



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir*

## Pieces of Jewell Pinot Noir

This is a celebrity Pinot Noir worthy of special mention not only because it is a tribute to well-known, four-time Grammy Nominated singer-songwriter, musician, and author Jewell, but because it is an exceptionally good wine offered in a beautiful package.



The story behind the wine is of interest. Eden Estate Wines, located just west of Saratoga in the Santa Cruz Mountains is owned by John Couch. He is a highly regarded pioneering software engineer in Silicon Valley who is one of the top executives at Apple. His Italian heritage led him to embrace Cabernet Sauvignon wines enough that he purchased land at the base of Mt. Eden, established a vineyard and built a winery to focus on that varietal.

The 2020 Pieces of Jewell Pinot Noir grew out of Couch's friendship with Jewell and collaboration with Bill Brosseau. Bill is the talented Director of Winemaking at Testarossa Winery where he has crafted Pinot Noir wines that been highly touted recently in the *PinotFile*. He has overseen the production of this wine as well.

This inaugural release is sourced from the famed Rincon Vineyard owned by Talley Vineyards in the Arroyo Grande Valley. Rincon Vineyard was originally planted in 1982 but modern additions have continued. Currently, the vineyard consists of 38 acres of Pinot Noir planted to Wädenswil 2A and Dijon 115, 667 and 777 clones. The older Wädenswil plantings are on their own roots, while more recent plantings of Dijon clones in 2001 are planted on resistant rootstock. Soils are shallow loam and calcareous clay similar to the soils found in the Côte de Nuits of Burgundy. Through the years, the vineyard has buoyed legendary wines from Talley Vineyards and other premium wineries including Testarossa.

Jewell was the designer of the attractive label with each berry representing her various moods or states of mind. The wine is devoted to Jewell's success in overcoming years of challenges revealed in her book, *Never Broken*, and her foundation for inspiring children. The Inspiring Children Foundation powers the non-profit "Jewell Never Broken Program," offering at-risk youth and families in providing housing, mental health counseling, and basic essentials such as food and clothing. Visit [www.inspiringchildren.org](http://www.inspiringchildren.org) and [www.jewellneverbroken.com](http://www.jewellneverbroken.com).

This special Pinot Noir is available for sale on the Eden Estate website at [www.edenestatewines.com](http://www.edenestatewines.com). This wine will make a very welcome Christmas gift to loved ones.

**2020 Pieces of Jewell Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., \$50. Produced and bottled by Eden Estate Wines LLC, Saratoga, CA. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Beautifully perfumed with aromas of cherry reduction, spice and a hint of burnt tobacco. Light to mid-weight in style, with a gracious and refreshing core of black cherry, dark red berry, and spice flavors framed by redeeming acidity, a compliment of oak, and an earthy tone. Comforting and easy to cozy up to initially but considerably more enjoyable on day one and two after opening. A very young wine with plenty of promise and most certainly will be deserving of a higher score after 6-12 months in the cellar. A "jewel" of a Pinot Noir.* **93**

# Three Sticks Wines: The Pinnacle of California Pinot Noir

“Billy Three Sticks” was a teenage nickname given to Bill Price by his surfing buddies who teased him about his formal name, William S. Price III. They are not teasing him now, as he is the head of a vineyard and winery empire that in addition to Three Sticks Wines includes Durell Vineyard, Gap’s Crown Vineyard, Walala Vineyard, One Sky Vineyard, LUTUM, Head High Winery, and Kistler Vineyards, all under the umbrella of Price Family Vineyards & Estates. Price is currently chairman of Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery and was chairman of Kosta Browne from 2009 through 2015. He only works with distinguished winemakers and the Three Sticks wines are from exceptional estate vineyards.

Three Sticks Wines was founded by Price in 2002 with a focus on wines from the renowned 200-acre Durell Vineyard. Price bought Durell Vineyard in 1997 and now owns 130 acres of the Carneros, Sonoma Valley and Sonoma Coast portions (the vineyard has vines in three appellations) of the vineyard as a result of a divorce.

Bob Cabral joined Three Sticks Wines in 2014 as Director of Winemaking after leaving Williams Selyem. He is ably assisted by winemakers Ryan Prichard and Carl Formaker.

The four Pinot Noir wines reviewed here are part of the fall 2021 release that also includes two Chardonnays.

Three Sticks Wines are available through a mailing list allocation with the wines reviewed here sold on the winery’s website at [www.threestickswines.com](http://www.threestickswines.com). Large formats (1.5L-9L) are available. Tasting is available at the winery’s historic Vallejo-Castenada Adobe originally built in 1842 by Salvador Vallejo and now restored. A variety of curated experiences are available by reservation.

**2019 Three Sticks William James Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.48, TA 0.69, 481 cases, \$75. Released August 2021. The vineyard is located west of Sebastopol surrounded by apple orchards. The Goldridge fine, sandy loam soil, known as “moondust,” is ideal for Pinot Noir. Clones are Swan, Calera and 943, an unusual combination. 25% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 52% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Highly appealing aromas of dark cherry, cranberry, earthy flora and a hint of oak. Velvety on the palate in a middleweight style, offering giving flavors of black cherry, cola and tobacco oak. Impeccably balanced with graceful tannins and a noticeably long finish. Quintessential Russian River Valley black cherry goodness. 93*

**2019 Three Sticks Gap’s Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.66, 770 cases, \$75. Released August 2021. Clones are Swan, 115, faux 828, 667, 777 and a Rochioli selection. 25% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 56% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of black cherry, cardamom spice and sprightly herbs. Long and succulent on the palate, with an array of black cherry and berry fruit flavors. The sap grabs the palate and won’t let go. Silky and suave, with very modest tannins and an amazingly long finish. Even better when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. 94*

**2019 Three Sticks Walala Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.66, 440 cases, \$75. Released August 2021. Redwood forested location high on a hill above the town of Annapolis on the extreme West Sonoma Coast. I consider it one of my “elite” California Pinot Noir vineyards. Clones 115, 113 and faux 828. 25% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 52% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Reserved initially, but picking up interest over time in the glass, offering aromas of blue and purple berry and tilled earth. The boldest wine among the four tasted here but not imposing. Mid-weight plus in style with yummy flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, boysenberry and spice with an earthy undertone. Juicy and seamless with fine-grain tannins and a generous finish. “Great” when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. 95*

**2019 Three Sticks Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot**

**Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.67, 580 cases, \$75. Released August 2021. Diverse soils including cobble clay loam, volcanic and rocky loam. Known for Chardonnay, this vineyard has quickly gained recognition for exceptional Pinot Noir as well. Clones 115, 667, 943, Swan and Calera. 20% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Intoxicating aromas of black cherry, baking spices and cola. Easy to find superlatives for this wine that instantly enchants. Mid-weight in concentration, offering a juicy core of cherry, raspberry and strawberry fruit flavors backed by a complimentary riff of oak. Elegantly composed, with a refreshing acid spine, and a finish alive with hi-tone, spice cherry goodness. The best Pinot Noir I have ever had from this vineyard. 96*



# 2018 & 2019 California Pinot Noir to Contemplate

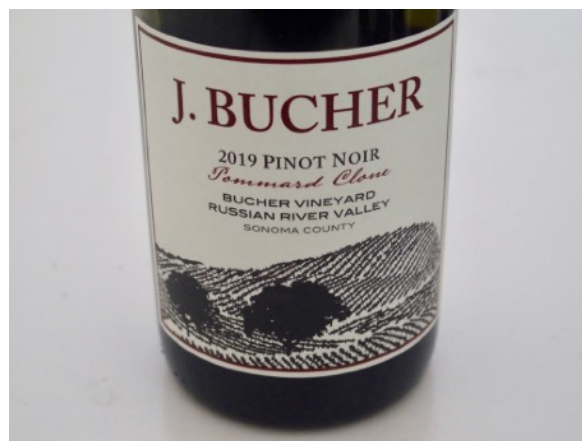
## Bucher Wines

This winery is uniquely situated adjacent to a 700-cow organic dairy on Westside Road in the heart of the Russian River Valley. John and Diane Bucher first planted a vineyard on the ranch in 1997 and the estate vineyard has now grown to 38 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Pinot Noir clones include Pommard, Swan, Mt. Eden, Jackson, Mariafeld and Dijon 115, 667, and 943. John farms the vineyard and Adam Lee, who helped launch the Bucher Vineyard line of wines in 2011, has been the winemaker ever since. An interesting side note is that John grew up with and is friends with Joe Rochioli. Tasting is available at Grand Cru Custom Crush in Windsor. The wines are sold on the website at [www.bucherwine.com](http://www.bucherwine.com).

The Pinot Noir wines from Bucher are unique in that they have an undertone of organic manure in the aroma and flavor profile. I have only experienced this in Pinot Noir from two other vineyards: Hansen Vineyard in the Russian River Valley and Pelos Sandberg Vineyard in the Willamette Valley. Presumably, this barnyard trait is related to former or nearby cow pastures. It makes for a terroir-driven signature that the drinker may or may not find appealing.

**2019 J. Bucher Bucher Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.58, 563 cases, \$45. Released October 2021. Sourced from 4 blocks in the estate vineyard and is composed of 7 clones (Pommard, Swan, Calera, Mariafeld, 37, and Dijon 115 and 943). Harvest Brix 23.9° (average). Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 20% new, 80% 1-5-year-old. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas of dark cherry, tilled earth and cow pasture. The wine is packed with darkest cherry cola flavor framed by gentle tannins, offering some persistence on the finish. There is a thread of pungent manure similar to ashen oak.* **89**

**2019 J. Bucher Pommard Clone Bucher Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.54, 114 cases, \$55. Released October 2021. 100% Pommard clone from 4 blocks in the Bucher Vineyard. Harvest Brix 24.0° (average). Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 60% new, 40% 1-2-year-old. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of earth-toned black fruits and a bit of mushroom. Mid-weight plus in a rich and bold style with waves of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors. Silky on the palate, with gentle tannins and some finishing power. The barnyard trait is barely noticeable.* **92**



**2019 J. Bucher Three Sixty Bucher Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 13.9% alc., pH 3.79, TA 0.54, 118 cases, \$65. Released October 2021. Sourced from 4 blocks on the western edge of the vineyard. Harvest Brix 23.2° (average). Clones are Swan, Pommard, Dijon 943. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 80% new and 20% 1-year-old. *Dark garnet color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of confected black cherry, sassafras, baking spices and fresh oak. Full-flavored, ripely-fruited, and full-bodied, offering flavors of darkest cherry, blueberry-pomegranate and cassis backed by modest tannins and acidity. There is only a hint of barnyard.* **91**

## CHEV

Noted winemaker Michael Browne, formerly of Kosta Browne, released his inaugural wines under the CHEV label in 2020: a 2018 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and a 2018 Russian River Valley Chardonnay. Wines are allocated to a mailing list ("Guild" members). Those that are mailing list members of Michael Browne's other winery, CIRQ (launched in 2009), are automatically added to the CHEV list. Browne bought the Russian Hills

Estate in Windsor and is revamping the vineyard, winery and tasting room as the home for CHEV and CIRQ. Visit [www.chevwines.com](http://www.chevwines.com).

**2019 CHEV Oregon Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., \$80. Fermented in 80% stainless steel open-tops and 20% in concrete open-tops. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. A complex nose offers aromas of black cherry, blackberry, baking spice, forest path and toasty oak. Discreetly concentrated core of black cherry, purple berry and spice flavors framed by integrated tannins. A tad boisterous by Oregon standards with exceptional mid-palate intensity and generous finish.* **92**

**2019 CHEV Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.6% alc., \$80. Fermented in 75% stainless steel open-tops and 25% in concrete open-tops. 5% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels 44% new (5% aged in concrete tank). *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose opens slowly to reveal aromas of dark red and black berry fruits. Refined and silky on the palate, with a mid-weight array of dark cherry and berry flavors. A solid wine that requires time to share its charms. Nicely balanced with no alcoholic warmth, a compliment of supportive tannins and an black cherry driven finish.* **93**



## Domaine Anderson

Founded by Champagne Louis Roederer in 2011, Domaine Anderson follows the same organic and biodynamic principles as the founding Champagne house. Visit [www.domaineanderson.com](http://www.domaineanderson.com).

**2018 Domaine Anderson Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** 13.2% alc., \$45. Sourced from three vineyard sites including Dach (64%), Walraven (29%) and Pinoli (7%). Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. There is a subtle green tone in this wine that reflects under-ripeness. Aromas of strawberry, cherry, spice and red rose petal. Red-fruit driven on the palate in a mid-weight style with gracious tannins and a red-cherry themed finish. Rather pedestrian and lacking in mid-palate fortitude. Less enjoyable with more oak in the forefront when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle.* **89**

## J. Cage Cellars

This boutique family winery, founded in 2014, is focused on single-vineyard Pinot Noir from premium vineyards with limited production of other varietals. Proprietors Roger and Donna Beery are from Austin, Texas and Colorado who were drawn to Sonoma County to produce wine. The couple is committed to sustainable grape farming and winemaking. The winemakers are Conch and Roger Beery and the consulting winemaker is Adam Lee. All wines are sold directly to consumers at [www.JCage.com](http://www.JCage.com). Virtual wine tasting experiences are a speciality.

**2019 J. Cage Cellars El Coro Vineyard Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.55, 125 cases, \$54. Released October 2021. Clones are faux 828, 777, 667 and a “La Tache” selection. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Upfront aromas of dark red cherry and berry, underbrush and cardamom spice. A flood of well-ripened and dark fruit floods the palate in a mid-weight plus style. An unbecoming flavor of raisin is present. Silky in texture, with minor tannins and oak in the background.* **89**

**2019 J. Cage Cellars Hallberg Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.57, 169 cases, \$54. Released December 2020. A co-ferment of equal parts Dijon 667 and 115. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of well-ripened black fruits and sweet pipe smoke. Voluptuous flavors of blackberry and boysenberry compote carry through to a generous finish that leaves behind mildly astringent tannins.* **90**

**2019 J. Cage Cellars The Wedding Block Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.51, 169 cases, \$54. Released October 2021. The Wedding Block Vineyard is located in the heart of the Russian

River Valley and is farmed by Lee Martinelli, Jr. A co-ferment of Dijon clones 777 and 115. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose offers deeply perfumed black raspberry and blackberry fruits that veer to the cooked side. There is a savory spice aroma as well. The mid-weight plus black cherry and black raspberry fruit veers to the sweet compote side. The tannins are silky, there is a compliment of oak in the background, but the wine lacks acidic verve.* **89**

**2019 J. Cage Cellars Van der Kamp Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.55, 213 cases, \$54. Released December 2020. A blend of six clones. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of dusty black cherry, rose petal, chalk and musty herb garden. A middleweight style with a juicy core of black cherry fruit. Polished in the mouth, with modest tannins and a dry, earthy finish.* **91**

**2019 J. Cage Cellars Cuvée '42 Sonoma County Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.55, 693 cases, \$42. Released July 2021. A blend of four Sonoma County vineyards. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The enticing nose offers aromas of red and black cherry, red licorice, cardamom spice and toasty oak. Crafted in a mid-weight plus style, offering vibrant flavors of dark red and black berries and black cherry. A mouthful of fruit but discreetly concentrated. Excellent harmony, with tame tannins, a sleek demeanor, and a well-fruited finish of some length.* **92**



## Lombardi Wines

The Lombardi family has a rich history of wine, food and tradition and have been in Sonoma county since 1947. Tony and Christine Lombardi founded Lombardi Wines in 2013, and together with winemaker Cabell Coursey, they craft small lots of Pinot Noir and chardonnay from prestigious vineyards in Sonoma county.

**2018 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.2% alc., pH 3.60, TA .57, 300 cases, \$48. Released November 18, 2019. Sourced from Giusti Ranch and Gunsalus Vineyard. Clones 115, 667 and 777. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, ripe strawberry and oak lead to a light to mid-weight styled wine with flavors of black cherry cola and black raspberry. Somewhat elegant with good balance but lacking a bit of mid-palate generosity. The bright, quenching finish is very satisfying.* **90**

**2019 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.54, 250 cases, \$49. Sourced from Gantz, Gap's Crown and Hill Justice vineyards. Clones are Pommard, 777, Swan, Calera and 23. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Delightful aromas of dark fruits, rose petal and peppery herbs. Judicious core of purple and black berry flavors with a soft oak shadow. Very soothing, polished texture, with modest tannins and a generous, fruit-driven finish.* **91**

**2018 Lombardi Hill Justice Vineyard Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.60, 100 cases, \$68. This 9-acre vineyard is steeply sloped and sits at 1,100' elevation on Sonoma Mountain. Swan and Pommard clones. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Reserved but pleasing aromas of blackest cherry, blackberry, spice and toasty oak. A mid-weight plus boldness with layers of boysenberry and blackberry fruit flavors framed by some noticeable but not aggressive tannins. Oak is well-integrated on the palate. A cohesive wine with saturating fruit on the finish.* **91**

**2019 Lombardi Hill Justice Vineyard Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.56, 87 cases, \$68. Swan and Pommard clones. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The fruit-driven nose offers aromas of blueberry and boysenberry. Waves of purple and black fruits greet the palate. A bold, but pleasing expression of Pinot Noir with harmonic tannins and acidity, and a very satisfying, richly-endowed finish.* **92**

**2019 Lombardi Gap's Crown Vineyard Petaluma Gap Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.58, 87 cases, \$68. 100% clone 777. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, once-used. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. A little volatile acidity on the nose blows off over time. Aromas of blackberry compote and bittersweet chocolate. Luscious black cherry and black raspberry fruits have a slight confected tone. Bold in style with a fat and silken fruit richness that cloaks the structure so the texture is sleek.* **91**



**2019 Lombardi Giusti Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.8% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.59, 100 cases, \$68. Dijon clones 667 and 777. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Frankly, the fruit in this wine is way too ripe. Overripeness is the point where dark berry flavors are transformed to flavors of dark chocolate and raisin. Beyond that, this wine is out of sorts with noticeable oak in the background, an unpleasant sweetness, and some drying astringency on the finish.* **88**

## Morgan Winery

The Double L Vineyard is the only certified organic vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands. I consider it one of California's "elite" Pinot Noir vineyards. Morgan produces an outstanding array of Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir from this estate vineyard and other nearby valued vineyards. This wine is sold on the winery's website at [www.morganwinery.com](http://www.morganwinery.com).

**2019 Morgan Double L Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., pH 3.54, TA 0.58, 507 cases, \$65. Clones 667 and 777. Certified organic grapes. Native yeast primary fermentation with 7% whole cluster. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The perfume bowled me over! Intoxicating scents of black cherry, blueberry and spice cabinet. An expressive attack of fresh black cherry fruit is annotated with anise and spice. The entry makes one sit up in their seat. Excellent cohesiveness, with a suave mouthfeel, a welcome touch of smoky oak, and a very long, cherry-fueled finish. Terrific!* **95**





# Compton Cellars: Pinot Noirs Kissed by an Angel

Matt and Tabitha Compton operate a small, family-owned boutique winery located in the town of Philomath in the southern Willamette Valley. Philomath is not on the tip of the tongue of most Pinot Noir connoisseurs, but there are two other highly-respected Pinot Noir focused wineries in the locale including Lumos Wine Company and Cardwell Hill Cellars. Philomath is located in Benton County at the base of Marys Peak, the highest point in the Oregon Coast Range, and 80 miles south of Portland. The area enjoys the mild climate of the middle Willamette Valley.



The winery was originally founded as Spindrift Cellars in 2004 but has since changed its name to Compton Family Cellars. The focus now is on Pinot Noir from special vineyards that Matt manages through his West Vine Farms vineyard management company. Besides a farmer, Matt is an experienced winemaker with well over twenty years of experience in the Oregon wine industry. As a result, the Pinot Noir wines have the handprint of an experienced grower and talented winemaker.

I last wrote about this winery in 2019 and what I said then still holds: The wines represent extremely good value, especially since I consider them equal in quality to any Pinot Noir wines currently being produced in the Northern Willamette Valley.

Tasting is offered at the winery and the wines are easily obtainable through the winery's website at [www.comptonwines.com](http://www.comptonwines.com). The three wines reviewed here are part of the winery's Old Vine Collectors Series.

These wines are true to the Pinot Noir ethos and the classic Willamette Valley style - perfectly ripened but not over-ripened fruit, modest alcohol levels, good, refreshing acidity, and elegant demeanor. All three wines were noticeably better when re-tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle and held up for another two days suggesting high quality, balance and age-ability.

**2017 Compton Alpine Cuvée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., \$34. Release planned for 2022. A blend of two dry-farmed vineyards in the Alpine area that is about 20 miles south of Compton winery: Woodhall Vineyard planted in 1976 at Oregon State University and BoVine Vineyard planted in 2008 to Pommard and Wädenswil clones. Basalt, red Jory series soils. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The nose exudes red cherry goodness with a side of spice and red rose aroma. Easygoing in a harmonious, mid-weight style, driven by cherry and raspberry fruit flavors with a shadow of oak and a mossy, forestry undertone reflecting its Alpine origins, Focused tannins and a raspberry-themed finish of some length complete the picture.* **93**

**2017 Compton Llewellyn Cuvée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.8% alc., \$34. Release planned for 2022. A blend of three vineyards located about 1-2 miles from each other: Compton Family Farms Vineyard, planted in 1998, Hoot & Howl Vineyard planted in 1986, and Mary's Peak Vineyard planted in 1977. Sedimentary soils. *Light garnet color in the glass. Wonderfully perfumed with scents of red cherry, cranberry, strawberry and spice cabinet. Juicy and bright in a middleweight style featuring plenty of unctuous red fruit flavors annotated with spice and framed by suede tannins.* **93**

**2017 Compton Mary's Peak Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., \$34. Released March 2021. This dry-farmed vineyard consists of 2.1 acres of Pinot Noir planted between 1977 and 1980 to the Wädenswil clone. Alluvial, sedimentary loam soil. *Light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry juice, balsam and earthy flora draw you in. Graceful, silky and cohesive, offering flavors of red cherry, raspberry and spice. Gentle power that packs more punch than the light color and demure composure would suggest. The gossamer tannins provide enough support and the finish has persistence without weight. There is something about Pinot Noir old vine patina that grabs at your soul.* **93**



# Briefs of Interest

**2021 Harvest Reduced in Size but of High Quality** After a disastrous 2020, it was a welcome relief for vintners that 2021 was relatively uneventful and therefore a cause of celebration for the expected high quality of the resulting wines statewide. Quantities will be somewhat limited and the reduced 2020 harvest tonnage (a 20-year low) due to wildfires means there will be less wine to go around. Finding labor to harvest the crop in 2021 had its challenges even though workers could make more than \$30 per hour. This has led more growers to turn to mechanical harvesting and it is now estimated that 90% of the wine grapes in California are picked by machines (excluding Pinot Noir!). The full 2021 Harvest Report is available at [www.wineinstitute.org](http://www.wineinstitute.org).

**Role of Biogenic Amines in Wine Intolerance Studied** New Zealand Master of Wine Sophia Parker-Thomson recently published a research paper exploring the role of biogenic amines (BAs) in winemaking, and the use of sulfur dioxide in winemaking to mitigate that issue. She concluded that addressing levels of BA could lead to some people re-engaging with wine (10% suffer wine intolerance) and argues for establishing a low BA category for wine. She believes wines with high BA levels should carry a warning. BAs are produced by lactic acid bacteria and typically cause headaches, nausea, rashes, and flushing. BA levels are highest in wines with zero and low sulfur dioxide regimes. A small addition of sulfur dioxide added to grape juice before alcoholic fermentation can make an environment that is hostile to lactic acid bacteria that produce BAs and normal winemaking techniques can then proceed. Sophia's research is important as it indicates that sulfites are a solution to wine sensitivity, rather than a source. Visit [www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz](http://www.ruralnewsgroup.co.nz).

**Moderate Drinking in Older People Protective Against Heart Disease** A Monash University study published in the *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology* is the first to study the risk of cardiovascular (CVD) events and mortality, from all causes, associated with alcohol consumption in initially healthy, older individuals. The study analyzed data for 18,000 Australian and American adults mostly aged 70 years and older. The participants were followed for an average of 4.7 years and found that there was a reduced risk of CVD events as well as a reduced risk of mortality for those consuming alcohol in moderation compared to abstainers, regardless of gender.

**Winegrower, Vintner and Attorney John M. Peterson, Jr, Passed Away** John was the owner of Peterson and Cortada Alta Vineyards in the Santa Lucia Highlands and Mansfield-Dunne Wines. He died on October 7, 2021, after a battle with cancer. Multiple wineries, including August West, Calera, Luli Wines, Loring Wine Co, Morgan, Samuel Louis Smith, Testarossa, Windy Oaks, and Wrath purchased grapes from Cortada Alta and Peterson Vineyards. Mansfield-Dunne Pinot Noir and Chardonnay were crafted by noted winemaker Ed Kurtzman. I reviewed a number of vintages (2011-2018) of Mansfield-Dunne wines: [www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2188/](http://www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2188/). Regrettably, I never met John in person but communicated with him by email on a number of occasions.

**California Represents a Huge Challenge for Oregon Wine** David Adelsheim considers the 'colonization' of Oregon, particularly the Willamette Valley, by California, to be a huge challenge to the future of the Oregon wine industry. He recently commented. Currently, about a quarter of Oregon grapes go to California to be made into wine. This is often done at low overhead, large capacity facilities with low-cost Oregon grapes being turned into low-priced wines. This should be good for consumers, right? Well, not if the consumer wants an Oregon wine that tastes like what he or she has come to love. The California version doesn't need to follow Oregon's strict labeling regulations so a Pinot Noir can be 25% Syrah, or worse. This is way too complex an issue to get bogged down in details here. But, ultimately, the Willamette Valley wine industry was built on collaboration. Growers, winemakers, salespeople work together, not brand by brand, to raise the tide for all brands. The winemakers and salespeople at the California wineries do not collaborate with the industry people in Oregon. They can afford to work on their own and show us how to do it "correctly." Obviously, this is not meant to be a diatribe against every California winery making wine from Oregon grapes. Those who make their wine in Oregon, for example, are often very collaborative and seek to produce wines in the traditional Willamette Valley style.

**Joseph Phelps Vineyards Introduces Proem** The Proem Pinot Noir wines are singular expressions from the Joseph Phelps Freestone Estate on the western Sonoma Coast. Joseph Phelps Proem

No. 1 and Proem No. 2 are from distinct blocks of the Freestone Estate. Winemaker Justin Ennis has an affinity for Swan, Calera and clone 777 Pinot Noir. He especially likes the Swan clone fruit in block 212 of Pastorale Vineyard and the same can be said for the Calera clone in block 225 in the Quarter Moon Vineyard. During the 2018 harvest, two very distinctive lots were held separate, each fermented with a larger percentage of whole cluster and a longer barrel aging regime. 2018 Proem No. 1 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$225 and 2018 Proem No. 2 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$225. Visit [www.josephhelps.com](http://www.josephhelps.com).



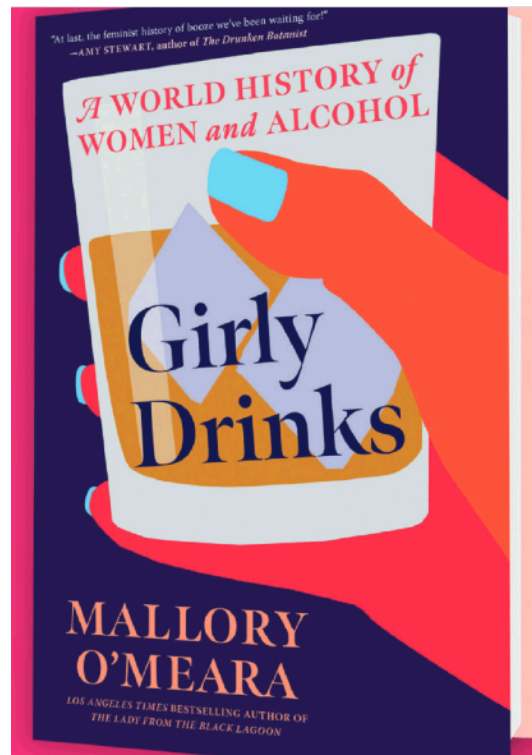
**Palm Springs Pinotfest** The second annual Palm Springs Pinot Noir Festival - A Passion 4 Pinot, will be held Saturday, January 8, 2022, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa in Palm Desert. Readers of the PinotFile can use promo code PRINCE for \$10 off an Early Entry or General Admission ticket. Visit [www.palmspringspinotfesst.com](http://www.palmspringspinotfesst.com) for a list of participating wineries and to acquire tickets.

**Heavy Wine Bottles Receive Attention at COP26** As reported in The Washington Post (November 4, 2021), reducing the weight of wine bottles can reduce the wine's carbon footprint. At the recent COP26, there was a petition gaining traction for wineries to use lighter bottles. The petition was signed by Jancis Robinson who has campaigned against heavy wine bottles for years (so have I), The production and transportation of glass bottles makes the greatest contribution to wine's carbon footprint. Besides asking for wineries to include bottle weight on tech sheets, the petition calls for a campaign to recycle glass bottles. The petition also asks wine writers to include bottle weight in wine reviews so consumers know which wineries are using light bottles.

**Focus on the Pinot Varieties** Stan Grant, a viticulturist and member of Lodi Wine Growers has published an article focusing on the pinot varieties. This is a compact treatise on Pinot Noir and its permutations. "Pinot varieties have some traits that make them unique among winegrape varieties, while at the same time there is great variability within the Pinot family." Beautiful photographs. Read more at [www.lodigrowers.com/variety-focus-pinot-varieties/](http://www.lodigrowers.com/variety-focus-pinot-varieties/).

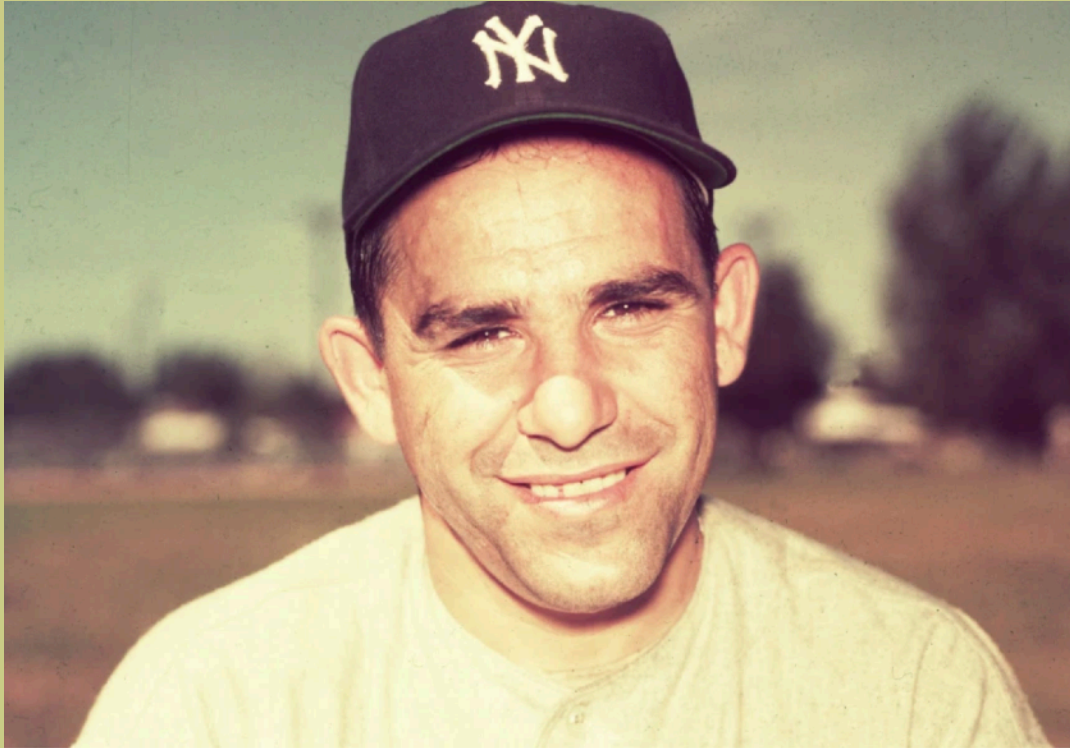
**Two New Wine Books of Interest** *Girly Drinks: A World History of Women and Alcohol*. Written by Mallory O'Meara, a distinguished *Los Angeles Times* author, this is both a pleasurable and humorous

feminist slant to the history of women and alcohol through time. Brittany Gibbons, *New York Times* bestselling author, exclaimed, "As if being a woman today isn't enough cause for a drink, O'Meara has compiled an addicting history of women and the alcohol that fills their glasses. This book left me positively inebriated with excitement about the underrated cultural footprint women have made in the world of alcohol. Cheers, ladies, this one's for you." ***On California: From Napa to Nebbiolo....Wine Tales from the Golden State.*** This is a collection of multiple essays on California's wine industry. Mike Veseth, the publisher of *The Wine Economist*, said, "The 39 essays and excerpts by 35 different authors hang together very well and make informative and enjoyable reading. The content connects the past and present with the emerging future. Well done!"



**110-Year-Old Woman Says Red Wine is Secret to Her Longevity** As reported at [www.thedrinksbusiness.com](http://www.thedrinksbusiness.com), a 110-year-old woman credits red wine among her secrets to a long life. Eileen Ash said that doing yoga twice a week and enjoying a glass of red wine helped her live and long life, although the article did not say how often she drank a glass of red wine.

**Vanessa Bryant Files Wine Trademarks** The widow of NBA icon Kobe Bryant has filed four new trademark applications under the name Mamba Vino. The filings, made on November 5, indicate that Mamba Vino-branded wine might be on store shelves soon. The 4 new trademarks: MAMBA VINO 2024, MAMBA VINO 24, MOMBA VINO 8, and MAMBA VINO. The numbers pay tribute to Bryant's jersey numbers, 8 and 24, which have been retired by the Lakers.



## If Yogi Berra Was a Wine Writer

We have come to the end of another baseball season and I thought it would be of interest to consider how baseball legend Yogi Berra might write about Pinot Noir. The former Hall of Fame catcher for the New York Yankees became known for his “Yogi-isms.”

**“If Pinot Noir were perfect, it wouldn’t be.”**

**“When I drink a great Pinot Noir, it’s deja vu all over again.”**

**“You can taste a lot by tasting.”**

**“If people don’t want to come to the winery, nobody’s going to stop them.”**

**“I didn’t really drink all the Pinot Noir I drank.”**

**“You can observe a lot by watching winemaking.”**

**“Great Pinot Noir is 90 percent vineyard. The other half is winemaking.”**

**“You better split the bottle of Pinot Noir into four parts because I’m not thirsty enough to drink six.”**

**Speaking of a new Pinot Noir release: “An overwhelming underdog.”**

**Commenting about a new popular Pinot Noir winery: “No one goes there anymore. It’s too crowded.”**

**And finally, when asked when to pick Pinot Noir: “It ain’t over ’til it’s over.”**