



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

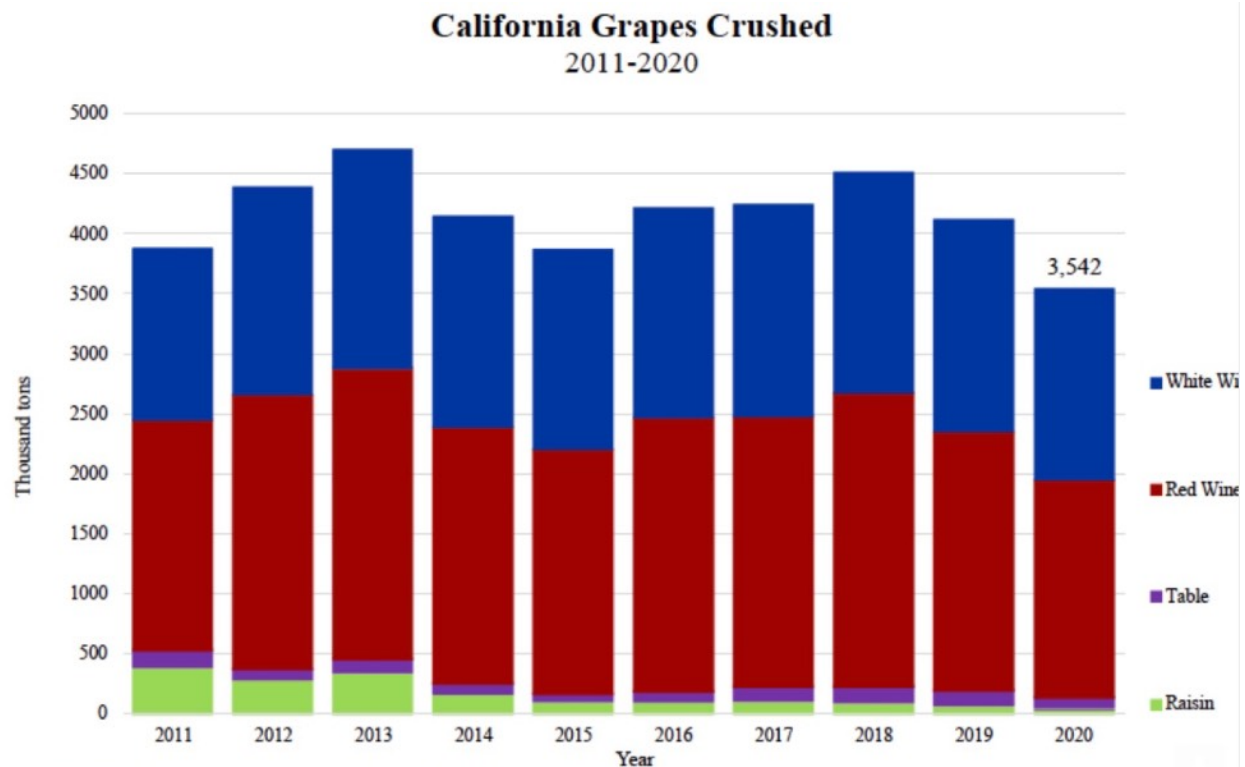
Volume 12, Issue 15 March 1, 2021

If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir

2018 Vintage Pinot Noir: An Embarrassment of Riches

The 2018 vintage of California and Oregon Pinot Noir is one to celebrate. The growing season was mostly uneventful in both states and there was no prolonged heat or dreaded temperature spikes. Ripening moved along at a steady pace and total tonnage at harvest was at near record-breaking levels. 7% of all the grape varieties crushed in California was Pinot Noir.

The chart below shows that the tons of grapes crushed in California in 2018 exceeded all of the previous ten vintages except 2013. This means there is currently plenty of superb domestic Pinot Noir in the pipeline, an “embarrassment of riches.”



Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Pacific Regional Office

Winemakers can often be over-exuberant in their praise for the quality of a vintage but in 2018 their enthusiasm is no BS. Some have described the 2018 vintage as a “winemaker’s dream” and “picture perfect.”

It is time to stock your cellar, especially in the light of the problematic 2020 vintage. The reviews that follow in this issue reflect consistent excellence in the pinotsphere. The scores may seem inflated, but I can guarantee you that they are well-deserved. (Check the previous issue of the *PinotFile*, Volume 12 Issue 14 for more 2018 Pinot Noir reviews)

Recently Tasted 2018 California & Oregon Pinot Noir



Cambria Estate Winery, Santa Maria, CA

Cambria's storied history began in 1986 with the purchase of the Tepesquet Vineyard on the Santa Maria Bench. Since that beginning, the winery has focused on single-vineyard expressions from this estate in the Santa Maria Valley AVA. The wines pay tribute to the winery's founders, Jess Jackson and Barbara Banke, who named the vineyards at Cambria after their daughters Katherine (Katie's Vineyard, exclusively Chardonnay)) and Julia (Julia's Vineyard, exclusively Pinot Noir). The winery is owned by women, led by women and the wines are made by women. This bottling says "Vinted and Bottled by Cambria Winery, Santa Rosa, CA." Visit www.cambriawines.com. The Julia's Pinot Noir is widely distributed and represents one of the most consistently excellent and sensibly priced Pinot Noir wines in California.

2018 Cambria Julia's Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$26.99 (but often discounted). Clones are 50% Pommard 4, 20% Dijon 667, 15% clone 23, 8% Wädenswil 2A, and 7% Dijon clone 115. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in stainless steel open-top tanks after a 5-day cold soak. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Giving aromas of boysenberry, blackberry, cardamom spice, tilled earth, flower blossom and a touch of toasty oak. Mid-weight and forward-drinking in style, with flavors of black cherry, black plum and blackberry with a riff of oak in the background. Silky in texture, with quenching acidity and a modest but satisfying finish.* 91

Dutton Estate Winery, Sebastopol, CA

Dutton Ranch, which dates to 1964, farms more than 80 vineyards in the Russian River Valley, the cool Green Valley sub-appellation of the Russian River Valley and the Sonoma Coast. Dutton Estate was established in 1995 by Tracy and Joe Dutton (originally as Sebastopol Vineyards). Grapes are sold to over sixty wineries, many of which feature the prestigious "Dutton Ranch" designation on the label. The current winemaker is Bobby Donnell and the wines, focused on vineyard-designation are produced and bottled in Sebastopol. Visit www.duttonesstate.com. The wines show impressive balance and immediate accessibility.

2018 Dutton Estate Winery Thomas Road, Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.575, 196 cases, \$68. Released January 2021. The Thomas Road Vineyard is located in the northeastern part of the Green Valley. Soils are Goldridge sandy loam. 100% clone 115. Harvest Brix 25.1°. 5-day cold soak, daily punchdowns during cold soak and up to three times daily during primary fermentation. Aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of black cherry, allspice and earth, more welcoming over time in the glass. Mid-weight plus charge of hefty dark fruits yet light on its feet. Great harmony, with a suave, silky mouthfeel that compliments the rich fruit sap. Reserve tannins and a hint of oak in the background.* **93**

2018 Dutton Estate Winery Manzana Vineyard Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.52-3.6, TA 5.9-6.0, 222 cases, \$65. Released January 2020 as part of the winery's single vineyard collection. Clones 35% 115 and 65% "828." 20 acre vineyard planted in Goldridge sandy loam exposed to a very cool climate. Harvest Brix 25.0° (115) and 24.5° (828). 5-day cold soak, with daily punchdowns during cold soak. Inoculated with three proprietary yeasts. Punchdowns three times daily during primary fermentation. Aged in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of purple berry and spice cake lead off. Delicious black cherry and purple berry fruit flavors with a appealing note of spice. A complete wine with excellent harmony, integrated oak and tannins with a very lengthy finish. A five-alarm sensation.* **95**

2018 Dutton Estate La Familia Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.67, 223 cases, \$72. Released January 2021. Sourced from the Kozlowski Family Vineyard located in the heart of the Green Valley and the home of Tracy Dutton's family who have farmed Sonoma County over five generations. 100% Pommard clone planted in 1998 in Goldridge sandy loam soil. Harvest Brix 25.4°. 5-day cold soak, inoculation with proprietary yeast and daily punchdowns applied to gently release color. Aged in a mixture of French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose wows with aromas of the ripest strawberry, Bing cherry, black raisin and baking spice. Bold, dark cherry core that saturates the mid palate and floods the long finish with goodness. Admirable balance with reeled-in tannins and oak input. The ripe fruit in this quintessential Russian River Valley Pinot Noir reflects many days of sunshine.* **94**

En Garde Winery, Glen Ellen, CA

Proprietor and winemaker Csaba Szakal wears his enthusiasm for Pinot Noir on his sleeve. A fourth-generation winemaker from Hungary, he moved to California to work as a computer programmer in 1996 and soon was enthralled with California wines. He began making wine in his garage before his first commercial release in 2001 that won a gold medal. He launched En Garde Winery in 2007 with a serious commitment to quality. I have sampled En Garde Pinot Noir wines since the 2010 vintage. I visited Csaba in 2019 and tasted single clones in barrels of the 2018 wines reviewed here with favorable first impressions. Multiple varietals are offered from sourced grapes including several Pinot Noirs. The wines are produced and bottled at Mayo Winery in Glen Ellen and a tasting room is located at 9077 Sonoma Highway in Kenwood. Visit www.engardewinery.com. All wines are bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

2018 En Garde Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 125 cases, \$60. Noble Family Estate Vineyard. Clones "828" and Pommard. Harvest Brix 25.5°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Very seductive nose offering aromas of red cherry, rose petal, white pepper and oak spice. Oak-dusted dark red cherry and purple berry fruit flavors in a light to mid-weight style. Up front and the most accessible Pinot Noir in the 2018 En Garde lineup. Excellent energy, gossamer tannins and a sturdy finish showing red candied cherry goodness. Still enjoyable the following day from a previously opened bottle.* **93**

2018 En Garde Roma's Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 145 cases, \$60. Pommard clone. Harvest Brix 23.8°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose lacks fruit, offering aromas of underbrush, piquant herbs and cedary oak. The core of purple berry fruits has a slight green, herbaceous undertone. Good mid palate impression, well-blended tannins and some length on the finish.* **89**

2018 En Garde Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 160 cases, \$60. Sourced from a Los Carneros Vineyard in the Sonoma Coast AVA. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Intriguing aromas of black plum black tea, black pepper and tobacco. Mid-*

weight in sap, offering flavors of black cherry and purple berry. A bit mysterious with a thread of oak in the background and some finishing purpose. 91

2018 En Garde Pleasant Hill Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 155 cases, \$60. Clones 115, 777 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 23.8°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Well-appointed nose of black cherry, blueberry, and oak spice and toast aromas. The mid-weight core of dark cherry fruit explodes in glorious exuberance in the mouth. Flat-out delicious fruit with accents of spice and cola. Stereotypical Russian River Valley Pinot Noir that delights from entry to finish. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. 94*



2018 En Garde Starkey Hill Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.4% alc., 777 cases, \$60. Clone 23 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 26°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Perfumed with aromas of blackberry, blueberry-pomegranate, black tea and spice. Very ripe, luscious and full-bodied, with flavors of blackberry jam and cassis. Easy drinking, with minimal tannins and a very long, fruit-laden finish. The sheer immensity of very ripe fruit obscures any terroir or vineyard identity, but the toothsome fruit is hard to ignore. 92*

2018 En Garde Passion De La Reine Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.2% alc., 131 cases, \$70. Clones 23 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 26.0°. A barrel selection. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of black cherry, black raspberry, turmeric spice and unlit cigar. Similar to the Starkey Hill bottling in purple and black fruit profile but this wine is a bit more refined and grows on you over time in the glass. Toasty oak shows up in the background as a compliment and the tannic backbone is enough to escape flabbiness. The fruit is infused with many spices including cardamom that are more evident on the somewhat persistent finish. The alcohol is well-buried. A little more enjoyable when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. 93*

LOBO Wines, Wulff Vineyards Napa, CA

Husband and wife team Kryss and Randy Wulff have grown premium grapes in Napa Valley for over 15 years, selling to many well-known wineries such as Lewis, Robert Mondavi and The Prisoner. The Wulffs specially select areas in their estate vineyards to make their own signature wines under the LOBO label, the Spanish word for "wolf." The winery's Pinot Noir is from estate-grown vines located in the Oak Knoll AVA of the Napa Valley. It is a blend of Mariafeld and Martini clones. The winemaker is Victoria Coleman, who has returned to Napa after a stint next to Erick Tourbier at Chateau Mouton Rothschild. Visit www.lobowines.com or contact to purchase gordon@palmateerwinegroup.com. Napa wineries that concentrate on Cabernet Sauvignon often offer Pinot Noir as an alternative because of its popularity but rarely rises to the quality level of Pinot Noir dedicated wineries. LOBO Wines is an exception. The grapes are estate-grown and the resultant Pinot Noir wines are very good. The two wines reviewed here tend to reflect a warmer site in ripeness and are unique in possessing the combination of Mariafeld and Martini clones. The wines are consistent in character with other Pinot Noir wines I have sampled based on these clones.

2015 LOBO Oak Knoll District Napa Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.62, 175 cases, \$65. Released March 2019. Hand-harvested grapes, cold soak on the skins, aged for 11 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of purple and black berries, allspice and cardamom spice. The mid-weight, sturdy core of blackberry, purple berry cassis and anise flavors with a savory spice edge enjoy a juicy infusion of acidity. A bit of tannin shows up on the dry finish that reveals some generosity. Oak is way in the background and never intrudes. 91*

2017 LOBO Oak Knoll District Napa Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.61, 225 cases, \$50. Released February 2021. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of raspberry, strawberry, balsam and wine cask lead off. Engaging mid-weight plus flavors of black raspberry and purple berry pack plenty of length in the mouth and persist through a notably long finish. The tannins are mildly weighty and some oak plies the background. Lighter in color than the 2015 vintage bottling, but this wine packs more flavor and structure.* **92**



Madson Wines, Santa Cruz, CA

Cole Thomas and partner Ken Swegles started Madson Wines in spring 2018. Their goal was to select some of the most ocean-influenced and high-elevations sites in the Santa Cruz Mountains and convert them to 100% organic and regenerative agriculture. The partners' experience is unique among wineries in that both have an extensive background in both winegrowing and winemaking. Cole has always had a love for agriculture and was an organic vegetable farmer before his career in wine. He has worked in vineyards in Victoria, Australia, Central Otago, New Zealand, and assisted in winemaking in the Santa Cruz Mountains for several years. Ken has lengthy experience in viticulture, working at Santa Cruz Mountains Vineyards, Bonny Doon Vineyards Rhys Vineyards as well as assisting in winemaking during several junctures. Ken currently manages vineyards for Madson Wines and runs his own business, Rhizos Vineyard Consulting.

In the cellar, vinification includes 100% native yeast fermentations and the incorporation of high percentages of whole cluster, with the percentage dependent on the quality of the vintage. There are no additives besides a small amount of SO₂ at bottling. Barriques are mostly neutral French oak 228L with some 500L oak puncheons. Anywhere from 0 to 10% new French oak barrels are used depending on the wine and vintage. Ultimately, the goal is to craft a wine that speaks of special places in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The wines are produced and bottled in Santa Cruz, CA. Note: two of the wines are from the 2019 vintage. Visit www.madsonwines.com. Website and mailing list offer wine availability.

2019 Madson Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 12.4% alc., 75 cases, \$29.99. A blend of fruit from many small vineyards that the vintners farm. Typically, this bottling is between 70% and 100% whole cluster fermented. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, dried herbs, white pepper and pipe smoke. Light to mid-weight in style, offering flavors of dark red cherry and a hint of whole cluster inspired goodness. Very silky with gentle tannins. Needs time to open up so consider decanting.* **91**

2019 Madson Ascona Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 75 cases, \$49.99. Ascona Vineyard sits at 2500 feet elevation at the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains. 100% organic farming practices. 100% natural yeast fermentation, 100% whole cluster fermented. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Deep aromas of darker stone and berry fruits with added scents of exotic spices and burnt tobacco. Very pleasing in the mouth, with middleweight flavors of well-spiced darker stone and berry fruits with whole cluster driven additions of tea and floral blossom. Nice harmony, exhibiting a good cut of acidity and soothing tannins. The wine finishes crisp and juicy.* **93**

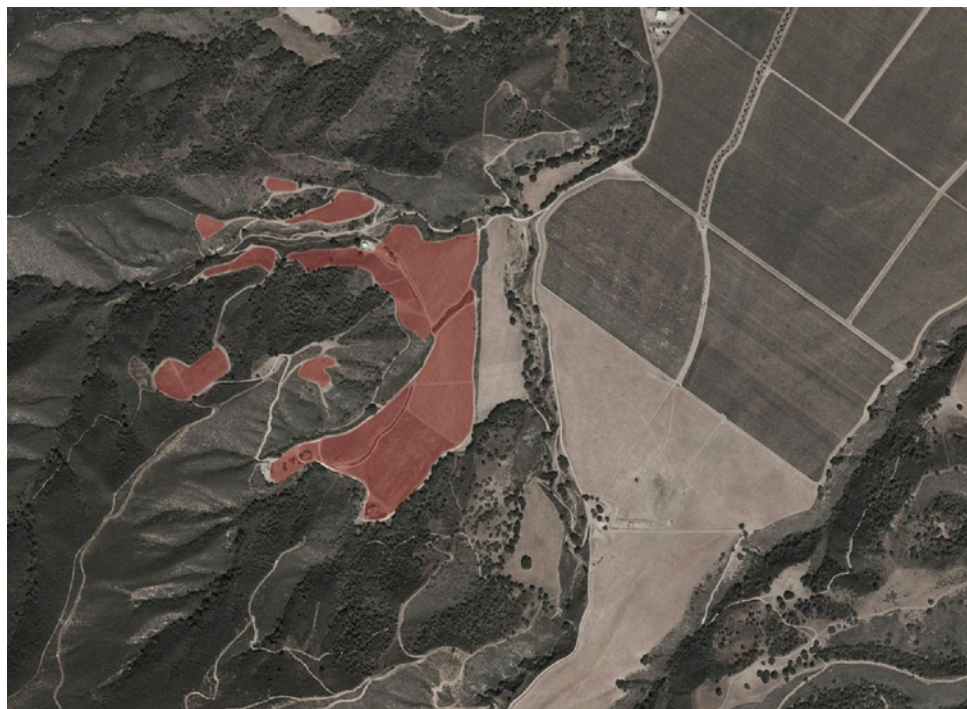
2018 Madson Les Enfants des Nuages Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir

12.4% alc., 169 cases, \$55. Sourced from Toyon Vineyard. Only 3 miles from Pacific Ocean at 400 feet elevation, this vineyard is impacted by cool temperatures and cloud cover. Vineyard farmed 100% organically. A melange of various clones. Fermented 100% whole cluster outside in the vineyard. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Terrific, whole-cluster driven aromas of musk, spice and burnt tobacco infusing purple berry fruits. Mid-weight plus in style, with an impressive charge of purple grapes and purple berry fruits infused with spice. Plush in the mouth, yet bright with acidity, finishing with minimal tannins and refreshing tartness. Even more enjoyable when tasted several ours after opening. A heartthrob. 94*



Mansfield-Dunne Wines, San Francisco, CA

John Peterson, Jr., a small grower in the Santa Lucia Highlands launched a new label with the 2011 vintage. Mansfield-Dunne wines are the culmination of a ten-year effort to secure land in the Santa Lucia Highlands with the goal of growing and producing premium Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The Peterson Vineyard is 11 acres with 7.9 acres planted to Pinot Noir clones "828," 667 and 115 and Pommard 5. A second property, Cortada Alta Vineyard, was more added in 2014 with additional plantings in 2015-2017. Located at 1200 to 1600 feet elevation, Cortada Alta Vineyard is the highest vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA. The planted Pinot Noir clones include Calera, Pommard, Swan, Wädenswil 2A, 23, 667, faux 828, and 943. (Aerial photo of the vineyard below). John is committed to organic estate farming. I have reviewed every vintage since the inaugural release in 2011. Library wines dating back several years (a rarity) are available for sale on the website. The wines are produced and bottled by Mansfield-Dunne Wines in San Francisco. To acquire, visit www.mansfield-dunne.com.



The 2018 Pinot Noirs are crafted in a rich, ripe style with bold, fruit-driven flavors. That said, the wines retain good balance indicating age worthiness yet are reasonably approachable now.

2018 Mansfield-Dunne Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 336 cases, \$39. A blend of ten clones. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 43% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Richly perfumed with aromas of blackberry preserves, black tea and dark rose petal. Full-bodied, with vigorous dark fruit flavors including blackberry, black grape, cassis and dark chocolate. Silky in texture, with weighty tannins and some length on the generously-fruited finish. 90*

2018 Mansfield-Dunne Cortada Alta Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 192 cases, \$58. Multiple clones. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 75% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas of black currant, cardamom spice and wet loamy soil. Full-bodied in style with layers of purple and black berry and pomegranate fruit flavors. Modest and balancing tannins with the faintest oak in the background. Impressively generous finish that lingers. 92*

2018 Mansfield-Dunne Cortada Alta Vineyard Dijon Clones Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 1 select barrel, \$N/A. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Highly aromatic, with seductive aromas of dark berries, ripe black cherries, baking spices and dark chocolate. Full-bodied, with an appealing sleekness and roundness. Robust purple and black fruits are featured, framed by very modest tannins and uplifting acidity. Oak does not make an appearance. The intensely fruity finish is quenching. This wine has spirit. 93*

2018 Mansfield-Dunne Peterson Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 168 cases, \$65. Multiple clones. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. A complex nose offers scents of black stone fruits, blueberry-pomegranate, tilled earth, sweet pipe tobacco and a hint of vanilla. Full-bodied and very charming with a plethora of boysenberry blackberry and allspice flavors. Velvety in the mouth, with very modest tannins and giving on the finish. Super rich and ripe but not at all jammy. 93*



Red Electric - Sedimentary Wines, Amity, OR

Red Electric wines is a collaboration between winegrower Douglas Ackerman, owner of Armstrong Vineyard, located in the Ribbon Ridge AVA of the Willamette Valley, and winemaker John Grochau. The winery's name is derived from the Red Electric commuter train that carried passengers from Portland to communities of the Willamette Valley from 1913 to 1920. Red Electric wines are meant to capture the electricity and excitement of that era. Armstrong Vineyard was planted in 2007 on ancient sedimentary (Willakenzie) soils. The Pinot Noir clones include Pommard, Wädenswil and Dijon 114, 667 and 777. In 2017, one acre was grafted over to Chardonnay, primarily Mt Eden clone with scion wood sourced from Cameron and Johan wineries. In the cellar, there is moderate use of whole cluster fermentation when stems are optimally lignified, limited use of new oak barrels, native yeast fermentation, and acidulation only when necessary. Three Pinot Noirs are offered each vintage, with the TGV bottling only offered in special vintages. The first Pinot Noir release was from the 2015 vintage. I no longer review Chardonnay but the two examples from Red Electric were so special I have included reviews here. These are the inaugural Chardonnays from this producer who grafted over an acre of the Armstrong Vineyard primarily to the Mt. Eden clone of Chardonnay using scion wood from Cameron Winery's Clos Electrique Vineyard. The Mt. Eden clone of Chardonnay is a rarity in Oregon. The wines are produced and bottled by Sedimentary wines, Amity, OR. Visit www.redelectricwines.com to purchase wine (discounts for 6-bottle and case purchases).

2018 Red Electric Interurban Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.85% alc., \$28. An introduction to the vineyard. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of dark cherry, earthy flora, spice box and nori. Impressive juiciness in a really lovely, gracious mid-weight style. Captivating flavors of black cherry, dark strawberry and black raspberry with lingering mid palate and finish impression. Very lush and enjoyable. I prefer this wine over The Pulse for drinking right now. 93*

2018 Red Electric The Pulse Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.72% alc., \$50. A barrel selection. *Light garnet color in the glass. Rather shy initially, more giving over time to reveal aromas of red cherry and underbrush. Light in style yet quite flavorful, offering flavors of dark red cherry, red raspberry and spice. Infused with acid-driven energy and the slightest oak. Very forward drinking in a feminine style, exhibiting admirable harmony and finishing with generous, nimble fruit. 92*

2018 Red Electric TGV Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.92% alc., \$70. A special occasion barrel selection wine only produced in exceptional vintages. A little more percentage of whole cluster and new oak is used in production. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Clearly a step up in quality. Very tantalizing aromas of deep red cherry and berry, exotic spices and rose petal. A high-collared, mid-weight plus wine that oozes class. Perfectly ripened fruit flavors of black cherry, red and purple berry and a touch of spice. Lively, refreshing acidity and enough weighty tannins to carry the wine for years. The most serious and age worthy 2018 Red Electric offering. 95*



2018 Red Electric Armstrong Vineyard Alpine Lily Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Chardonnay 12.8% alc., \$25. A blend of all Armstrong Vineyard clones including Mt Eden, l'Espiquette, Musqué and Dijon 76. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of baked pear, white peach, Asian pear, white flowers, toast and graphite lead to flavors that echo the aromas with added citrus (including pineapple) taste. Silky in the mouth, with good richness, quenching crispness and some length on the finish. Impressive, particularly at this modest price. 94*

2018 Red Electric Armstrong Vineyard Evening Primrose Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Chardonnay 12.8% alc., \$33. An estate blend of all Armstrong Vineyard Chardonnay clones. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Alluring aromas of white stone fruits, lemon blossom, spice and slate. A harmonious blend of citrus and white stone fruits infused with lively acidity. Slightly leaner and crisper than the Alpine Lily Chardonnay. This wine does not make quite the same impression as the Alpine Lily, but is still a terrific Chardonnay. 93*

Taft Street Winery, Sebastopol, CA

Taft Street began in a backyard Berkeley, California garage almost forty years ago and is family-owned and independently operated. The word, "garagistes" appears on the front label of the wines, a homage to the garagistes tradition of innovation and excellence in a chateau-alternative locale. The family has a connection to the Russian River Valley since the early 1990s. Limited production releases celebrate local vineyards and growers. The winemaker is Melissa Kuhn who has worked alongside many prominent Sonoma County winemakers including Anthony Austin, Hugh Chapelle, Kerry Damskey, Greg LaFollette, Ginny Lambrix, and Guy Davis who is the consulting winemaker for Taft Street Winery. The wines are produced and bottled at Taft Street Winery in Sebastopol. Visit www.taftstreetwinery.com. These are the best Pinot Noir releases from this winery I have ever tasted and represent outstanding value.

2018 Taft Street Garagistes Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 175 cases, \$38. Released October 2020. Grapes are from the Skikos Vineyard (Dijon 667) located on Piner Road in the Santa Rosa Plains Neighborhood and the Dutton Winkler Vineyard (clone 23) situated in the Green Valley Neighborhood of the Russian River Valley. 5-day cold soak, proprietary yeast inoculation, daily punchdowns, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Inviting scents of black cherry, allspice and red rose petal. Excellent charge of dark red cherry and red and purple berry goodness backed by felty tannins. Luscious in the mouth, with a complimentary shadow of oak and a modest finish. Easygoing, upfront drinking. 92*

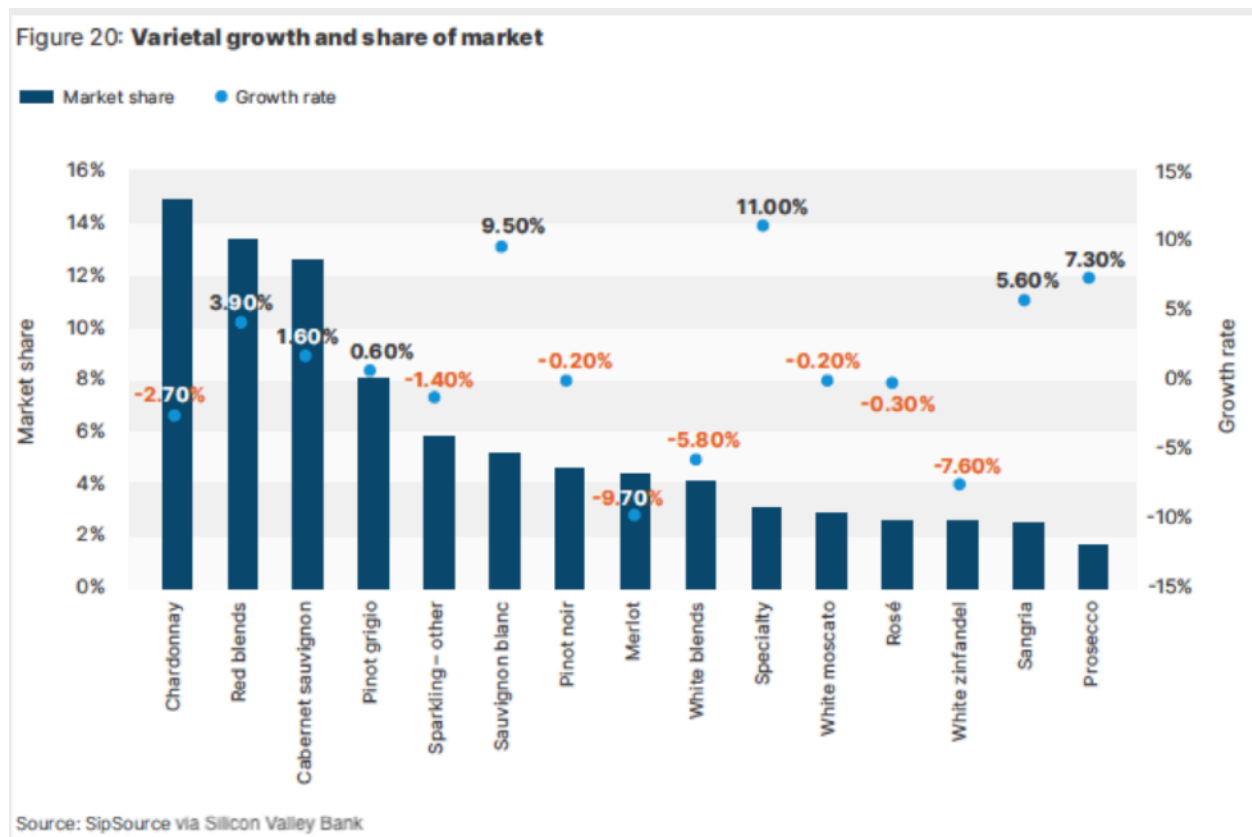
2018 Taft Street Skikos Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 220 cases, \$38. Released October 2020. Grapes are clone 667 sourced from Skikos Vineyard. 5-day cold soak, proprietary yeast inoculation, fermentation in open-top tank fermenters at cool temperatures and aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of cherry, dark strawberry, rose hips and spice cake. A succulent fruit core of black cherry and black raspberry creates an impression. A serious wine that shows impeccable balance and gentle use of oak. The peach-skin make for easy drinking and the juicy finish draws the drinker back to the glass. Even more lavish over time in the glass. This beauty can be enjoyed now are cellared. 94*



Briefs

Duckhorn Portfolio Files for an IPO Duckhorn has a portfolio of premium wines sold in all 50 states and over 50 countries. Brands include Duckhorn Vineyards, Decoy, Migration, Kosta Browne, Goldeneye, Calera, Paraduxx, Canvasback, Greenwing and Postmark. The company also operates eight wineries and 22 sustainably farmed Estate vineyards spanning a total of 843 acres. The Duckhorn Portfolio is the eleventh largest wine supplier by sales value overall in the United States for the 12 months ending October 4, 2020. Based in St. Helena, CA, the company booked \$290 million in sales for the 12 months ended October 31, 2020. It plans to list on the NYSE under the symbol NAPA. It is estimated the IPO will raise \$300 million.

Best Selling Wine Varietals in the US Market Dr. Liz Thach, MW, noted wine writer, educator, and consultant recent published “Overview of 2020 US Wine Market Stats and 10 Hot Wine Trends for 2021” at <https://lizthachmw.com/winestars/overview-of-2020-us-wine-market-stats-and-10-hot-wine-trends-for-2021/>. Of the 2020 Top 10 most popular wine varietals in the US market by volume. Pinot Noir comes in at #8. The graph below from SipSource via Silicon Valley Bank shows varietal growth and share of the market for 2020. Pinot Noir comes in at #7 with a slight decrease in growth rate.



Identification of Pinot Noir Clones Dr. Laurent Deluc and associates at Oregon State University are using molecular methods to identify Oregon Pinot Noir clones. The genetic relationships among Pinot Noir clones are not well understood. One way to identify a plant with certainty is to do a molecular test that generates a specific genetic fingerprint. Today researchers can sequence a full grapevine genome for less than \$10,000, a fraction of the cost of the same work ten years ago. Clonal selection is important for grape growers and winemakers because the vine performance in a particular growing environment and the resultant flavor profiles of wine vary from one clone to another.

Four-fifths of California Wine Production Certified Sustainable As of December, 2020, 171 wineries accounting for 80% of California’s total wine production and 2,347 vineyards farming 32% of the state’s wine grape acreage were certified under the statewide sustainability program according to California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance’s 2020 certification report released February 3. California remains the global leader in sustainable winegrowing practices

Drink Wine, Have Sex David Khayat, a former chairman of France’s National Cancer Institute, urges people to enjoy life’s pleasures, from sex to wine. Khayat published a tome, *Arrêtez de Vous Priver* (Stop Depriving Yourself), that urges people to have a “few small excesses, without feeling guilty.” He says that the health risks from enjoying chips, meat, and alcohol are being inflated by poor doctors, who, are keen are imposing their ‘hygienist’ vision of society. Khayat’s comments have generated considerable public debate, but he is undeterred and says, “Life without pleasure makes no sense.”

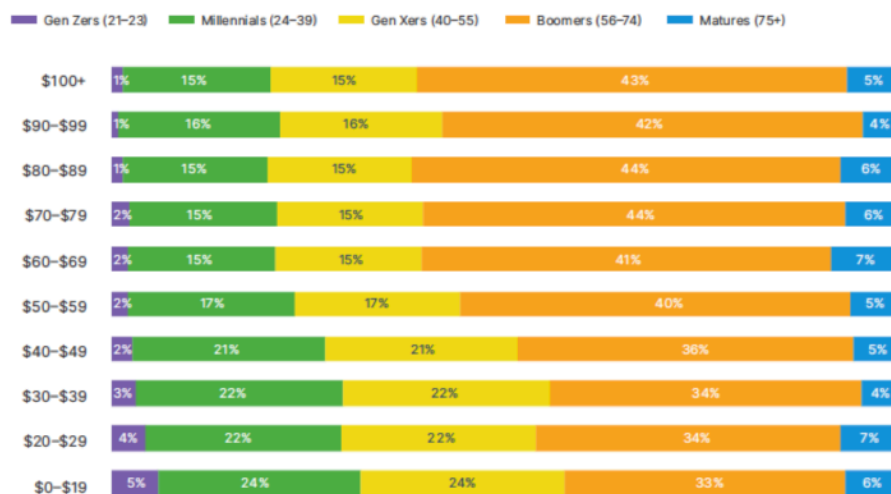


Boomers Still Buy The Most Luxury Wines The Silicon Valley Bank State of the Wine Industry Report 2021 finds that consumption by cohort based on winery’s average bottle price is clearly driven by Boomer’s (56-74). Will the younger generations step up in the future?

Despite declining numbers, Boomers still buy more luxury wines than any other demographic.

February 5, 2021 | Filed under [Daily Data](#) | Posted by [Lewis Perdue](#)

Figure 24: **Consumption by cohort based on winery’s average bottle price**

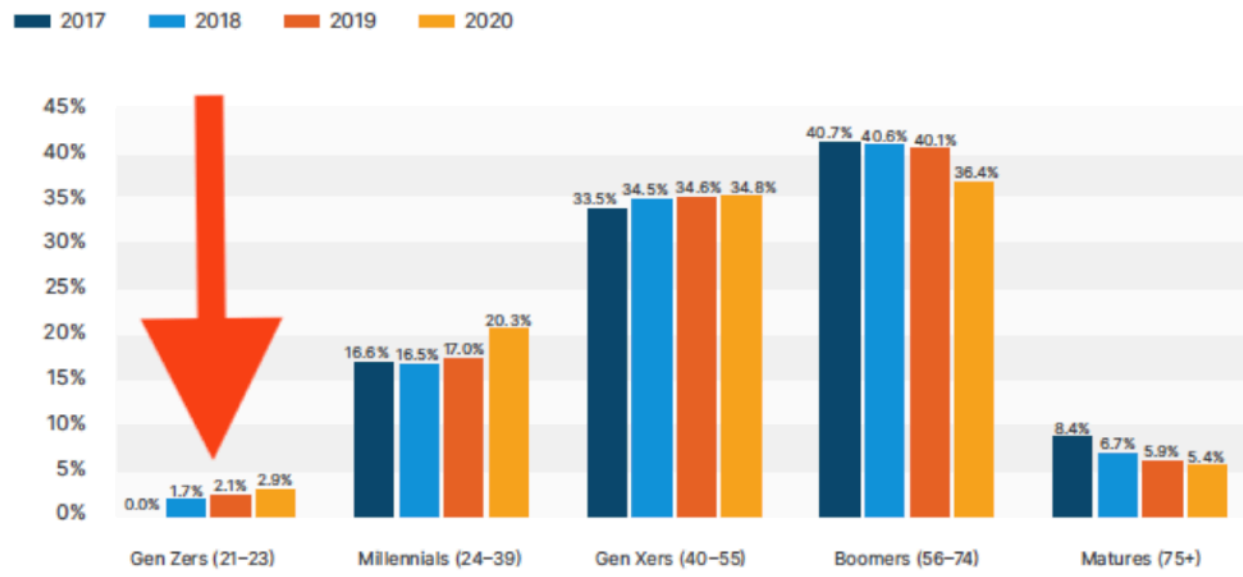


Source: SVB Annual Winery Conditions Survey

Source: [Silicon Valley Bank State of the Wine Industry Report 2021 20th Anniversary Issue](#)

Another graph from Silicon Valley Bank's Annual Conditions Survey in 2021 shows that despite Boomers leading wine consumption, their dominance has decreased in 2020. The wine industry needs to find ways to attract new consumers and not bemoan the aging Baby Boomers or blame the Millennials for lack of wine purchase.

Figure 23: Wine consumption by cohort



Source: SVB Annual Winery Conditions Survey

DuMOL Wines Impress I recently enjoyed three 2018 DuMOL wines that I purchased for my own enjoyment rather than for the purpose of reviewing. The 2018 DuMOL Estate Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and the 2018 DuMOL Jentoft Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir were exceptional wines deserving of scores in the 97-98 point range. The 2018 DuMOL Chloe Ritchie Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay was as good as it gets in California Chardonnay. Andy Smith, the talented winemaker and viticulturist (and partner in the winery) has been at DuMOL since 2000 and has perfected his craft. The winery is not open to the public. The wines are offered by allocation to mailing list customers at www.dumol.com.

