly, killing 41,000 people a year. The official guidance of Santé Publique France is for people to drink no more than 10 glasses of wine each week. Wine consumption in France has been decreasing and the French lag Lithuania, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Latvia among European countries in average consumption. French winemakers feel like this pronouncement only serves to upset the moderate wine drinker.

Domaine De Broglie This new Oregon brand has been added to The Family Coppola portfolio. The vineyard and modern tasting room is located in the Dundee Hills, 800 feet above the valley floor. The name is dedicated to Louis de Broglie, a French physicist who won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1929. The property was formerly Vista Hills Vineyard. Three 2017 estate single clone Pinot Noir wines as well as a Dundee Hills blend of multiple clones have been released. Visit www.domainedebroglie.com. The gentrification of Oregon wineries continues!



Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association Announces Technical Conference

Agenda The Technical Conference portion of the 22nd Annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival will be held on May 17, 2019, at Camp Navarro in the northern Anderson Valley. The Conference will include an overview of the Anderson Valley by *Wine & Spirits* magazine editor Patrick Comiskey, a walk-around tasting of 2018 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir wines from neutral barrel, part of a larger terroir study currently being undertaken in the Anderson Valley, and a discussion of regional microclimates reflected in vineyard designates led by duos of winemakers and viticulturists. Admission is \$100 and includes a light breakfast and lunch with accompanying wines. Tickets for the entire Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival and the Technical Conference are available at www.avpinotfest.com.



2019 International Pinot Noir Celebration North American Featured Wineries This year's IPNC will be held July 27-28 at Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon. Featured Oregon wineries: Alexana Winery, Amalie Robert Estate, Anam Cara Cellars, Andrew Rich Wines, Archery Summit, Brooks, Chehalem Winery, Cristom Vineyards, Dancin Vineyards, Del Rio Vineyard Estate, Domaine Serene, Drouhin Oregon Roserock, Dukes Family Vineyards, Elk Cove Vineyards, Evesham Wood, Foris Vineyards, Goodfellow Family Cellars, Grochau Cellars, Harper-Voit, Johan Vineyards, King Estate, La Crema Oregon, Lange Estate Winery & Vineyards, Le Cadeau Vineyard, Longplay Wine, Love & Squalor, Luminous Hills, LUMOS Wine Co, Nicholas-Jay, Owen Roe Winery, R. Stuart & Co Winery, Resonance, Rex Hill, Sokol Blosser, St. Innocent, Tendril Wine Cellars, Tye Wine Cellars and Winderlea Vineyard & Winery. Featured California wineries: Alma Rosa Winery, Bouchaine Vineyards, Calera Wine Co, Cartograph, Cobb Wines, Enroute, Gainey Vineyard, J Vineyards & Winery, Kosta Browne Winery, Laetitia Vineyard & Winery, Masut, Mindego Ridge Vineyard, Moshin Vineyards, Paul Hobbs Winery, Perception, Sanford Winery, Siduri Wines, Ten Acre Winery and Thomas Fogarty Winery. The full weekend experience is \$1295. A la carte tickets to Passport to Pinot (\$150) and the Salmon Bake (\$225) are also available. Visit www.ipnc.org for a description of the event. Look me up if you attend. I wouldn't think of missing this ultimate celebration of Pinot Noir!



Pour Oregon The kickoff event for Oregon Wine month, this wine festival will be held Sunday, April 28 at the World Trade Center Portland featuring 55 small wineries from 19 Oregon wine regions. The event benefits the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Oregon. All tickets include entrance to the event, a souvenir glass and free tastings. Buy tickets at www.pouroregon.com.

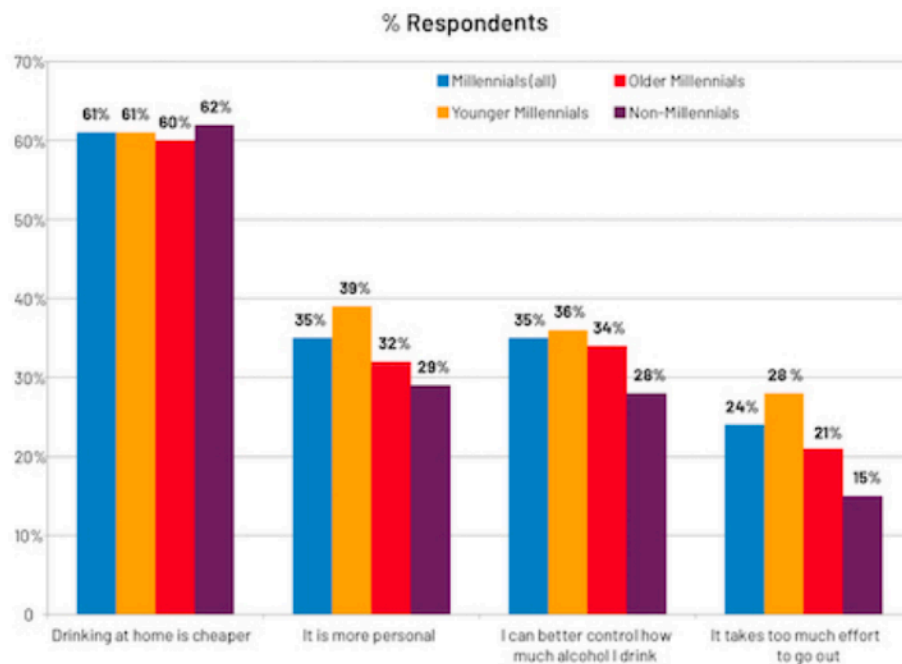
2019 Pinot Paddle Oregon by Willamette Riverkeeper Imagine paddling down the Willamette River for five days. Pause at a quiet back channel, set up camp, then join new friends for an evening of wine tasting featuring four local wineries (Cramoisi Vineyard, Goodfellow Family Cellars, Arcane Cellars and Winderlea) alongside a catered dinner with live music and talks. Wake up to a great breakfast, then paddle your way to lunch. June 15-16, 2019. Details at www.willametteriverkeeper.org.

More Upcoming Wine Events for Pinotphiles The 37th Annual Santa Barbara Vintners Festival will be held May 4. Visit www.sbvintnersweekend.com for details. The Silicon Valley Wine Auction in Saratoga will be held May 18-19. Visit www.siliconvalleywineauction.org. The West of West Wine Festival will be held at City Winery in New York City on May 8. Visit www.westsonomacoast.com.

New Book: *Intertwined - A Pinot Noir Parable: Grief, Gratitude and Growing a Business* A self-published book by Kerry McDaniel Boenisch who grew up in McMinnville on one of the first commercial vineyards in the Pacific Northwest at the time of the emerging wine industry in the Willamette Valley, tells a story about her entrepreneurial journey through the professional world of grape growing, writing and speaking with a few near-death experiences thrown in for good measure. Available in paperback from Amazon, \$19.95.

Why Consumers Prefer to Drink at Home

WHY CONSUMERS DRINK AT HOME VS. AWAY FROM HOME



Source: *On-premise Alcohol Trends, U.S., April 2018, Lightspeed/Mintel*

Source: [Beverage Information Group's 2018 Cheers On-Premise Handbook](#)

38th Annual Wine & Spirits Restaurant Poll 225 restaurateurs completed this poll. Average price by variety: \$98.70 for Cabernet Sauvignon, \$93.00 For Chardonnay, \$80 for Pinot Noir and \$64.50 for Sauvignon Blanc. Among wines most often offered in restaurants by the glass, #5 Willamette Valley Vineyards Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$13), #6 Rodney Strong Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$13), #21 Anthill Farms Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$18) and #22 Angeline California Pinot Noir (\$10). The 50 most popular wines in America's top restaurants included the following Pinot Noir producers: #5 Kistler Vineyards (\$150), #13 Frank Family Vineyards (\$99), #15 Failla (\$84), #16 Hirsch Vineyards (\$125), #20 Decoy (\$83), #25 Cristom Vineyards (\$73), #26 Flowers Vineyards & Winery (\$103), #35 J. Lohr (\$44), #38 Bow & Arrow (\$58), #41 Littorai (\$121), #46 Patricia Green Cellars (\$76) and #47 Merry Edwards Winery (\$117). Among

wine varieties as a % of top-selling wines, Cabernet Sauvignon is #1, Pinot Noir #2 and Chardonnay #3. Pinot Noir has 13.8 percent of respondent's top-selling wines, just 1.5 percent less than Cabernet Sauvignon, and 5% higher than Chardonnay. The ten most popular Pinot Noirs: Failla, Hirsch Vineyards, Cristom, Patricia Green Cellars, Flowers, Merry Edwards, Adelsheim Vineyard, Bethel Heights Vineyard, Sea Smoke, and Littorai.

Luxury Assets Soar in Value

