

# PinotFile<sup>®</sup>

The FIRST Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinot Noir

## Where To Find The Good Stuff

Finding small production collectable Pinot Noirs is a daunting task. If you are not on a winery's mailing list, you must look to the secondary retail and auction market. Wine-searcher.com is a good resource which is free (a professional version which gives you additional retail sources is \$26 a year). Winecommune.com is an auction site that features a good number of hard-to-obtain Pinot Noirs and is free to the buyer. I have also found the following internet retailers to offer a good selection of cult Pinot Noirs.

**Liquidpartyworks.com** (Southern California): Adrian Fog, Brewer-Clifton, Brogan, Drew Family, Flowers, Hansel, Kalin, Miura, Patz & Hall, Roar, Shea, Siduri, Skewis, Ken Wright.

**Wadeswines.com** (Southern California): Brogan, Castelia, Clos Pepe, Clos Saron, DuMol, Failla, Freeman, Loring, Martinelli, Sea Smoke.

**D&M, dandm.com** (Northern California): Hope & Grace, El Molino, Clos Saron, Chalone

**Cuveecellars.com** (Illinois): Belle Glos, Dehlinger, DuMol, Etude Heirloom, Iron Horse Thomas Road, La Crema 9 Barrel, Hansel.

**Greenjug.com** (Southern California): Arcadian Pisoni, Davis Bynum, Sine Qua Non, Hansel.

**Avalonwine.com** (Oregon): Beaux Freres, Bergstrom, Shea, Deponte, Forchini, many other small production Oregon Pinot Noirs.

**Whwineco.com** (Southern California): August West, Brewer-Clifton, DuMol, Hansel, Martinelli, Radio-Coteau, Williams Selyem.

**Brownderby.com** (Missouri): Calera, El Molino, Flowers, Mount Eden, Siduri, Testarossa, Thomas, Woodenhead, Ken Wright.

**Klwines.com** (Northern California): Ambullneo, Dom Serene, Porter Creek, Orogeny.

**Hitimewine.net** (Southern California): Archery Summit, August West, Domaine Drouhin, Elk Cove, Paul Hobbs, Hope & Grace, Morgan, Patz & Hall, Joseph Swan, Whetstone.

**Wineex.com** (Southern California): Broadley, Capiaux, Domaine Alfred, Failla, Gary Farrell, Lemelson, Morgan, Ojai, Rex Hill, Shea, Turjanis

**If You Drink  
No Noir, You  
Pinot Noir**

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Pop the cork on a good bottle of Pinot and enjoy some other sensuous pleasures on TV from the Big Apple— the US Open begins today.



Inside this issue:

Arcadian Winery	2
British Columbia Wine Research Center	2
Sea Smoke Cellars	3
Southpark Seafood Grill & Wine Bar	3
Alcohol Prevents Heart Attacks	4
Ortman Family	4
Mendocino Award Winners	4

## Arcadian Pinot Noir: French Artisan Style

Arcadian Winery owner Joseph Davis calls himself a winegrower rather than a winemaker because he strongly feels that great wine is made in the vineyard. He takes an active part in farming his grapes, leasing the land as opposed to simply purchasing grapes at harvest, and trying to achieve that “somewhereness” that typifies the Burgundian French artisan model. Stylistically Joseph looks to Domaine Dujac which played a critical role in his “wine epiphany” (see *PinotFile*, Volume 3, Issue 45). Arcadian has gained an international reputation for exceptionally refined and focused Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

David began his career crafting excellent Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs for Dan Lee at Morgan Winery. He started Arcadian Winery in 1996, sourcing grapes from select California Central Coast vineyards, and focusing on vineyard-designate wines. Grape quality is the number one priority and Pinot Noir yields are kept to 2-2.5 tons/acre. Winemaking is done in the traditional Burgundian method. The wines are made in Santa Maria (Central Coast Wine Warehouse) where the winery is not open except by appointment, but recently Davis opened a tasting room in the Ballard Inn on 2436 Baseline Avenue in Ballard, CA. This is a partnership with Chef/Owner Budi Kazali and is next door to Café Chardonnay. Davis can be found at the tasting room pouring his wines and sharing his passion for Pinot Noir (Tuesday-Sunday 10-5).

I had the opportunity to taste through some of the latest Arcadian Pinot Noirs, three of which I highly recommend. The style is restrained with emphasis on elegance and balance. Alcohols are in the 13.0 to 13.4 range. Excellent harvest and technical information on all wines is available on the winery’s website at [arcadianwinery.com](http://arcadianwinery.com). Wine may be purchased from the website also.

**2000 Arcadian Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** (\$75) The most deeply colored and intense of the three wines reviewed here, but not as extracted as many Pisoni bottlings from other producers. Elegant black fruit bouquet that complements the seductive Pinot flavors. Soft tannins frame a velvet finish. Give this wine some time in the glass and it becomes very pretty.

**2001 Arcadian Fiddlestix Vineyard Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir** Soft and smooth like a baby’s bottom. Enticing smoky oak nose. A cherry pie with plenty of spice. Excellent food wine.

**2001 Arcadian Gold Coast Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** (\$22) A sweet, feminine wine that still packs a lot of flavor and grip. Supple and elegant, the finish will not let go. A great value.



## British Columbia’s Wine Research Center

This Vancouver-based research center, established in 1999, has moved to the forefront of genomics research on grapes. Researchers around the world have sequenced sections of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, but the British Columbia Wine Research Center plans to advance grapevine genomics by completely sequencing the fruit, seed, and skin of the Cabernet Sauvignon grape.

Earlier this year, genomics provided the solution to the long-standing confusion over wine color. It was well established that a grape skin pigment called anthocyanin tints red wine, but why wasn’t it present in white grapes? As reported by Japanese scientists in the journal *Science*, all grapes, whether red or white, have two versions of a gene that directs anthocyanin’s production. In white grapes, both genes are mutated. Grapes with two normal genes are very dark and red grapes like Pinot Noir have one gene mutated, one normal.

The science of grape genetics will eventually solve other puzzles such as the complex interplay of genes and the environment that produce grape ripening, the genetics behind stressing a grapevine, and how hormones control terpene (molecules responsible for flavor nuances in wine) production.

## “Smoking” Pinot Noir

Richard Sanford planted his Sanford & Benedict Vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills region of the Santa Ynez Valley in 1971. The area was completely unknown then, but has quickly become one of California’s prime Pinot Noir growing areas. The Santa Rita Hills AVA straddles the Santa Ynez River west of the 101 Freeway between Buellton and Lompoc. The area’s east-west oriented hills allow for the cooling influence of the Pacific Ocean some 12 miles away and the area is one of the coolest grape-growing regions of California. Because it is a relatively new appellation, it has had the advantage of starting out with the sexy new Pinot Noir clones such as 667, 115, and 2A which gives Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noirs great structure and complexity.

After Sanford, some early settlers of the area were LaFond, Babcock and Clos Pepe. Today there are at least 30 distinct vineyards with an estimated 1,400 acres in vines. Prominent producers include Bonaccorsi, Brewer-Clifton, Casa Cassandra, Fiddlestix (a partnership between Kathy Joseph and Beringer), Foley, Foxen, Hitching Post, Longoria, Loring, Melville, Ojai, Siduri, and Taz.

One of the most visually beautiful vineyards in the Santa Rita Hills is Sea Smoke, owned by Bob Davids. Davids followed a successful career as a design consultant by establishing Radica Games, a leader in hand-held video games. He named his 100-acre vineyard after the billowing white fog that rolls through the valley. Sea Smoke is planted on a steep, south-facing slope. The soil is a mix of sand and clay called Botella. The vines here are planted to French clones on vigor-reducing rootstock. The result is small crops of tiny berries with intense flavors.

All Sea Smoke Pinot Noirs are from estate grapes. The winemaker, Kris Curran, has successfully brought the estate’s terror to life in three unique releases for 2002. The inaugural vintage, 2001, and the current 2002 vintage were sold out quickly after extremely glowing reviews in the wine press. The style of the wines is robust and ultraripe, with alcohols in the 14.5% range.

**2002 Sea Smoke Botella Pinot Noir** (\$25) The wine is named after the clay loam soil of the vineyard. 1,200 cases.

**2002 Sea Smoke Southling Pinot Noir** (\$40) Sourced from north/south rows on the south-facing hillside bluffs of the vineyard. 1,000 cases.

**2002 Sea Smoke Ten Pinot Noir** (\$56) The winery’s reserve or showcase wine, it is made from favorite barrel lots of each of the ten Pinot Noir clones on the estate. 500 cases.

A mailing list assures allocations of the wine each year ([seasmokecellars.com](http://seasmokecellars.com)), Some retail availability at Wine Club, Pacific Ranch Market (ask Phil) in Orange, and elsewhere.

## Best Short Wine List in America

The trend toward well-chosen, short wine lists is prevalent today. Restaurants that are part of this trend are pushing diners to look beyond name brands and scores for wines that sparkle with the cuisine that is offered. Southpark Seafood Grill and Wine Bar, located in downtown Portland, was awarded “Best Short Wine List in America” in the 15th Annual Restaurant Hospitality awards. Southpark has 120 wines on the list, composed of 50 different varietals. The emphasis is on “wines that complement food, rather than wines that elbow their way to the center of attention.” The wines are organized by stylistic groups rather than varietal or geographic source. Restaurant Hospitality said their wine list was “pure poetry” and “carefully chosen for their innovative pan-Mediterranean cuisine.”



Chuck Ortman was at the forefront of winemaking on the Central Coast as the founding winemaker at Meridian. Three years ago he joined his son, Matt, to begin Ortman Family Vineyards in San Luis Obispo. Working out of Orcutt Road Cellars outside San Luis Obispo, the Ortman family is crafting some beautiful Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays. They produce a Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir and have planted new vineyards in the Dundee Hills of Oregon's Willamette Valley. Their winemaking style is heavily influenced by Burgundian vintner Andrew Porcheret.

**There has been a sizable amount of solid research supporting the health benefits of alcohol, but whether red wine is the most healthy is a controversial issue. A recent study by Dr. Emanuel Rubin, a pathologist, at Jefferson Medical College, compared the effects of drinking either red wine or gin on several biochemical markers in the blood. Red wine had a much greater effect in lowering levels of substances which are hallmarks for heart disease and stroke. "Moderate drinking, that's say one, two drinks a day of alcohol, provides as much protection as the statin drugs. It's a third reduction in heart attacks and alcohol is a lot cheaper," said Dr. Rubin. He believes it is prudent for doctors to recommend to patients after a certain age that one to two drinks a day with meals is actually good for you.**

## 2004 Mendocino Wine Competition

The value of medals at major wine competitions is somewhat diminished by the generous number of awards extended to entered wines. At the recent Los Angeles County Fair Wine Competition, 60% of the entries collected an award of some sort. At this year's San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, 78% of the 2,500 entries garnered awards. The large number of awards is in part due to the competition organizers who want to keep the wineries interested and involved and in part to the high quality of the entered wines. Generally, bronze awards are the most numerous and are not distinguished wines.

At the recent 2004 Mendocino Wine Competition in Philo, 52 wineries and 200 submissions were judged. The criteria for entry is that the wine must be made from grapes grown in the Mendocino appellation. The sweepstakes winner was the 2003 Navarro Gewurztraminer, Anderson Valley Estate Bottled. Of the 30 Pinot Noirs entered, the following entries were given gold medals: Handley Cellars 2002 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$16), Londer Vineyards 2002 Parabol Pinot Noir (\$45), and the 2002 Navarro Vineyards Anderson Valley Methode L'Ancienne (\$22). A double gold was awarded to the 2002 Surprise Valley Ranch, Shandel's Openlander Vineyard Mendocino Pinot Noir (\$30).

A recent tasting by the *San Francisco Chronicle* wine panel of 39 Mendocino Pinot Noirs recommended the same four gold medal winners as the 2004 Mendocino Wine Competition plus: 2000 Claudia Springs Mendocino Pinot Noir (\$18), 2001 Dunnewood Mendocino Pinot Noir (\$9), 2001 Elke Donnelly Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$24), 2001 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$48), 2001 Greenwood Ridge Eye of Dragon Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir (\$25), 2002 MacPhail Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$35), 2002 Migration Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$26) (a panel favorite), 2002 Navarro Vineyards Deep-End Blend Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$39), 2001 Organic Vintners California Collection Mendocino Pinot Noir (\$15), 2001 Pacific Star Langley Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, 2002 Raye's Hill Estate Bottled Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$26), 2001 Skewis Demuth Vineyard and Floodgate Vineyard Pinot Noirs (\$45).