



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir

Winemaker Bill Brosseau Works Magic at Testarossa Winery: Part II

In a recent issue of the *PinotFile* (Volume 22 Issue 19), I reviewed part of the exceptional lineup of 2019 Testarossa Pinot Noir wines. This issue is devoted to the remainder of the 2019 Pinot Noir releases from winemaker Bill Brosseau.

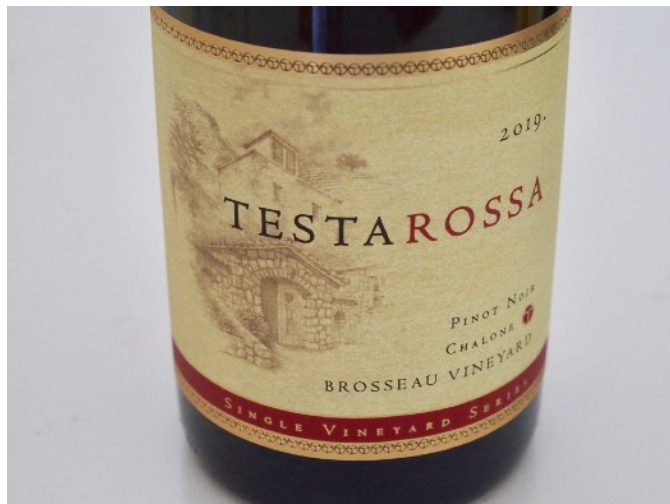
Testarossa Winery although possessing no estate vineyards, has an unrivaled lineup of superb partner vineyards in California, extending from the Russian River Valley to the Sta. Rita Hills. The single-vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines from these sources are the featured winery offerings. Nineteen single-vineyard small-lot Pinot Noirs and 14 single-vineyard small-lot Chardonnays are produced.



Despite the excellence of the wines and their limited production, most are available at the winery's website store. The winery and tasting patio in Los Gatos is open by reservation and proper COVID protocols are in place. Visit www.testarossa.com.

Winemaker Bill Brousseau has been integral in Testarossa's 25+ years of consistently outstanding reviews by the nation's most well-known critics. You can now add my name to that list.

2019 Testarossa Brousseau Vineyard Chalone AVA Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.596, 384 cases, \$74. Release January 2022. The Brousseau family owns and farms this vineyard with heavy limestone soils situated at 1660-1700 feet elevation. Planted clones are Dijon 113 and 115, Mt. Eden, and Pommard 4 planted in 1980 are naturally low-yielding. The first Testarossa vintage from this vineyard was 2002. Aged 21 months in French oak barrels, 73% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The heady aromas are what draw me to Pinot Noir and are rarely captured in such an alluring fashion. Scents of dark cherry, pomegranate, spice and antique furniture never lose their intoxicating purpose over time in the glass. Mid-weight black cherry and black raspberry flavors have appealing spice and earth tones, Highly unique, with supportive tannins, a shadow of oak, impeccable harmony and a crazy long finish. When tasting this wine I wanted to swallow instead of spit. Even better when sampled the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **96**



2019 Testarossa Doctor's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.38, TA 0.694, 1,296 cases, \$76. Released October 2021. This vineyard, owned by the Hahn Family, has sandy loam soils and is located at 350-540 feet elevation with southeast exposure. Clones are Dijon 113, 115, 667 and 777, Pommard 5, Swan, Jackson 9, Martini 13, Calera and Wädenswil 2A planted in 1991. Testarossa's first vintage of Pinot Noir from this vineyard was 2008. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 54% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose features aromas of earthy flora, cherry compote and petrol. An easygoing wine in a middleweight style with earth-toned flavors of dark cherry and purple berry with a good dose of spice., Well-crafted in a dusty, rustic tone with a modestly long finish.* **92**

2019 Testarossa Fogstone Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.687, 552 cases, \$74. Released September 2021. 35 acres of Pinot Noir planted in rocky, well-draining loam soils. Clones planted include Dijon 113, 115, and 667, Pommard 4, and Jardini, planted in 1993. Testarossa's first vintage of Pinot Noir from this vineyard was 2010. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 52% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of black cherry, raspberry and wet earth. Sleek in texture and comforting on entry, with a discreet core of black cherry and purple berry fruit flavors shadowing with a bit of nutty oak. Nicely balanced and giving upon opening with some finishing power and persistence. My first experience with this vineyard.* **92**

2019 Testarossa Graham Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.522, 312 cases, \$74. Released September 2021. This small vineyard is owned by Howard and Linda Graham. Dijon clones 667, 777, and faux 828 planted in Goldridge sandy loam soil in 2001. Testarossa's first vintage Pinot Noir from this vintage was 2004. Aged 21 months in French oak barrels, 59% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The perfume of ripest black cherry, baking spices, vanilla and woodland gather allure over time in the glass. Mid-weight plus in style and richly endowed with black cherry, cola and baking spice flavors. A solid, harmonious, and fruit-driven wine, but not enough to get too excited about.* **92**

2019 Testarossa Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.609, 288 cases, \$90. Released August 2021. The Pisoni family farms this iconic vineyard planted with an unspecified selection known as the "Pisoni clone" in decomposed granite and clay soils. Testarossa sources fruit planted in 1992 and the first Pinot Noir vintage was 1997. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The moody nose offers aromas of dark cherry, tilled earth and dark rose petal. Quite an extraordinary black cherry bombast on the palate. The impression is one of black tie refinement. The velvety*

mouthfeel makes it easy to find comfort in this wine. The remarkable finish stands out for its exceptional length of over thirty seconds. 94

2019 Testarossa Rincon Vineyard Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.603, 312 cases, \$74. Released August 2021. This well-known vineyard is owned and managed by the Talley family. Clone 115 planted in 1985 in shallow local and calcareous clay. Testarossa's first vintage of Pinot Noir from this vineyard was 2012. Aged 19.5 months in French oak barrels, 77% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. This wine captures your attention from the get-go. Beguiling aromas of blackberry, ripest strawberry, earthy flora and pumpkin spice. Mid-weight plus in structural power, with fruit that really pops on entry and persists in generosity through a very long and quenching finish. Excellent balance and soft in the mouth with an array of vivid purple and black fruit and spice flavors supported by ingratiating tannins. Sinfully delicious even when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. 95*

2019 Testarossa Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.27, TA 0.709, 360 cases, \$74. Released August 2021. This vineyard is owned and managed by the Pisoni and Franscioni families. Soils are rocky, sandy loam. Testarossa sources Pisoni clone planted in 2008. Testarossa's first Pinot Noir from this vineyard was 2011. Aged 19.5 months in French oak barrels, 53% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, bramble and earth lead to a discreetly concentrated wine featuring flavors of earthbound black cherry, blueberry and boysenberry framed by modest tannins. The finish is generous and long-lasting. For whatever reason, I have had many very good Pinot Noirs from this vineyard from multiple producers but never an exceptional one. 92*

2019 Testarossa Tondré Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.27, TA 0.709, 480 cases, \$74. Released December 2021. The Alarid family farms this vineyard with sandy, gravelly loam soils. Testarossa sources Dijon 777 and Pommard 4 planted in 2009. Testarossa's first vintage Pinot Noir from this vineyard was 2012. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Initially reserved but opening with time, revealing aromas of blackberry, cardamom and ash. There is no shortage of purple and black berry fruits in this mid-weight plus offering showing a slight smoky imprint not experienced in the other Testarossa 2019 lineup. The robust, fruit-packed finish makes quite a departing impression. 92*

Morgan Winery: The Upper Echelon of California Pinot Noir Production

Morgan Winery has proven itself to be one of California's most consistent producers of excellent Pinot Noir. The origins of the winery date to 1982 when Daniel Morgan Lee, a UC Davis graduate and his spouse Donna Lee launched Morgan Winery in their spare time. At a time that precedes the approval of the Santa Lucia Highlands as a recognized AVA, the couple moved into their own winery in Salinas and released their first Pinot Noir in 1988.



Their famed Double L Vineyard, one of my “Elite” California Pinot Noir vineyards, was initially planted in 1997 and 1998 in the northern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands neighboring Rosella’s and Garys’ vineyards. Organically certified in 2001, the 48.5-acre Double L Vineyard became the first and only Monterey County Certified Organic property in the Santa Lucia Highlands.

The winery’s lineup of Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir is focused on the estate Double L Vineyard but other superb partner vineyards are also featured as single-vineyard wines. The winery’s Chardonnay wines I have reviewed have also been upper class. The winemakers are Dan Lee and Sam Smith.

Tasting is available daily at the Crossroads Shopping Center of Carmel. Most wines are available for purchase on the winery’s website at www.morganwinery.com.

The 2019 vintage commenced with bud break in late March, after a cold February and yearly precipitation of 16% above average. Slightly warmer than average temperatures started in April. A rain even in May gave the vines an extra drink, although this caused increased mildew concerns. The subsequent warm temperatures helped to achieve wines with excellent phenolic, medium acid, and flavor balance.

2018 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.62, 748 cases, \$65. Clones 667 and 777 (organic grapes). 100% de-stemmed. Native and cultured yeasts began the fermentation in open-top tanks. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Very appealing and fresh aromas of cherry, strawberry, and a hint of oak spice. The mid-weight flavors of*

dark red cherry really stick to the palate. Nicely balanced, with juicy acidity, a trace of tannins, and some length on the raspberry coulis inspired finish. This wine is a food magnet. 93

2019 Morgan Double L Vineyard Clone 114 Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.45, T 0.59, 97 cases, \$65. Grapes were hand sorted in the vineyard and a second time at the winery before de-stemming. Whole berry fermentation started with native and cultured yeasts. The wine was aged for 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *A single 114 clone Pinot Noir is a rarity. Organic clone 114 grapes. Aromas of blueberry, black cherry, clay, spice and a floral imprint. Mid-weight plus in concentration, with generous amounts of earth-toned blueberry, boysenberry and pomegranate fruit flavors framed by a noticeable but not imposing tannic spine. Picks up appeal over time in the glass and although not too complicated, it drew me in with its irresistible core of fruit flavors. 94*



2019 Morgan Double L Vineyard Clone LT Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.62, 105 cases, \$65. Clone LT refers to one of the most celebrated Pinot Noir vineyards in Burgundy. A small block of this suitcase clone was grafted at the top of Double L Vineyard. Organic grapes. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Stellar aromas of black cherry, purple grape and dried herbs. A saturating impact of black cherry and blackberry fruits greet the palate and persist through a very long finish. Excellent harmony with juicy acidity and balanced tannins. The wine seems to glide on the mid-palate. Very satisfying and forward drinking. 93*

2019 Morgan Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.60, 96 cases, \$65. 100% de-stemmed Pisoni clone. Native yeast fermentation. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Wines from this vineyard always stand out. Moderate garnet color in the glass. Beautifully perfumed with scents of black cherry, black raspberry and dark rose petal. A luscious black cherry core immediately brings the palate to attention. Very flavorful but refreshing and elegant. This wine a quintessential example of an iron fist in a velvet glove. Refined and classy, with an exceptional finish of uncommon length. 95*

2019 Morgan Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.59, 96 cases, \$65. Pisoni clone, 100% de-stemmed. Native yeast fermentation in open-top tanks. Manual punch downs. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. My, my, what a great nose. Soaring aromas of red cherry and strawberry fruits, Xmas spice and red rose petal. Light to mid-weight in style with a gorgeous expression of red cherry fruit backed by a compliment of oak. Beautiful harmony and a bright, lasting, and thirst-quenching finish. 94*

2019 Morgan Tondré Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.57, 113 cases, \$65. Clones 114 and 777. 100% de-stemmed after hand sorting. Manual punch downs. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, spice, toast and burnt tobacco. Mid-weight flavors of plum, blueberry, boysenberry and black raspberry with a touch of spice and espresso. Refreshing to drink, with a generous and very lengthy finish. 92*

2019 Morgan Boekenoogen Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.57, 119 cases, \$65. A high-altitude vineyard located at the northern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands. 100% de-stemmed grapes after hand sorting. Native yeast fermentation in open-top tanks. Manual punch downs. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Effusive aromas of cherry pie and complimentary oak. Deep cherry and raspberry flavors showing noticeable power. Some Asian spices add interest. Impressive unison with peaceful tannins and a congruent acid spine. Delivers a satisfying message on the finish. 93*

New-Found Value in Pinot Noir

Alan Meadows has been quoted as saying, “In search for great Pinot, you may not always get what you pay for, but you will never get what you don’t pay for. It is a sad fact that inexpensive, high-quality Pinot Noir is almost non-existent.”

One cannot argue with Meadows’ statement, but sometimes you are not seeking to drink an epiphany. There are times when you are looking for a Pinot Noir you can buy in quantity that is easy on the wallet, have on hand to drink with impunity in a casual setting, and not feel obligated to critique the wine or its price. Similarly, if you are a foodie, you love to partake in a gourmet meal on occasion, but there are instances when an In-N-Out burger will do just fine.

I’m always on the lookout for a solid Pinot Noir that is reasonably priced and easy to find in the marketplace. I found a few recently that fill the bill.

The Pinot Noir wines at Trader Joe’s are always a gamble but a flyer that sometimes pays off. That is because the wines are obtained from many different sources and producers, some of which are known for bulk wines and producing wines destined for grocery market shelves. I would recommend avoiding all Trader Joe’s label Pinot Noir wines priced under \$12 and only try those with a reserve series designation.

2019 Trader Joe’s Lot #79 Platinum Reserve Carneros Pinot Noir White and silver label, 14.25%, \$14.99. Artificial cork. Label says “Vinted and bottled by Carneros Cellars, Napa, CA.” a producer I cannot locate. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry and spicy oak. Mid-weight flavors of red cherry, strawberry and a shadow of oak. Decent, with silky tannins and a short finish. Leans too much on oak for my taste.* **89**

2020 Trader Joe’s Grand Reserve Lot #106 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.7% alc. \$12.99. Black label, real cork. A featured wine in Trader Joe’s Fall Fearless Flyer. Label says, “Produced by Bozzano & Co., Morgan Hill, CA. This company specializes in grape and bulk wine sourcing and sales. Wherever they sourced this wine is a mystery, but it is damn good. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Aromas of strawberry, cherry and sandalwood leap from the glass. Light in weight and elegant, but with engaging flavors that echo the nose. Gossamer tannins make for very easy drinking, the texture is refined and silky, and there is an appealing cherry-fueled finish. This is not a bombastic wine, but is tres Pinot.* **91**



2019 Sean Minor Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$16.49 at retailers such as Bottle Barn in Santa Rosa, CA. Vinted and bottled by Sean Minor, American Canyon, Napa, CA. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Easy to like, with aromas and flavors of black cherry and spicy oak. Very open and giving in a mid-weight style, picking up flavor intensity over time in the glass. More fruit and structure than the Trader Joe’s Sta. Rita Hills bottling and some may find that more appealing. Sean Minor is a reliable value-priced wine producer.* **91**



2019 Ken Wright Cellars Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., \$28 (SRP is \$43 but many grocery markets carry this wine for around \$28), plastic cork. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Several nuances on the nose including aromas of black cherry, boysenberry, earth, barn door and rose petal. Surprisingly robust and fruit-forward in a mid-weight plus style. Purple berry fruits stand out and there is a slight incursion of oak in the*

background. Creamy in texture, with some, but not extended, finish. A solid daily drinker for those looking for a lower alcohol example. 90

2019 Martin Ray Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$14.99 (Costco), screw cap. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of raspberry, baked cherry and purple grape fade in the glass over time. Middleweight flavors of black cherry and raspberry with a hint of oak. A little shallow on the mid-palate and finish but the wine's bright acidity offers some redemption. Seems to me like a de-classified wine. 89*

Starscape Vineyard, Formerly Floodgate Vineyard, Old Vine Pinot Noir

As readers know, I published an extensive article in Volume 12 Issue 8 of the *PinotFile* dated August 2020 and titled, "Drinking California Pinot Noir History from 'Old Vine' Vineyards: A Bucket List." Although I had performed extensive research, I missed including the Starscape Vineyard, formerly known as Floodgate Vineyard. I must thank Evan Pontoriero, the co-proprietor and winemaker at Fogline Vineyards in Fulton, CA., for pointing out the omission.

Try as I may, I was not able to obtain complete information on this vineyard including complete details of the original plantings, ownership and management. Here is what I know.

The current-named Starscape Vineyard is located at the south end of the Middle Reach of the Russian River Valley, adjacent to Mark West Creek, and along Trenton-Healdsburg Road in Forestville. It is near Kistler Vineyard and Ritchie Vineyard. The vineyard was planted originally in 1971-1972 to Martini (? 13 or 16) clone of Pinot Noir and named Mark West Vineyard. Apparently, Mark West had a production facility in Graton but suffered through a series of ownership disruptions. The Mark West brand, production facility and wine inventory were acquired in 2012 by Derek Benham and his brother Courtney Benham, former owners of the Blackstone brand.

The Mark West Vineyard was acquired by Bill Hambrecht in 2006, named Floodgate Vineyard, and became an estate vineyard for Alysian Wines and Floodgate Wine Company, brands started by Hambrecht and winemaker Gary Farrell in 2007. Hambrecht had owned the Floodgate Vineyard along with grower Fred Peterson in Anderson Valley. This 52-acre vineyard was sold to Goldeneye in 2003, became one of four estate vineyards for that winery, and eventually renamed the Narrows. This freed up the name Floodgate.

Bill Hambrecht needed cash to pay \$11 million in legal settlements in 2013, necessitating the sale of his prized vineyard property. Originally listed for \$17 million, it was sold in June 2013 for \$10.2 million. This selling price did not bring enough to pay off all of his debts. According to court documents, a disgruntled Hambrecht Wine Group employee who had won a \$56,263 employment judgment prior to the sale became the owner of the property including a 150,000-case winery and the Floodgate Vineyard. However, the details of the legal battle are unclear to me and records show the Floodgate Vineyard and winery were sold at a Sonoma County sheriff's auction for \$100 on May 22, 2014. The legal trail for me ends here.

When the vineyard was renamed "Starscape" is unclear. The current lessee (since 2019) and vineyard manager of the Starscape Vineyard is Chris Walden, who has worked with the vineyard at least since 2012. He did not respond for further information.

The Starscape Vineyard currently consists of 74 acres, planted from 1971-1972 to 2009. Pinot Noir clones include Martini, Swan, Pommard, and Dijon 667, 777 and faux 828. There is also Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc planted.

The most prized block in the vineyard is Block 4, the original Martini clone Pinot Noir planting. Two wineries source grapes from this block: Joseph Jewell (since 2014 and labeled "Old Girls") and Fogline Vineyards (labeled "Old Vine"). A number of other wineries have sourced Pinot Noir from Starscape Vineyard including Talisman, Cartograph, C. Donatiello, Fulcrum, and Thomas George Estate, but their wines have been confined to plantings of Pommard and Dijon clones.

www.foglinevineyards.com.

2018 Fogline Vineyards Old Vine Starscape Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 48 cases, \$50. *Light garnet color in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of cherry, pipe smoke, sandalwood and deep red rose petal. A gorgeous and complex mid-weight offering, with oodles of cherry goodness like cherry pie day at cooking school - cherry, baking spices and interesting results. Silky in texture, beautifully balanced, and very congenial for a young wine. A true old vine treasure. 94*



Uninvited But Welcome

Sometimes great Pinot just falls in your lap. Most of the Pinot Noir I currently review is wine sent to me by my invitation. Occasionally, wine will show up at me wine locker, asking to be reviewed. Here are two producers who recently followed that scrip.

Pangloss Cellars

Winemaker Erich Bradley gained notoriety with the excellent Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon wines he crafted for Sojourn Cellars in Sonoma and more recently, the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines under the Texture label. Jules Janssen is the assistant winemaker.

The brand is named after Dr. Pangloss, the eternal optimist in Voltaire's novel Candide. The lineup of varietals includes Pinot Noir, Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, a white Rhone blend, Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc. Some wines are only sold to wine club members of 'The Optimist Society,' such as the 2017 Charles Vineyard Pinot Noir reviewed here. Tasting is available daily by reservation at the Pangloss Cellars Tasting Lounge in Sonoma. Visit www.panglosscellars.com.



2017 Pangloss Cellars Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.58, 506 cases, \$40. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Inviting scents of black cherry, wax and a hint of oak. Light to mid-weight in style, with plenty of well-spiced dark cherry and berry fruits to satisfy. Very sleek and polished in the mouth showing excellent harmony and a cherry-driven finish. A very friendly wine.* **91**

2017 Pangloss Cellars Charles Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.55, 492 cases, \$50. Sourced from a 15-acre vineyard near the town of Boonville that is farmed by Bill and Nancy Charles. 100% Pommard clone. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of dark cherry, raspberry, strawberry and cardamom spice rise from the glass. Very impressive entry and mid-palate fullness in a mid-weight plus style featuring flavors of black cherry, blueberry, and boysenberry. A compliment of oak and cola pitches in. A wine that aims to please with admirable length on the generous finish.* **93**

Three Furies Wines

There is a philosophical bent to this winery's goal. The vigneron from the antipodes, Martin McKenzie, produces wines "that are a manifestation of his insatiable curiosity and quest for truth, power, and beauty in wine." His wines are "an expression of respect for the power of nature." Martin is a New Zealand native who crafted wines for Stonyridge Vineyard on remote Waiheke Island, New Zealand, for ten years before moving to California wine country in 2009 to practice his craft. Three Furies Wines is a partnership between Martin and Olin Russum.

Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are offered in limited-edition, single-vineyard releases. Current releases are Constant Vengeance Pinot Noir from the Sta. Rita Hills AVA and The Angry One Pinot Noir from Santa Lucia Highlands (The Second Fury). The third wine, Fury (The Third Fury) will be released in 2022. The winery's

mailing list membership, “The Society,” gives members the convenience of receiving three bottles of each Furies wines upon release. Visit www.threefurieswines.com.

The wines have a few special placements including The French Laundry, Torc, Sante, The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, and the K. Laz Wine Collection.

2019 Three Furies Constant Vengeance Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 120 cases, \$85. Sourced from the 35-acre Rancho La Viña Vineyard planted to Pinot Noir. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of black cherry, pomegranate, brisket, spice and a hint of espresso. A very luxurious mouthfeel is instantly agreeable. A mid-weight styled wine with a heady core of black cherry, dark raspberry and cola flavors with a subtle note of toasty oak. Nicely integrated tannins and acidity, with a quenching finish that leaves an impression. As Martin noted, “Constant Vengeance is impossible to resist,” and I agree. The wine is considerably more enjoyable several hours after opening and reaches a crescendo the following day from a previously opened bottle.* **93**



Pinot Briefs

Celebrity Wines Grate on Me In the recent past, covers of the *Wine Spectator* have included celebrities who are an owner or partner in a wine label. The lineup has included pop music star Jon Bon Jovi, star basketball player Carmelo Anthony, actor Brad Pitt and pro golfer Christie Kerr. *Wine Enthusiast* has had covers featuring model Christie Brinkley, professional basketball player LeBron James, and actor Kate Hudson. Professional basketball players who have launched their own wine brands include Dwayne Wade, Channing Frye, Amar'e Stoudemire and CJ McCollum. There are numerous other examples including former professional football player Drew Bledsoe. Basically, these big names are wine enthusiasts with plenty of money to indulge their interests, but in many cases, they are simply providing financial backing and act as ambassadors or endorsees of the brand with no significant role in winegrowing and winemaking. There is absolutely no connection between notoriety and wine quality. You won't find any celebrity Pinots in my cellar.

Garagiste Wine Festival This festival, which launched in 2011, returns to Paso Robles on November 12-13 to celebrate its 10th anniversary with two days of events, including the tasting of wines from over 50 small production wineries from California. The Garagiste Festival is the nation's first and only festival to showcase the wines of commercial, micro-production (under 1,500 cases annually) 'garagiste' winemakers. This is not a Pinot Noir festival, but some participating wineries do produce Pinot Noir. For further information, visit www.garagistefestival.com.

World of Pinot Noir The Ritz-Carlton Bacara in Santa Barbara will again be the site of the World of Pinot Noir. The 22nd annual event will be held March 3-5, 2022. Tickets go on sale on October 15 and attendance will be limited. Many of your and my favorite Pinot Noir producers will be pouring including Bernardus Winery, Black Kite Cellars, Calera, Clarice Wine Company, Etude Winery, FEL Wines, Gary Farrell, Goldeneye, Hyde Vineyard, Joseph Phelps Vineyards (Freestone), MacRostie, Maggy Hawk, Morgan, Paul Lato, Pisoni Family Vineyards, Roar Wines, Saxon Brown, Sea Smoke, Talley Vineyards, Details of guest experiences including the Grand Tastings will be announced when tickets go on sale. Visit www.worldofpinotnoir.com.



WORLD OF PINOT NOIR

2022 IPNC Next summer world-renowned Champagne and Sparkling wine producers from all over the world will participate at the 36th Annual International Pinot Noir Celebration July 29-31, 2022. This year's theme is "Through Rosé Colored Glasses" and will feature twelve highly-regarded Champagne and Sparkling wine producers in addition to over 70 of the world's finest Pinot Noir producers. Nearly 75% of the available weekend tickets have been sold. Visit www.ipnc.org.

Through Rosé Colored Glasses:

SPARKLING PINOT NOIR FROM NEAR AND FAR

July 29-31, 2022

LINFIELD UNIVERSITY CAMPUS | MCMINNVILLE, OREGON

Two New Labels from Winemaker Greg La Follette Noted veteran winemaker Greg La Follette has launched two new well-priced labels. GLF Wines offers Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier using many of his favorite sources from his Alquimista Cellars days. The 2019 GLF North Coast Pinot Noir is priced at \$28 and the 2018 GLF Van der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir is available at \$50. The second label, Marchelle Wines focuses on old vines (mostly 100 years plus) including Zinfandel, Carignan, Cinsault and Colombard (fantastic values at \$28-\$40 for old vine wine). Visit www.glfwines.com and www.marchellewines.com.

Goldridge Soil: Moon Dust Besides the fog, the most distinguishing feature of Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast vineyards is that many possess Goldridge soil, a well-draining loam that also has enough clay to retain some water. A recent article at www.winemag.com titled “Russian River’s Goldridge Soil Has the Midas Touch” details all you need to know about Goldridge soil. This is an article by Virginie Boone that I wanted to write but never got around to it. The photo below shows the Goldridge soil at Wayfarer Vineyard.



Going Overboard The new Matheson Restaurant in Healdsburg offers 130 wines by the glass, most available from self-serve dispensers. Russian River Valley Pinot Noir dominates the selection. Some wines offered are highly allocated. Wines are available by the taste, by the half glass and by the full glass, and markup is significant (those dispensers are expensive!)

Diminished, Smoke-Free 2021 Harvest in California’s North Coast The lower-than-average grape harvest is being attributed to the second year of a drought. Preliminary data (74% of Pinot Noir as of October 1) picked indicate some vineyards that need water may have yields that are down 50%. Younger vines and drought-tolerant rootstocks seem to fare better. The full report in February 2022 will tell the tale.

Rhys Sparkling Wines The current release of the 2021 Rhys Vineyards Perpetual Reserve Sparkling Wine is the inaugural bottling representing over five years of collaboration with renowned Champagne producer Rodolphe Peters of Champagne Pierre Peters. Rhys has selected reserve lots of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from several vintages at Bearwallow and Mt. Pajaro vineyards, and aged them in the cellar prior to bottling. In the tradition of Reserve Champagne. Each year new wine is added to the “Solera” or blend of all prior vintages, and a portion is bottled. The remainder continues to age until the following year when the process repeats. This methodology produces a sparkling wine with distinctive aged complexity and a great consistency of character. After lots from 2016, 2017, and 2018 vintages were combined, it was clear this was

an outstanding first Rhys Perpetual Reserve MV. In addition to the Perpetual Reserve, Rhys will offer an Mt. Pajaro Vineyard vintage Blanc de Blancs, a Bearwallow Vineyard Vintage Ultra Brut, and a Bearwallow Vineyard Vintage Rosé. All of these sparkling wines will have significant cellaring capability. Visit www.rhysvineyards.com.



Healdsburg Crush: Pouring on the Plaza Premium Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and sparkling wines from 60 participating wineries on October 17, 11:00 AM-3:00 PM. All proceeds benefit Boys & Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marin. Pouring wineries include Hirsch Vineyards, Alma Fria, Peay, Gros Ventre, Wayfarer, Banshee, Littorai, and Ernest Vineyards, General admission tickets (\$90) available at www.bigticket.com.

HEALDSBURG CRUSH

Pouring on the Plaza

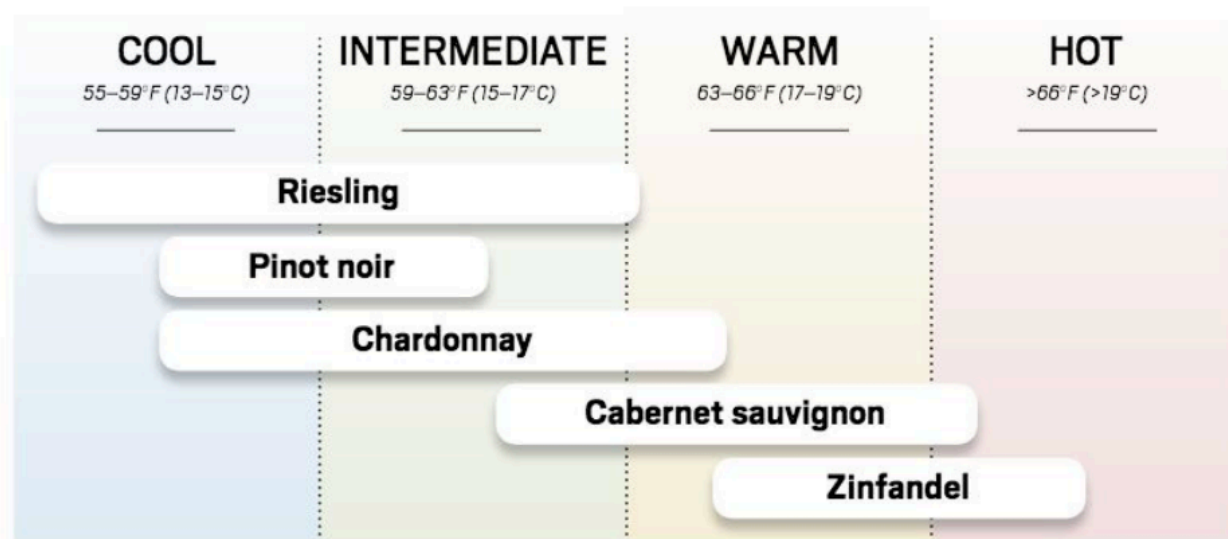
Michelin Stars Two restaurants in Sonoma County won Michelin stars in the recently announced Michelin awards: one star for Barndiva in Healdsburg and three stars for Single Thread, also in Healdsburg. Despite being open for 17 years, this is the first Michelin star for Barndiva. Barndiva has an excellent wine list that includes domestic Pinot Noir from Williams Selyem, Drew, Ceritas, Cobb, Hirsch, Littorai, Occidental, Peay, Raen, Soliste, Arista, Freeman, Porter Creek, Rhys and Melville. Besides Silver thread, only five other restaurants in California have received the same honor: The French Laundry (Yountville), Atelier Crenn (San Francisco), Benu (San Francisco), Quince (San Francisco) and Manresa (Los Gatos).

Pinot Noir in some California regions may become extinct due to global warming

Will we see large shade covers over Pinot Noir vineyards or tented indoor Pinot Noir vineyards in the future?

IN THE ZONE

Each variety of grape thrives in a specific temperature range, and pinot noir's niche is narrow.



Growing-season average temperature tolerances. Source: Gregory V. Jones