



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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My
Paramour*

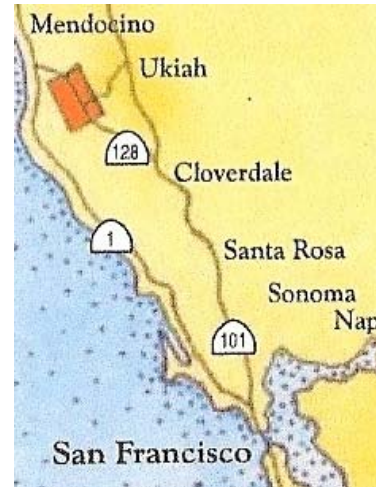
Anderson Noir Valley



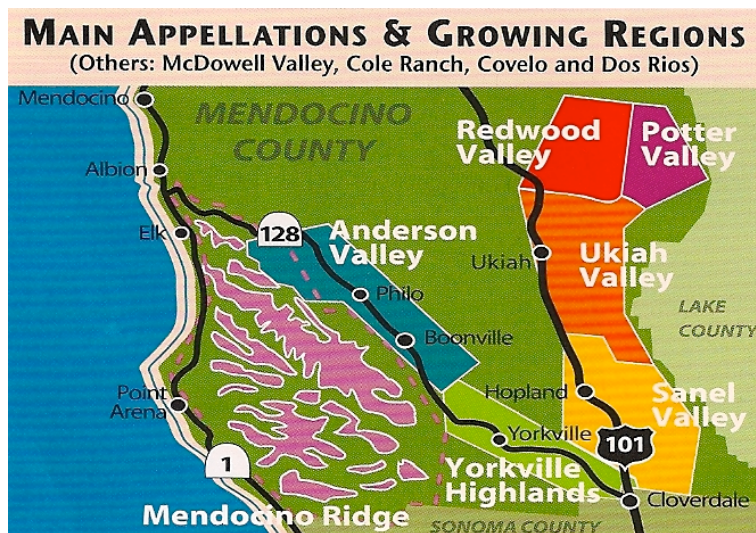
Anderson Valley will never rival its southerly neighbor, the Russian River Valley, for notoriety. Retirees and urban refugees with money seeking the wine lifestyle won't find the creature comforts here. There is no restaurant scene, spa or high-end lodging. The local inhabitants discourage tourism, calling intruders "wine-and-cheese gentry." Their worst fear is that this bucolic valley might become a destination wine region. The locals' disdain for city people is reflected in the unique language of the Anderson Valley known as boontling, which refers to visitors as "brightlighters." Despite this indigenous aversion to outsiders, the pinotophile cognoscenti have descended on the Anderson Valley, reveling in the magnificent Pinot Noirs that are threatening to make this slow lane region a wine lover's paradise. Pinotphiles are a determined group, addicts if you will, looking for that next fix of Pinot Noir and rarely deterred by a challenge. They will travel anywhere to find what Adam Lee of Siduri Wines calls "true-believer" wineries that produce Pinot Noir because "it is the true enological love of their lives."

Anderson Valley is one of eleven grape-growing appellations in Mendocino County, California, but is the most uniquely suited to growing that insolent grape, Pinot Noir. Plantings of Pinot Noir in Mendocino County (2,204 acres) are overshadowed by Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon and rank fifth among the other major Pinot Noir growing regions of California (Sonoma, 10,192 acres, Monterey, 7,123 acres, Santa Barbara, 4,140 acres and Napa, 2,756 acres). The average price per ton for Mendocino Pinot Noir ranks fourth in the state at

\$2,486, trailing Sonoma (\$3,168), Santa Barbara (\$3,106), and Napa (\$2,588), and exceeding Monterey (\$1,842). Exceptional Anderson Valley Pinot Noir vineyards can command up to \$6,000 per ton.



Anderson Valley is located between mile marker 9 and 50 on Highway 128, 120 miles north of San Francisco. It is a relatively isolated area mostly less than a mile across with 1,000+ foot mountains on both sides. The valley floor is about 18 miles long and opens on its northern end to the Pacific coast by way of the Navarro River Canyon. At this most northerly portion of the Anderson Valley, the Pacific Ocean is but a 15 mile twisting drive away. The resulting marine influence allows morning fog to roll into the valley and gentle breezes to enter in the afternoon. A gradient is created, with the northern end, referred to by locals as “down-valley,” or the “deep end,” receiving more rain and fog and thus being cooler, and the southern more inland portion, or “upper-valley,” being typically 8-10 degrees warmer. The valley’s vineyards and wineries are clustered along the fringes and rolling hills adjacent Highway 128, which bisects the valley in a south to north direction, with a majority of the vineyards located down-valley. Along Highway 128, the vineyards begin at the town of Boonville, continue north through Philo, and end in the tiniest hamlet of the three, Navarro, population 67.



Most visitors access the Anderson Valley by way of Highway 128 as it departs westward from Highway 101 at Cloverdale, 80 miles north of San Francisco (Confusingly, Highway 128 east is approached first heading north and takes you to Guerneville). Once on Highway 128 west, the traveler enters a pastoral land of great beauty, the pulse slowing with each mile traversed, assuming you don’t meet with any timber trucks barreling south on

the narrow two-lane highway. The world of roadside McDonalds and gas stops is left behind, replaced by a countryside laced with lichen-covered oaks, towering redwoods, ramshackle old barns, and calmly grazing sheep and cows. The smell of skunks and hay fills the air. In 30 minutes, Yorkville appears, the town center of the Yorkville Highlands AVA. There are 22 vineyards here planted to 21 different wine grape varieties primarily at higher elevations between 1,000 and 2,200 feet. Cabernet Sauvignon is most suitable for this warm region where the vineyards, all family run, average 18 acres each. There are a few microclimates suitable for Pinot Noir in Yorkville Highlands, notably the Weir Vineyard at mile marker 43.3 farmed by owners Bill and Suki Weir. About 50 acres of Pinot Noir total are planted in the Yorkville Highlands. After leaving Yorkville and another 15 minutes of driving, the township of Boonville appears, the so-called "center of activity" in the valley. About 3,000 people are scattered throughout the Anderson Valley, a fourth of them calling Boonville home.

Boonville is known as "Boont" in the unique local language of Anderson Valley known as boontling. In the 1800s, this code-like dialect became the spoken word for many of the valley residents. The exact origins are unclear, but many attribute the derivation to the mothers and children who worked in the hop fields that were prevalent in the valley at the time. The isolation of the valley and the distrust of visitors fostered the language. Terms included: "Boont Region" (Anderson Valley) "bawl seep" (lovers of wine), "bawl hornin" (good drinking), "Fрати" (wine - Mr. Frати was a local vineyard owner), "Fрати shams" (wine grapes), "backdated chuck" (someone who is behind the times) and "Boontners" (speakers of Boontling). Many of the words were derived from other languages including Scottish, Irish, Spanish and the dialect of the Pomo Indians who were the original Native American settlers of the Anderson Valley. Today, fragments of boontling persist as slang terms.



Native American: Pomo, (Photograph), Retrieved May 21, 2009, from Britannica Student Encyclopedia: <http://student.britannica.com/elementary/art-85132>

Among the first white settlers in the Anderson Valley were the Anderson family who arrived in 1851. Walter Anderson planted the first apple trees in the valley and this became an agricultural staple. Hop fields became ubiquitous and a thriving sheep and timber industry developed. The 1960s brought an influx of hippies who were drawn to the beauty and isolation of the valley. They fostered an illicit marijuana enterprise which to this day remains the biggest grossing agricultural product in the valley, exceeding wine grape growing. During the 1970s and 1980s, urban escapees, so-called "back-to-the-landers," bought ranches and replaced apple orchards with vineyards. This movement continues at a slow pace to this day. The latest newcomers to the valley are Mexican laborers valued for their work in the vineyards. Olives are the newest crop and several olive oil producers including well-regarded Stella Cadente have appeared.

The history of winegrowing in Mendocino County is linked most closely with Parducci (the oldest modern winery in the region dating to 1931) and Fetzer (dating to the late 1960s), both of whom flooded the market through the years with wines of reliable value from the warmer areas of Mendocino County outside the bounds of the Anderson Valley. The history of viticulture in the Anderson Valley goes back to the Italian immigrants who arrived from San Francisco and successfully raised grapes above the valley along the Greenwood Ridge in what is now the Mendocino Ridge AVA. The immigrants favored Zinfandel, Muscat, Malvasia and Palomino.

The DuPratt Vineyard, planted in 1916 on Mendocino Ridge is still viable. In the 1940s and 1950s, attempts to grow grapes in the valley by Asti, Goodhue and Pinoli were largely unsuccessful due to problems with ripeness and frost. The modern history of winegrowing in the Anderson Valley is linked to four names: **Edmeades, Husch, Lazy Creek** and **Navarro**.

In 1963, Dr. Donald Edmeades, a cardiologist from Pasadena, California, bought the Nunn Ranch, consisting of 108 acres of grazing and orchard land north of Philo. He planted 24 acres of grapes excluding Pinot Noir in the late 1960s. The locals were quite skeptical and Edmeades, in good humor, put up a sign on Highway 128 that read, "Edmeades' Folly." In truth Edmeades had carefully researched the potential for grape growing in the Anderson Valley and had been visiting the region on vacations since the 1950s. The University of California Davis viticulturists had completed a survey of the climate of the valley at the time and classified it primarily as Region I (up to 2,500 degree days), ideal for cool-climate grapes. Edmeades was successful growing Chardonnay and Gewürztraminer, and supplied Parducci and Seghesio for nearly ten years. In 1972, the Edmeades winery and label was launched but both Donald and his wife passed away from cancer just after his winery was built. His son Deron took over and crafted the first vintage. Edmeades, which was acquired by Kendall-Jackson in 1988, achieved notoriety with Zinfandel but was never a major player in the Pinot Noir game in the valley.

The first Pinot Noir planted in the Anderson Valley was at Husch Vineyards in 1968. Founder Wilton (Tony) Husch had been exposed to Pinot Noir by John Parducci and after acquiring the 60-acre Nunn Ranch halfway between Philo and Navarro, selected a 3-acre parcel of the Husch estate known as the Knoll block. According to John Haeger (*North American Pinot Noir*, p 309), the original plantings were taken from Wente's Arroyo Seco vineyard. In 1971 the first crop was harvested, and the back room of the Nunn Ranch house, built in 1920, became the first modern winery in the valley. Long time vineyard manager, Al White, arrived in 1973. As Al recounts his first harvest at Husch in 1974, clearly vineyard management was archaic at the time. The vines were planted with 8' by 12' spacing with overhead irrigation. Trellising was minimal and no leaf pulling was done. Rain at harvest was a problem and with it came mold for which there was little suitable treatment. The grapes were picked to apple boxes at a very casual pace over several days by a hippie crew. The Knoll block is still producing Pinot Noir, but was interplanted with Dijon 667 clone in 2001 and transformed by modern viticultural practices. Tony Husch sold the property in 1979 and there have been a string of winemakers and owners since then.

The third noteworthy modern winegrowing pioneer in the Anderson Valley was a restaurateur from San Francisco, Johann Kobler and his wife Theresa. They bought the 20-acre Lazy Creek Vineyards in 1969 from the Pinoli family who started their farm in Philo in the early 1900s. According to the Anderson Valley Historical Society, Joe Pinoli had the first bonded winery in the valley in 1911 and planted the first vineyards on the valley floor. The Pinolis had more success with fruit orchards than vineyards. Kobler was able to revitalize the vineyards and built a small winery in 1973. He had success with both Pinot Noir and Gewürztraminer. Josh and Mary Beth Chandler acquired Lazy Creek Vineyards in 1999 and carried on the tradition admirably until 2008 when they sold the estate to Ferrari-Carano. Ferrari-Carano continues to manage Lazy Creek Vineyards as a separate winery and label.



Ted Bennett was a successful businessperson when he and his wife, Deborah Cahn, left San Francisco in 1973 and bought a 900-acre sheep ranch along Highway 128 between Philo and Navarro. They were Alsatian grape aficionados and initially only planted white varieties beginning with their first plantings in 1974. Pinot Noir came later and today they have 31 acres of estate Pinot Noir and source additional Pinot Noir from other Anderson Valley vineyards. Their marketing prowess was largely responsible for Anderson Valley's recognition among wine enthusiasts. They built a welcoming tasting room and regularly sent out an informative newsletter that led to considerable consumer-direct sales. The second generation, Aaron and Sarah Cahn Bennett, are actively involved in the winery today. The long time gray-bearded winemaker is Ted Klein, who can easily be confused in appearance with owner Ted Bennett. Today, their lineup of quality wines is impressive and includes Gewürztraminer, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Muscat, Syrah, Zinfandel and Pinot Noir (three bottlings including Anderson Valley, Méthode a l'Ancienne and Deep End Blend). Navarro Vineyards & Winery has broken ground recently on a second winery located in Boonville and are adding new plantings nearby.

Although the Edmeades, Husch, Lazy Creek and Navarro wineries laid the groundwork for success, Anderson Valley's validation as a premium grape-growing area was firmly established by two sparkling wine producers, Roederer Estate in the early 1980s and subsequently Schraffenberger. Still, the public's perception of Anderson Valley wines has lagged primarily due to the small number of wineries, the sale of large amounts of grapes to wineries located in Napa and Sonoma with more visible profiles, and the anti-tourism and anti development attitude that is prevalent among the residents of the valley. The paucity of lodging and creature comforts have prevented the Anderson Valley from becoming a wine destination and many visitors to the valley simply pass through on their way to the Mendocino Coast, stopping only at a few visible winery tasting rooms on Highway 128.

Some have compared the Anderson Valley to Oregon's Willamette Valley which is similarly largely rural and not overwrought by tourism. Both climates fall into the coolest Region I, with Oregon being cooler at 1,924 Celsius degree-days compared to Anderson Valley at 1,900 to 2,300 Celsius degree-days (Burgundy is at 1,982 Celsius degree-days). Rainfall is almost identical in the two regions, averaging about 40 inches annually. In addition, Anderson Valley wines bear more resemblance to those from the Willamette Valley than to other California appellations, and as a result, the Anderson Valley has been dubbed "Baja Oregon." The structural elements, that is the tannins and acidity of Pinot Noir from the Anderson and Willamette Valley, are closely aligned with Burgundy. What distinguishes Anderson Valley from Oregon is the heavily marine-influenced climate. The Willamette Valley is largely protected from the Pacific coast by its Coastal Range of mountains, but the proximity to the Pacific Ocean at Anderson Valley's deep end leads to the frequent intrusion of afternoon ocean breezes and evening fog, resulting in a temperature moderating effect most prominent in the summer. As the sun goes down, warm days give way rapidly to very cool evenings resulting in marked diurnal variation (a midday temperature of 82 degrees might give way to a nighttime temperature of 45 degrees). This allows the grapes to accumulate acidity and retain it. The downside is that nighttime cold snaps can create frost damage to vines. The 2008 vintage year was marked by the worst series of frosts in April since the early 1970s. Flower damage on primary buds from last year are shown below right compared to a healthy vine from Handley Cellars this May.



While both Oregon and the Anderson Valley began plantings of Pinot Noir about the same time in the mid 1960s, Oregon's quicker ascent to success can be largely attributable to the clones that were planted. While Oregon was committed initially to Pommard and Wädenswil clones, both of which turned out to be quite appropriate for the Willamette Valley climate, Oregon had the advantage of earlier and widespread plantings of the cool-climate Dijon clones. Anderson Valley was primarily planted to California heritage and sparkling wine



clones initially. The Dijon clones, which are earlier ripening and often more suitable to the climate in Anderson Valley, came later. The Anderson Valley has had to catch up, but today as newer plantings of Dijon clones are reaching significant maturity, the Pinot Noirs are fulfilling the promise of "bawl hornin"

Besides Pinot Noir, the Anderson Valley is perfectly suited for Alsatian varieties such as Pinot Gris, Riesling and Gewürztraminer. Each year the Anderson Valley hosts an International Alsace Varietals Festival in February. Chardonnay can also shine in the Anderson Valley and is an important component of the region's sparklers.



Mendocino Ridge

Mendocino Ridge is a newer American Viticultural Area winning approval in 1997, yet has some of the oldest producing vineyards in Mendocino County. The first plantings, primarily Zinfandel, were established by Italian immigrants and date to the late 1800s. Today, Zinfandel is still the pride of this AVA, but the area holds promise as California's newest "hot spot" for Pinot Noir.

The Mendocino Ridge AVA is a non contiguous trio of ridges that it is defined by vineyards at least 1,200 feet or more in elevation and within 10 miles of the Pacific Ocean. It is California's first and only non contiguous AVA. Because of the hilly terrain of the AVA some lower elevations are not included, fostering the name, "Islands in the Sky." This catchy name is trademarked by Dan Dooling, owner of Mariah Vineyards, and one of the winegrowers along with Steve Alden of Perli Vineyard to successfully achieve appellation status for the region. The ridge is a twisting 12 mile uphill westward drive along Greenwood Road from the Anderson Valley floor. Refer to map on page 2.

The climate is different from the Anderson Valley below. Perched above the fog and frost threat, the vineyards bask in the early morning sun, and early afternoon breezes cool down the fruit, never allowing the temperatures to rise as high as the valley below. The diurnal variation during the growing season is significantly less than the valley below (20 degrees versus 40 degrees). There is enough rainfall and ground water to dry farm vineyards. According to winemaker Van Williamson of Edmeades, "Mendocino Ridge grapes produce wines intense in fruit, high in acidity and structured for aging in the cellar."

The first winery in the AVA was Greenwood Ridge Vineyards in 1980 (their tasting room is in the Anderson Valley below). The original Greenwood Ridge Vineyard was planted by Tony Husch in 1972 and was acquired in 1973 by Greenwood Ridge owner Allen Green. Other Pinot Noir plantings include Manchester Ridge Vineyard (19 acres of Pinot Noir and 11 acres of Chardonnay), Perli Vineyard (6.5 acres of Pinot Noir) and Sky High Vineyard. Other wineries producing Pinot Noir in the Mendocino Ridge appellation include Baxter Winery, Drew, and Phillips Hill Estates. Wineries sourcing fruit from the Mendocino Ridge AVA include Arista (Perli Vineyard), Ferrari-Carano (owners of Sky High Vineyard) and Auteur, B. Kosugi, J. Jacamon, Marguerite Ryan Cellars, Tandem (all Manchester Ridge Vineyard).

I have had spectacular Pinot Noirs from Manchester Ridge Vineyard. Greg La Follette, former winemaker at Flowers, commented on the first Pinot Noir harvested from Manchester Ridge in 2005 and said, "...this vineyard is bound to be another Flowers Camp Meeting Ridge - even better." The vineyard is pictured below from the Manchester Ridge Vineyard website at www.manchesterridge.com.



2009 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival

Once a year, Anderson Valley opens its arms to pinot aficionados and stages its annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival. This year marked the 12th annual Festival, held on a sunny weekend May 15-17, 2009. The event began informally 17 years ago with winery open houses, but was formalized into a festival in 1997. It has increased in popularity in step with the meteoric rise in quality of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir over the last several years and this year's celebration of Pinot Noir was sold out with over 700 people in attendance. Held each year the third weekend in May, the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival is sponsored by the Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association.

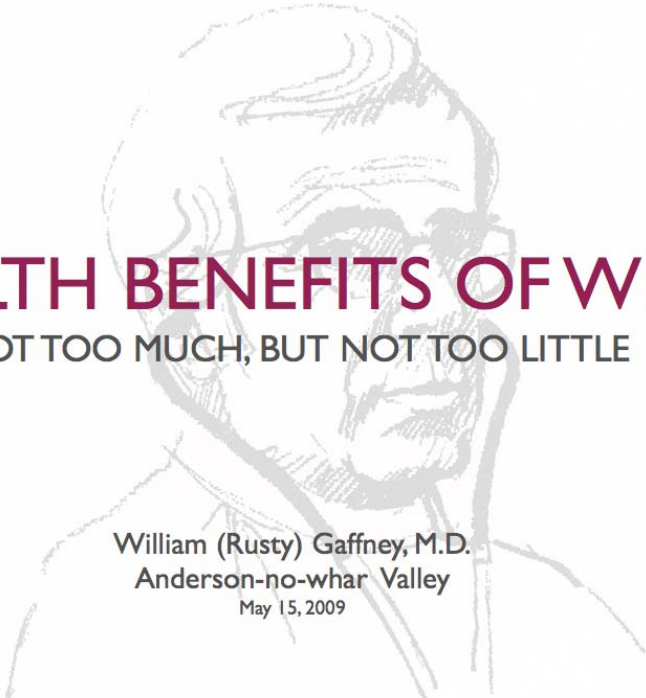


The Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival is one of my favorite annual Pinot Noir events. Each year I look forward to attending, attracted by the casual, country fair atmosphere, the delectable local artisan food, the warmth and passion of the local winegrowers and winemakers, the cheerful organizers, and the superb Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs which have become world-class.

The event kicked off on Friday, May 15 with the Technical Conference at the Mendocino County Fairgrounds Apple Hall in Boonville. I was honored to give a presentation titled, "Health Benefits of Wine: Not Too Much But Not Too Little." This program is available for listening on the website.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF WINE

NOT TOO MUCH, BUT NOT TOO LITTLE

A faint, light-colored sketch of a man's face, likely William (Rusty) Gaffney, M.D., is visible in the background of the text.

William (Rusty) Gaffney, M.D.
Anderson-no-whar Valley
May 15, 2009

Saturday, May 16, turned out to be toasty (flirting with 95 degrees) at Goldeneye's Confluence Vineyard where the Grand Tasting of over 40 producers of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir was held under the big tent. As a reggae band played in the background, visitors downed some great juice, renewed friendships and found some new producers to follow. Interviews with several Anderson Valley winemakers are available for listening on website.



Before the Grand Tasting, a press tasting was offered in the Goldeneye Tasting Room featuring the latest releases from 31 producers of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. This was a special opportunity to spend some time with each of the wines and critically evaluate them. My tasting notes are featured in the following pages. In addition, I have included tasting notes on many other Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs that I have recently sampled in my usual manner.



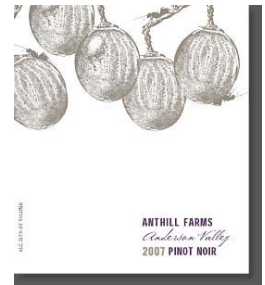
Anderson Noir Valley Pinot (Pt I)

With few exceptions, most of the 2006 and 2007 vintage Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs are priced in the \$40 to \$60 range. In many cases, the hefty tab is justified by the ultra-premium quality. There are a few exceptional value-priced wines under \$30 (see Husch, Greenwood Ridge, La Crema). The standouts at the pre-Grand Tasting press event were the 2007 Black Kite Cellars River Turn, 2007 Couloir Roma's Vineyard, 2007 Drew Monument Tree Vineyard, 2006 Elke Donnelly Creek Vineyard, 2007 Foursight All-In Charles Vineyard, 2007 Greenwood Ridge, 2007 La Crema, 2007 Navarro Deep End Blend, 2007 Phillips Hill Corby Vineyard, and the 2006 Woodenhead Wiley Vineyard. The overall quality of the entire lineup of Pinot Noirs was impressive, especially the wines from the stellar 2007 vintage. The winemaking is impressive but it is the soils and climate of the Anderson Valley, the terroir, that is at work here. As Dirk van der Niepoort recently said, "While 'good' wines are 50% terroir and 50% winemaking, 'great' wines owe far more to terroir."

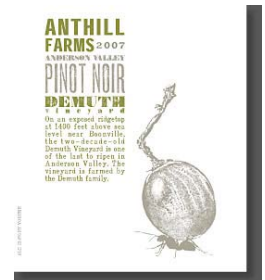
Anthill Farms This outstanding producer of Pinot Noir owes its heritage to Williams Selyem Winery. Three young Pinot amigos, who had worked together as cellar hands at the Williams Selyem Winery, launched their own winery with three Pinot Noir releases in 2004. Anthony Filiberti grew up in Sonoma County and was lured to wine at an early age. He developed his winemaking skills at Bergstrom Winery in Oregon, Hafner Vineyards in the Alexander Valley before a stint at Williams Selyem. David Low grew up in Kansas but became hopelessly hooked on wine while attending University of California Berkeley. His winemaker experience came from both Williams Selyem and Papapietro Perry and is now the winemaker at Papapietro Perry. Webster Marquez grew up on the East Coast and attended college in Virginia. He began his career at Jefferson Vineyards in Virginia before moving to Sonoma County to join Williams Selyem. Currently he is the winemaker at C. Donatiello on Westside Road in the Russian River Valley. The three have dedicated their wines to growers, picking the name Anthill Farms to emphasize the many tiny individual vineyards that form "the link between place and product." They source grapes from North Coast vineyards in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. The winery is located in Healdsburg where they receive visitors for tasting by appointment (707-490-5191). This young winery has impressed from the start and I am a loyal fan. All the wines reviewed below are beautifully crafted and tasted superb from an opened bottle the next day.



2007 Anthill Farms Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$33. *Lightest in color of the 2007 lineup. A tasty wine driven by black cherry aromas and flavors with admirable finesse and good grip on the dry finish. Drinking nicely now. Not extraordinary, but very decent.*

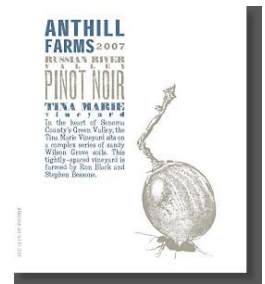


2007 Anthill Farms Demuth Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$42. This vineyard sits at 1,500 feet on a ridge above Boonville. Originally planted by the Demuth family and now owned by the Knez family, the vineyard is 20 years old. Wädenswil and Pommard clones. Yields were less than one ton per acre. *Brooding and restrained aromas of dark fruits, toast and spice. Packed with sappy dark stone fruit with a faint vein of citrus in the background and sporting flamboyant tannins. Still closed and unyielding. A well-endowed wine with great cleavage that, given enough time, will be the best wine in the 2007 lineup. Match now with full-flavored food.*

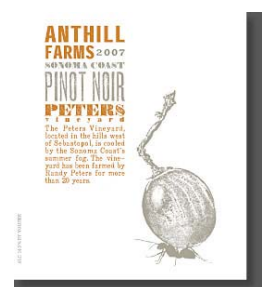


Other wines

2007 Anthill Farms Tina Marie Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$46. From a Green Valley vineyard farmed by Ron Black and Stephen Bessone. Yields were two tons per acre. *This wine sports the ripest fruit in the lineup. Alluring perfume of black cherries, root beer, vanillin and subtle spices. Rich and well ripened Bing cherry fruit with a touch of cola and oak. Elegant and harmonious with gossamer tannins and a mild grip of citrus peel on the finish.*



2007 Anthill Farms Peters Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., \$42. This vineyard is located in the hills west of Sebastopol and has been farmed by Randy Peters and his father-in-law, Tom Mukaida for over 20 years. The clones are Pommard and Dijon 777. Yields were less than two tons per acre. *This wine smells of the earth with added notes of cherries, berries and some oak. Picks up intensity in the glass becoming more fruity and adding Indian spice over time. A diaphanous and silky wine that carries the earthy aromas and spice through to the finish with citrus in the background. Primarily cherry flavored with lively acidity creating a tart finish. The wine picks up intensity in the glass which is always a good sign of longevity.*

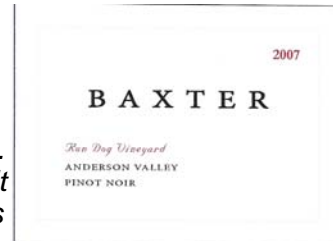


Baxter Winery Phil Baxter has been making wine commercially since 1969 when he began his career with Bill Bonetti of Charles Krug Winery. His son, Phil Baxter, Jr., studied winemaking at University California Davis and worked in Burgundy at Domaine de la Vougeraie. In 2003, father and son started the Baxter label to concentrate on single vineyard Pinot Noirs. Phil Baxter, Jr. is also the winemaker at Jim Ball Wines in the Anderson Valley since the 2008 vintage. The Baxter Farm is located in the Mendocino Ridge AVA close to Greenwood Ridge Vineyards. The website, www.baxterwinery.com, needs updated information. Two vineyard sources for 2004 and 2005 were Oppenlander Vineyard and Toulouse Vineyard. The winery added the River Run Vineyard and Henneberg Vineyard, both in Anderson Valley in 2006, and the 2007 vintage of the River Run Vineyard Pinot Noir is scheduled to be released in September, 2009. This producer is on mark and deserves your attention. The wines are sold through a mailing list at www.baxterywinery.com with some retail distribution.

2005 Baxter Winery Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 150 cases, \$45. This vineyard has a southwestern exposure on slopes near Philo. Below the coastal fog in the morning, the vineyard has plenty of warmth midday. Whole berry fermentation, small open top tanks, hand punch downs.

Pleasant aromas of black cherries, raspberries, marzipan and oak smoke with a hint of alcohol peaking out as the wine warms in the glass. A mid-weight wine with a soft and tasty core of dark cherries and raspberries that are nicely spiced with a hint of citrus in the background. Very smoothly textured with soft and supple tannins.

2007 Baxter Winery River Run Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 75 cases, \$45. This vineyard is just under one acre and sits on the northwestern edge of Boonville. Pommard 5 clone. Yield 1.5 tons per acre. 5 day cold soak, whole berry fermentation, native yeast, 18 days on the skins, unfiltered. *Moderately deep reddish-violet color. A woody and nutty nose featuring cherry fruit. An earthy wine with some notable minerality enhancing the raspberry and cherry fruit flavors augmented by a subtle note of citrus with a little heat on the finish. Generous acidity, mild tannins and admirable finesse.*

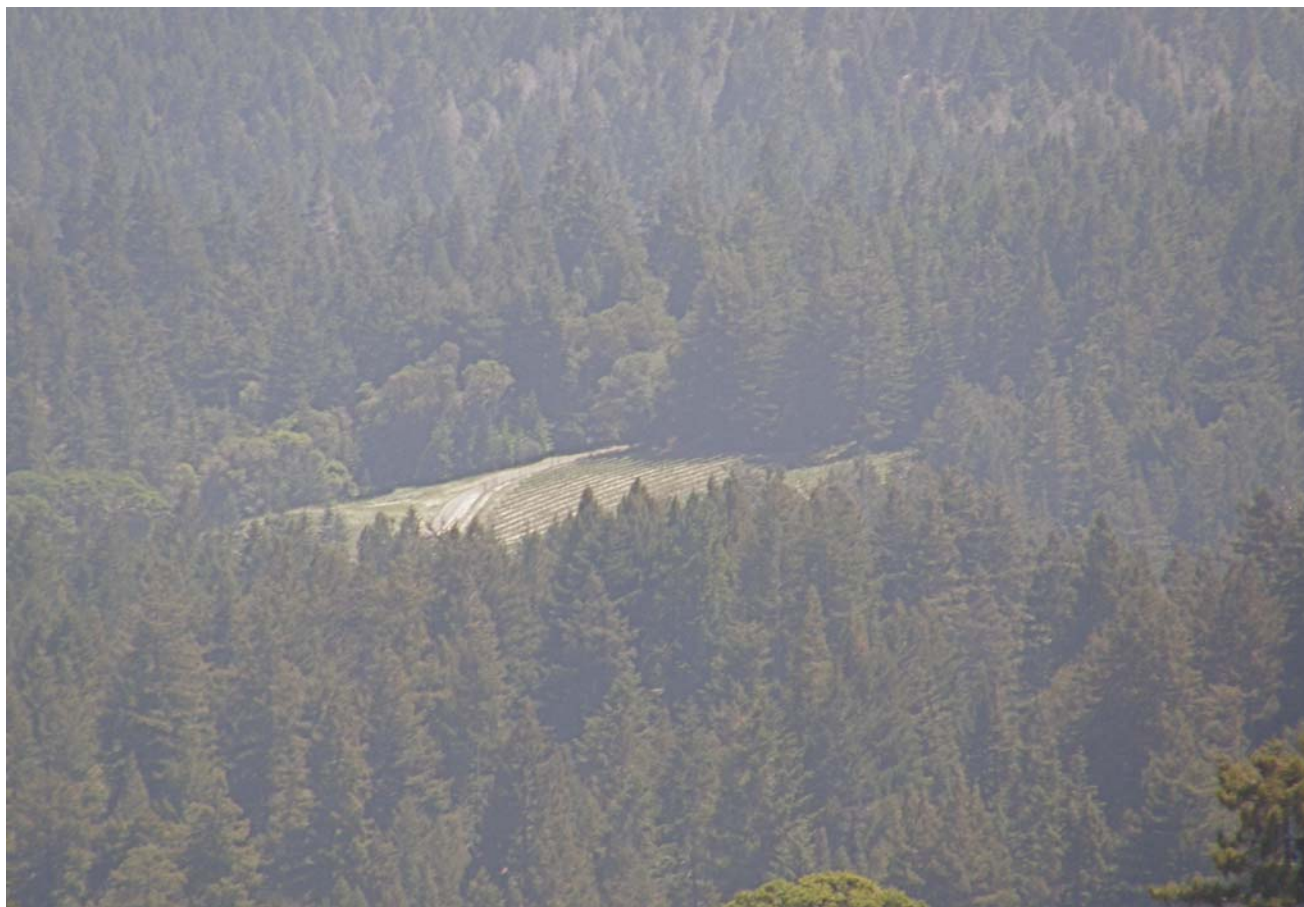


Benovia Winery A newer producer that released their first commercial wine with the 2006 vintage. The winery is located in the original Merry Edward's winery and former DeLoach Pinot Noir facility on Hartmann Lane in the Russian River Valley. The winery has been completely modernized and well-known winemaker Mike Sullivan (formerly Hartford Family Winery) has been hired to direct the wine program. New plantings of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are going in on a parcel adjacent the winery property on the North side (Martaella Two). The original 13.5-acre estate Martaella Vineyard (Martaella One) has been completely updated with the addition of Calera and Dijon 828 clones to the original Pommard plantings. An additional source of Pinot Noir, a cool site near Freestone, will come into production in 2013. In addition, the Cohn Vineyard has been acquired by the owner, Joe Anderson, and has been brought up to current viticultural standards. The wines are sold primarily through a mailing list at www.benoviawinery.com. Tasting is by appointment (707-526-4441) Monday through Saturday.

2006 Benovia Winery Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 220 cases, \$55. Rich Savoy has farmed this vineyard located west of Philo for 20 years. This wine is composed of multiple clones including Pommard, Calera, Martini 13 and Dijon 114 and 115, and is typically slow to come around. Each of the clones were vinified separately with only select barrels included in this bottling. *The nose is primal with oak char, dark berries, crusty toast and smoke surfacing. The wine possesses a solid dark berry core of fruit with plenty of oak char dominating the fruit at this stage. Silky in texture and nicely composed. Patience will be needed to fully appreciate this young wine which flashed a lot more fruit when newly crafted. Still fresh the next day from a previously opened re-corked bottle.*



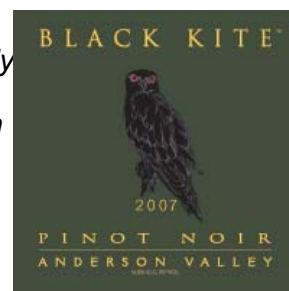
Black Kite Cellars Don and Maureen Green bought a property in 1995 in the Anderson Valley located in the coolest part of the deep end of the Anderson Valley and in 1999 developed a 12-acre vineyard consisting of three 4-acre blocks planted to Pommard and Dijon clones 114 and 115. The Greens are avid ornithologists and named their winery after the beautiful black-shouldered kite (hawk) which is an endangered species in the Anderson Valley. The hawk has distinctive penetrating red eyes which are strikingly portrayed on the Black Kite label. The viticulturist is veteran Paul Ardzrooni and the winemaker is Jeff Gaffner (Saxon-Brown). The Pinot Noir lineup consists of about 800 cases of four bottlings: Kite's Rest Pinot Noir, which is a blend of all three blocks in the Kite's Rest Vineyard, and block-specific Stony Terrace Pinot Noir, Redwoods' Edge Pinot Noir and River Turn Pinot Noir. As the vines have matured, it has been discovered that the vineyard blocks yield quite different flavors and characteristics. Sorting of grapes is done both in the vineyard and at the winery. The grapes are de-stemmed into small open-top stainless steel tanks, cold soaked for 3 days, and fermentation is launched with a Burgundian yeast. The wines are raked several times over 11 months of barrel aging to slowly remove solids. The wines are bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The wines are sold primarily through a mailing list on the website at www.blackkitecellars.com with limited retail distribution. The winery is not open to the public. I have been impressed with the wines since the launch of this label in 2005 and you would be well advised to take a serious look at them. The wines have been fawned over by every major wine publication and for good reason. The photo below was taken from Holmes Ranch Road looking west across the valley, showing the Black Kite Vineyard which rises 300 feet from the banks of the Navarro River to a hillside grove of majestic Redwood trees and is one of the few north-facing vineyards in the valley.



2007 Black Kite Cellars Kite's Rest Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 726 cases, \$42. *A shy but perfume of darker fruits, oak and a whiff of alcohol. Discreet and tasty black raspberry, strawberry, chocolate and oak flavors wrapped around supple tannins with a dry and fruity finish. Not quite as good as the 2006 vintage, but very commendable. Tasted three times on separate occasions with consistent results.*



2007 Black Kite Cellars River Turn Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 195 cases, \$52. Released in May, 2009. *Very pretty black cherry robe. Exotically perfumed with wild berries, black cherries, herbs and grass. Perfect balance of ripe raspberry and blackberry fruit, vibrant acidity and refined tannins. The mouth feel is soft and gentle with an endless finish that holds on tight for what seems an eternity. Is there an app for this?*



Breggo Cellars Douglas Ian Stewart and his wife Lucia Benitez-Stewart bought a 203-acre sheep ranch on Highway 128 just south of Philo in 1996. Stewart was a successful businessperson who had grown up in Sonoma and knew that sheep and grapevines flourished in areas like Anderson Valley that were considered to be marginal climatically and geographically. He renovated the house on the property, built a small winery and in 2005 began to source grapes from high-profile Anderson Valley vineyards. Most recently, he has begun planting an estate vineyard on his property using a subsurface irrigation system. (see photo below). Stewart crafts the wines along with consulting winemaker Ryan Hodgins from Hanzell Vineyards in Sonoma. The name, Breggo, is boontling for sheep. The winery and charming tasting room are located at 11001 Highway 128, Boonville. The tasting room is open from 11:00 to 5:00 daily. The 2007 Pinot Noirs currently in release are from Ferrington Vineyard, Savoy Vineyard and Donnelly Creek Vineyard and are available online at www.breggocellars.com or through retail channels.



2006 Breggo Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$37. *Deep ruby color. Appealing and assertive scents of dark stone fruits, raisin, cedar and grass. Ripe fruit profile on the palate featuring moderately concentrated plum and black cherry flavors. Soft and smooth with mild dry tannins. Admirable harmony and pleasant to drink.*



2007 Breggo Cellars Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 390 cases, \$55. Released March, 2009. A blend of 777 and Wädenswil clones. 7 day cold soak, 9 day uninoculated primary fermentation, 7 day extended maceration, aged 14 months in 44% new French oak barrels, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish-purple color. Somewhat restrained aromas of brambly cherries and berries with balsam. Lightly weighted core of earth-kissed raspberry fruit with zippy acidity, well-collared tannins and deft use of oak. Needs more time in the bottle to reach full expression but holds great promise.*

Brogan Cellars Margi Wierenga was a teenager when her father, Burt Williams, started making his first wines in a bathtub in a basement beneath their garage in the late 1970s. Once Williams Selyem winery was established, she worked as a volunteer at the winery's initial location in a rented garage on River Road in Fulton. In 1993 she became a paid worker at the Westside Road facility situated at Allen Vineyard. She also developed her winemaking skills at nearby Hop Kiln Winery. In 1998, after Williams Selyem was sold, she decided to follow in her father's footsteps and started her own winery. Brogan Cellars is named after Margi's paternal grandmother and is truly a garagiste operation. Her original winery was an 800 square-foot garage in Dry Creek until 2002 when she acquired additional space in Hopland, 30 miles north of Healdsburg. In 2004, Margi's son, James, joined Brogan, adding a third generation to the family business. Margi crafts age worthy Pinot Noirs from premium vineyards in the Russian River Valley, Sonoma Coast and Anderson Valley. Her father's Morning Dew Ranch in the Anderson Valley is the source of superb Pinot Noirs. She adds to her 2,000 case lineup with various other varieties including Chardonnay and Zinfandel depending on availability of fruit. The wines are sold almost exclusively to an eager mailing list of customers (www.brogancellars.com). Tasting is available by appointment at the Dry Creek location (707-473-0211). Margi sports her trademark smile with her mother (in red) at the 2007 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival below. The vertical below shows different labeling but all are from Burt Williams' Morning Dew Ranch (I believed it was still unnamed in 2004).



2004 Brogan Cellars Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 100 cases, \$40. The first wine from Burt Williams' vineyard. *The nose is a knockout featuring heady fresh berries, black cherries, spices and a hint of oak. Literally intoxicating. Luscious dark fruits with a dusting of oak char. Plenty of body and weight but supported beautifully by balancing sandy tannins and acidity. A marvelous wine that is drinking at its peak.*



2005 Brogan Cellars My Father's Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 150 cases, \$60. Aged in 50% new French oak barrels for 15 months. *The nose will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand erect. Oodles of black cherries, berry pie, sage, Moroccan spice, and violets. Wow! A richly flavored wine brimming with black raspberries with a hint of citrus peel in the background (think lemon custard with raspberries). Even some spearmint flavor shows up. A very interesting wine which still has enough structure to go the distance.*



2006 Brogan Cellars Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., \$45. Aged 11 months in 50% new French oak barrels. *High-toned nose showing aromas of deep red Pinot fruits, leather hide, seasoned oak and a touch of grass. Vibrant and vigorous strawberry, raspberry, cranberry and pomegranate fruits which taste like the best fruit punch you have ever had. Plenty of vim and vigor due to lively acidity, well-integrated tannins, a sense of delicacy and a finish that keeps on delivering for over 30 seconds. Uncle!*

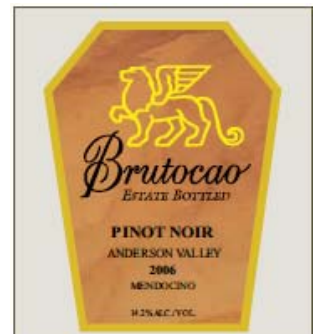


2007 Brogan Cellars Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., \$50. *The most restrained nose in the lineup showing less fruitiness and more stem, oak char and good barnyard. A solid berry fruit core peeks out and there is good balancing t n' a, but this wine is tight. There is enough charm to indicate good things are ahead, but I wouldn't even think about popping the cork on this one for another few years.*

Brutocao Vineyards & Cellars This winery represents the merger of two families through marriage: the Brutocao family from Italy and the Bliss family of California farmers. Irv Bliss bought his Anderson Valley property in 1943 and the family began making wine in 1991. Brutocao Cellars now produces over twenty different red and white estate wines from its 450 acres of vineyards in the southern regions of Mendocino County. Bliss, Feliz and Contento vineyards are separated by the Russian River and the fourth property in the Anderson Valley is known as Slo Lopin' Vineyard ("Slo Lopin'" is a boontling word for happy). The winery's label features the Italian Lion of St. Mark, a symbol of family tradition and quality. The winemaker is Fred Nickel. The Anderson Valley tasting room (the main tasting room is in the Brutocao Wine Center in Hopland) is housed in a rustic barn with an inviting covered patio on Highway 128 in Philo. Brutocao has never been a prominent player in the Pinot Noir game but their inexpensive Anderson Valley appellation bottling is a decent daily drinker. The wines are available in the winery's two tasting rooms and online at www.brutocaocellars.com.

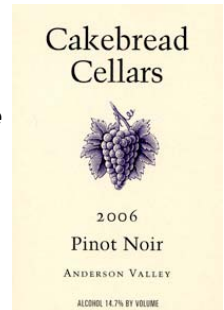


2006 Brutocao Cellars Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,770 cases, \$26. Sourced from Slo Lopin' Vineyard in Philo. Clones are Pommard 4, 115 and 777. De-stemmed, 50% whole berries, 10% whole clusters, 2-day cold soak, inoculation with Assmanshausen yeasts, co-fermentation of clones, 12 days on skins, double racked to barrel, aged 6 months in 15% new French oak, egg white fined and filtered. *Moderately deep garnet color. The nose is more barnyard, vegetable patch and nutty than fruity but is still attractive. A lean style with very light red fruit flavors including cranberries and cherries, that lead to a finish offering soft dry tannins.*



Cakebread Cellars This is one of Napa's older and highly respected wineries, founded in 1973 by Jack and Delores Cakebread, now operated by sons Bruce and Dennis Cakebread. Located in Rutherford, the winery farms 340 estate acres in the Napa Valley and the North Coast including a 46-acre Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyard in the Anderson Valley near Boonville that was planted in 2001. This vineyard sits on the site of a former apple orchard and is composed of six French clones of Pinot Noir. Cakebread has developed a much-deserved name for its Napa Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, both of which are a popular choice on restaurant wine lists. The winery's Visitor Center is a popular destination in the Napa Valley. The wines are sold through a wide retail distribution network, a mailing list and wine clubs, and at the tasting room. The website is www.cakebread.com. A Carneros Pinot Noir is also available.

2006 Cakebread Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., 3,600 cases, \$50. The six clones were fermented separately, with 15% fermented with native yeasts. 3-day cold soak, fermented in open-top stainless steel tanks with manual punch downs. Macerated on skins 2 weeks, free run juice drained into barrels, aged 15 months in 45% new French oak. *Moderate reddish-violet color. Attractive aromas of fresh berries and brown spice. Tasty and sappy blackberry and raspberry fruit with moderate finely-ground dry tannins. This wine does not have the heavy tug of oak found in the 2005 vintage. A substantial Pinot Noir with plenty of extraction that will appeal to lovers of the New World style.*



Claudia Springs Bob and Claudia Klindt own the 20-acre property, house and garage winery where Milla Handley of Handley Cellars first crafted her wines in the Anderson Valley. Bob Klindt had been a home winemaker for several years before launching the Claudia Springs label while still living in the San Francisco Bay area. He concentrated on Zinfandel initially because Pinot Noir grapes were hard to come by. Along with other family members, the Klindts planted 8 acres of Pinot Noir on the property in 1998 (Klindt Vineyard, photo below). The first Pinot Noir from the estate vineyard was released in 2001. The clonal selection is Pommard 4 and 5 and Dijon 113, 115, 667 and 777. Bob also produces small quantities of other varieties including Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Pinot Gris and Viognier. If you get the opportunity, visit with Bob as he has a wealth of knowledge about the Anderson Valley and can wax for hours about the humorous turns and twists of his winemaking career there. A tasting room in Philo (recently expanded) is open primarily on weekends and is shared with Harmonique, another Anderson Valley Pinot Noir and Chardonnay specialist for which Bob crafts the wines. Claudia Springs wines are sold through the tasting room located at 1810 Highway 128 at mile marker 16 next to the Floodgate Deli. For 2006, there are two Pinot Noirs: a Klindt Vineyard Estate bottling and a Klindt Estate Reserve bottling which is the flagship wine. The website is www.claudiasprings.com and the phone is 707-895-3993.



2006 Claudia Springs Winery Klindt Reserve Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc, 223 cases, \$35. Released May 2009. The six clones are picked and fermented separately. After aging for 8 months in barrel, an initial blend is made from these lots and returned to barrel for an additional 8-10 months. Aged in 40% new French oak barrels. Of the 32 barrels in the cellar, 9 were chose for the Reserve blend at the end of aging. *The nose is very pleasing showing cherries, cola, oak spice and a hint of alcohol. Tasty core of cherry and cranberry fruit with mild ripe tannins and good grip leading to a dry and refreshing finish. Reasonably priced and a good food wine.*



Copain Wines Wells Guthrie began his career as a tasting coordinator for *Wine Spectator's* San Francisco office. He soon fell in love with Syrah and traveled to the Northern Rhone to work for Chapoutier. He also spent time with Jean Louis Chave who heavily influenced his career. When he returned to the states, he worked at Turley Wine Cellars both in the vineyards and in the cellar. Guthrie later founded Copain Wines with Kevin McQuown and is also the winemaker. Today he crafts Pinot Noir from primarily Anderson Valley vineyards along with Syrah and Viognier. He produces 3,000 cases of Anderson Valley appellation Pinot Noir, 5,000 cases of vineyard-designate Pinot Noir and 3,000 cases of Syrah. Guthrie is a bright new talent who attributes his inspiration to Littorai's Ted Lemon. His wines are highly regarded by fellow winemakers and the wine press alike and have been well-received by sommeliers. Both an appellation series and vineyard-designate series of Pinot Noirs are produced. A tasting room is open at the modern new winery Thursday through Sunday at 7800 Eastside Rd. in Healdsburg. The wines are sold primarily through a mailing list on the website at www.copainwines with some retail distribution.



2007 Copain Hacienda Secoya Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$50. *Dark reddish-purple color. Alluring scents of dark red cherries, raspberries, watermelon and a hint of barnyard. Love this nose. Earth-kissed berry fruit with a hint of oak smoke. Rich and deeply flavored with bright acidity, soft in the mouth and perfectly balanced.*



2007 Copain Baker Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$50. *Lighter in color than the Hacienda bottling. A chameleon nose that changes constantly in the glass. Red fruits, smoke, grass, herbs, and barnyard noted. Delicious ripe strawberries on the attack with earth, tea, smoke and herbs in the background. Smooth and moderately light in weight with bright acidity and perfect harmony.*



Couloir Wines This new producer released its first Anderson Valley Pinot Noirs with the 2007 vintage. The founder and winemaker is Jon Grant who is an assistant winemaker at Turley Wine Cellars. Grant learned his trade while mentored by Cathy Corison at Corison Winery and Nils Venge at Plumpjack Winery. The name, Couloir, means a steep mountainside gorge and reflects Grant's love for ski mountaineering. I tasted the two inaugural 2007 Pinot Noirs from barrel last year and was impressed. The two vineyard-designates are from Roma's Vineyard and Monument Tree Vineyard. The small production wines are available through a mailing list at www.couloirwines.com. 1-888-COULOIR



2007 Couloir Roma's Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.85% alc., 200 cases, \$44. Released April 2009. Roma's Vineyard is at 1,850 feet on a mountaintop ridge. The vineyard was originally planted in 1990 for sparkling wine production, but later retrained to a bilateral cordon for still wine production. Planted to the Pommard clone and organically farmed under the direction of Ardzooni Vineyard Management. 50% whole cluster fermentation in stainless steel open-top tanks. 7-day cold soak, native yeast fermentation, gentle manual punch downs, gravity fed into 8 French barrels, 3 new, never racked, fined or filtered. *Moderately light reddish-purple color. World-class nose featuring crushed berries with a kiss of baking spices. A lovely wine in the mouth, very smooth, with moderate ripe tannins, gentle acidity and discreetly concentrated cherry and berry fruit. Elegant and perfectly balanced with admirable persistence on the finish. A complete wine.*



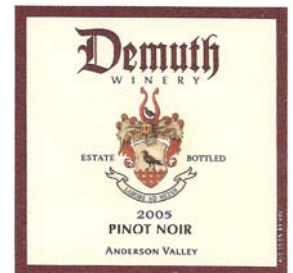
Dain Wines David Dain Smith produces small amounts of several vineyard-designate Pinot Noirs that are vinified at Crushpad in San Francisco. He still lives in Missouri and commutes to craft his wines. Each of the wines are named for a prominent now-deceased family member. Grapes are sourced from several California appellations. The wines have been inconsistent but I have had some very good bottles from certain vineyards in good vintages. The wines are sold through a mailing list (www.dainwines.com).

2006 Dain Wines Savage Juliet Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$48. Sourced from the Hein Family Vineyard. *Moderately light in color. The nose is thick with herbs, leaf, underbrush, oak smoke and camphor. Light in weight with good acidity, the flavor profile leans to cherries and cranberries with a slight chemical note. Smooth in the mouth. No special message but a decent drink.*



Demuth Winery Chris and Lynn Demuth planted 8 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the hills just north of Boonville 20 years ago. At 1,500 feet, this is one of the highest vineyards in the Anderson Valley. The clones of Pinot Noir are Pommard and Wädenswil. Small quantities of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are produced under the Demuth Winery label with much of the vineyard production sold to boutique wineries including Adrian Fog, Anthill Farms and Skewis. Tours and tasting are available by appointment. The wines are sold directly to visitors and through the website at www.demuthwinery.com.

2005 Demuth Winery Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 200 cases, \$40. De-stemmed into t-bins. 5-6-day cold soak. Inoculated with Assmanhausen yeast and punched down several times a day through completion of fermentation. Aged in 33% new Francois Freres medium toast oak barrels. Sterile filtered. Aged in bottle for 7 months before release. *Moderately light garnet color. Aromas of berries, cherries, green tea and green grass. Light in weight and rather austere with green vegetal, tea leaf, tobacco and mineral notes underlying the red fruits.*



Drew See special feature and listen to interview with Jason Drew in the next issue (Volume 7, Issue 19).

Elke Vineyards Proprietor and winegrower Mary Elke represents much of what is good about Anderson Valley people. She is a very charming woman, part farmer, part wine lover, and clearly a proud and tireless spokesperson for Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. She began her farming career growing organic apples and making apple juice. She has given up her apple farming but still produces her much revered apple juice from apples grown on the Drew estate in Elk. She has been growing wine grapes in the Napa Valley since 1979 and in the Anderson Valley since 1990. Her 60-acre Donnelly Creek Vineyard is just east of Boonville and over the years has supplied grapes to many notable wineries including Mumm Napa, Roederer Estate, Radio-Coteau, Copain, Londer, Au Bon Climat, ICI/La Bas and Breggo. The vineyard is planted to five clones of Pinot Noir. Since 1997, she has produced a vineyard-designate Donnelly Creek Anderson Valley Pinot Noir crafted by winemaker Tom Farella. This is a sophisticated Burgundian-styled wine of great breeding. She also releases a Mark Elke Pinot Noir which is a value-priced wine composed of fruit from the Donnelly Creek Vineyard and other sources in the Anderson Valley. It is crafted in a fruit-forward style popular with drinkers in California. Production is 1,700 cases annually. The wines are sold on the website at www.elkevineyards.com and through retail distribution. Tasting is by appointment (707-246-7045).



2006 Elke Vineyards Donnelly Creek Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 650 cases, \$38. 100% de-stemmed, inoculated with Burgundy yeast, 11 months in 30% new French oak barrels, unfinned and unfiltered. Released in November 2007. *Moderately light in color. Complex aromatic profile of black cherries, barnyard, chocolate and root beer. Very tasty dark cherry and berry fruit flavors blanket the palate with some underlying earthiness and a subtle touch of oak.*

Clean and pure with soft tannins and admirable finesse. A very good wine that will continue to charm for years to come.



NV Mary Elke's Organic Apple Juice Made from organically grown Golden Delicious and Jonathan apples from the Drew estate orchard in Elk. Delicious and Jonathan apples from the Drew estate orchard in Elk. Unsweetened, with no additives or preservatives and flash pasteurized to preserve the flavors. Unfinned and unfiltered. *Cloudy with a golden brown color. Aromas of fresh-cored apple. Crisp and hardy pure apple flavor with a hint of brown spice and light caramel. Can be enjoyed warmed with a dash of cinnamon or chilled in a smoothie. The real deal.*



Esterlina Vineyards & Winery The Esterlina estate is perched on a ridge commanding a sweeping view of the Anderson Valley. The former site of Pepperwood Springs Winery, the property was bought by the Sterling family in 2000 and rechristened Esterlina (Spanish for sterling). The Sterlings own additional vineyards in the Russian River Valley, Alexander Valley and Mendocino (including the smallest AVA in the United States at 253 acres - Cole Ranch). Esterlina is a family operation under the direction of father Murio and his sons. Eric Sterling, M.D. handles the winemaking duties while still employed as an emergency room physician. Steve handles the marketing, Craig is the winery's manager and legal counsel, and Chris assists in winemaking and manages the vineyards. The Esterlina Pinot Noirs are all from estate fruit and include an Esterlina Vineyard and a Riserva bottling. Esterlina wines are sold on the website at www.esterlinavineyards.com. Tasting is by appointment. A visit is well-worth the circuitous 2.5 mile drive up a dirt road to the winery as the Sterlings are warm hosts. 1200 Holmes Ranch Road, Philo. 707-895-2920.

2007 Esterlina Vineyards Estate Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 613 cases, \$45. Released May 2009. Average Brix at harvest was 24.2°. Whole berries dumped into open-top fermenters, punched down by hand, drained by gravity to barrel, remaining must basket pressed. Aged 15 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish-purple color. The appealing aromas of fresh strawberries and cherries and spices really draw you in and carry over to the focused flavors. Plenty of vim and vigor with perfectly balanced t n' a. A soft and creamy texture adds to the pleasure.*



Ferrari-Carano Vineyards & Winery Founded in 1981 by Donald and Rhonda Carano, this winery is named after Donald's grandmother, Amelia Ferrari. The Caranos are both second-generation Italian-Americans from Reno, Nevada, where they own the Eldorado Hotel and Casino. Through the years, Ferrari-Carano has dabbled in Pinot Noir, producing a Rhonda's Reserve Pinot Noir (Pinot Noir is Rhonda's favorite wine). A serious Pinot Noir program was launched with the 2006 vintage. Essentially a small Pinot Noir winery was started within the current white wine production facility in Healdsburg under the direction of winemaker Sarah Quider. Pinot Noir vineyards were purchased in the Russian River Valley and in the Mendocino Ridge AVA above Anderson Valley. The Mendocino Ridge property, Sky High Ranch (previously called Hayward Ranch), is located at 1,600 feet about eight miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Planted in 2003 to clones 667, 777, 828 and Pommard, yields here have been minuscule (.58 tons per acre in 2006, .67 tons per acre in 2007). The name "Sky High" is ironic as the vineyard site used to be occupied by hippies who farmed another crop of some repute. Pinot Noir is also sourced from vineyards farmed by the Dutton Company in the Russian River Valley. In 2008, Ferrari-Carano bought Lazy Creek Vineyards in the Anderson Valley and this will continue to be run as a separate winery with no name change. The winemaker at Lazy Creek Vineyards is Christine Griffith who was an assistant under Sarah Quider. I recently revisited the 2006 Sky High Ranch Vineyard Pinot Noir and found it to be spectacular. Ferrari-Carano Pinot Noirs are available through the tasting room which is open daily and the website at www.ferrari-carano.com.



2006 Ferrari-Carano Sky High Ranch Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$46 (sold out). Released May 2008. Grapes were de-stemmed allowing partial whole berry fermentation. Strictly reductive winemaking including a 3 to 5-day cold soak in small bins. Various yeasts were inoculated and the wine was gently pressed to barrel and aged 15 months in new French oak barrels.

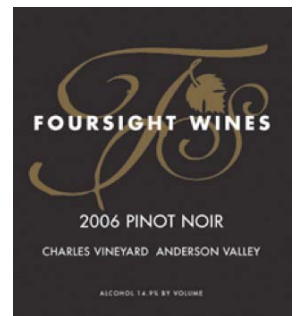
Deeply colored. Restrained aromas of black cherries, grilled meat and cigar box. Luscious dark red fruits on a smooth and silky frame accented by notes of spice, sawdust and citrus. The tannins have melted away and the whole package is deftly balanced. This is a special wine that gives you an emotional response.



Foursight Wines This is a new boutique producer in the Anderson Valley begun in 2007 by longtime winegrowers Bill and Nancy Charles and daughter Kristy Charles and her fiance Joseph Webb. The name of the winery was chosen to signify both the number of generations of family that have lived and worked on one piece of land in the Anderson Valley, and the foresight to provide a livelihood for future generations of the family. The Charles clan arrived in the Anderson Valley in 1943 to join the regional lumbar boom. In 1950, they bought property just east of Highway 128 in Boonville, built a sawmill and launched Charles Lumbar Company. The Charles family still lives on the property. In 2001, Bill and Nancy planted the Charles Vineyard consisting of 15 acres of Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. Initially the grapes were sold to Navarro Vineyards, Handley Cellars, Papapietro Perry and Schramsberg. After college, their daughter Kristy moved back to the Anderson Valley with her fiancée, Joseph Webb. Both Kristy and Joseph were wine enthusiasts and Joseph had received a degree in wine business from Sonoma State University. He acquired his winemaking skills at Sebastiani, Landmark Vineyards and Joseph Swan Vineyards. Kristy is the Executive Director of the Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association. Together with Kristy's parents, they launched Foursight Wines with the release of the 2004 Charles Vineyard Pinot Noir. A tasting room and winery was recently completed and the grand opening was held at this year's Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival weekend. The structure was designed and built by Bill Charles from lumbar grown, harvested and milled on the Charles family ranch. For 2007, Foursight has released three Pinot Noirs: "Zero New Oak" Charles Vineyard (all second-year and older barrels used in production), "Clone 05" Charles Vineyard (Pommard 5, 50% new oak), and "All-In" Charles Vineyard (poker term to describe combination of all Pinot Noir clones grown in the estate vineyard). An excellent Sauvignon Blanc fills out the lineup. The wines are available from the website at www.foursightwines.com. Check for tasting room hours (707-895-2889). The photos below show Bill and Nancy pouring at this year's World of Pinot Noir and the new Foursight tasting room and winery.



2007 Foursight All-In Charles Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 407 cases, \$46. Released March 2009. Clones 114, 115, 777 and Pommard 5. 80% de-stemmed, 20% whole clusters, wild yeast primary and secondary fermentation. Aged in 20% new, 31.25% two-year-old and 43.75% neutral French oak barrels. No racking, unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color. Clean aromas of cherries, mocha and spice. Very friendly in the mouth with savory flavors of fresh berries including cranberries with a subtle note of oak and dark chocolate. Texturally smooth with well-concealed ripe tannins and a good grip on the lasting finish. Plenty of Pinot singing here.*



Fulcrum Wines Owner David Rossi's background was in food marketing. He began his winemaking career at home over ten years ago and his success in amateur winemaking competitions led him to launch Fulcrum Wines. A fulcrum is a point of balance for a lever and David's goal is to "leverage the best wine out of the best grapes while maintaining balance." The wines are crafted at Crushpad in San Francisco. David's years of marketing experience are reflected in the impressive presentation of his wines. Each bottle is carefully wrapped in tissue and encased in a paper collar that has a seal depicting an acrobat juggling. This image embodies David's guiding theme of balance. Six bottles are presented in a handsome engraved wood box that is very classy. The 2006 vintage was quite respectable but the 2007 wine is a step up. The Fulcrum Pinot Noir is sold on the website at www.fulcrumwines.com.

2007 Fulcrum Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 100 cases, \$52. 50% Hein Family Vineyard and 50% Hayley Vineyard. The clones are 115 and 777. Aged in 41% new French oak barrels for 14 months and in bottle for 5 months. Unfinned and unfiltered. *With urging the nose blossoms beautifully revealing hi-tone aromas of ripe berry jam and wildflowers with a dusting of oak. The balance is admirable and the fine-grain tannins provide a silky smooth texture that is very appealing. The flavor profile leans to raspberry and cherry with a sidecar of oak. Plenty to like.*

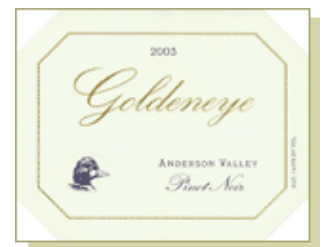


Goldeneye Winery This is the most visible and well-funded winery besides Roederer Estate in the Anderson Valley. The proprietor of Goldeneye, Dan Duckhorn, spoke at the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival Technical Symposium about his vision for this winery that was founded in 1997. He had already established the hugely successful Duckhorn Wine Company in the Napa Valley and saw Goldeneye as “the new vision of California Pinot Noir.” He said that when he started out, he wanted to “hit people over the head,” and then back off. The fleshier, broader, and full-bodied style of Goldeneye Pinot Noir was meant for early drinking and was so well received by consumers that he “hasn’t ever backed off.” The current Goldeneye visitor center is at the site of the former Obester Winery. 50 acres of Pinot Noir were planted on the property (the Confluence Estate Vineyard) initially and in later years, additional Anderson Valley vineyard property was acquired and developed (Abel Vineyard, Gowen Creek Vineyard, River’s Rest Vineyard and The Narrows Vineyard which was formerly Floodgate Vineyard). The location of the vineyards is shown on the map and the picturesque barn on the Abel Vineyard below. Goldeneye now farms 220 acres in the Anderson Valley, second



only to Roederer Estate’s 580 acres. The Estate vineyard program includes 96 individual blocks of Pinot Noir with 49 combinations of clones (19) and rootstocks (11). A new environmentally friendly winery is being constructed adjacent to the old winemaking facility at the Gowen Creek Vineyard. Zach Rasmussen came to Goldeneye after winemaking jobs at Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars and Husch Winery. The vineyard manager is Nathan Miller. Goldeneye sources from multiple vineyards besides the five estate vineyards for its “house style” estate Goldeneye bottling. A second blend, Migration, is more inexpensively priced. In 2004, single-vineyard Pinot Noirs were added to the lineup. Rasmussen favors a large percentage of new French oak, ranging from 50% for Migration Anderson Valley Pinot Noir to 95% for Confluence Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. 65% of the wines are sold to restaurants with the remainder finding good retail distribution. There is also a mailing list and online ordering at www.goldeneyewinery.com. The Goldeneye tasting room is the most comfortable and classy in the Anderson Valley, offering both indoor and outdoor seating and different tasting options. The current 2006 wines represent the winery’s tenth release. A new bottling, Ten Degrees (signifying the difference in temperature between The Narrows Vineyard in the north and the Confluence Vineyard in the south) is a limited production reserve selection of the 10 best barrels in the cellar (\$100).

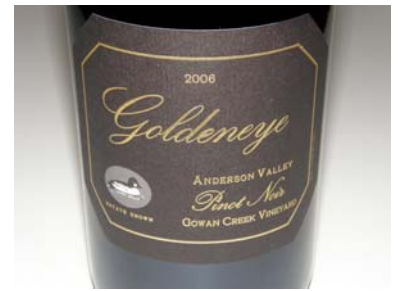
2006 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$55. *Opens nicely in the glass revealing spiced dark cherry and berry fruit. Moderately intense attack of black cherries and raspberries on the palate with a deft touch of oak. Silky in texture with lively acidity and a refreshingly dry finish. Well-crafted.*



2006 Goldeneye Confluence Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., \$75. *From the warmest vineyard site farmed by Goldeneye. Ripe raisiny fruit on the nose and ripe flavors of red cherries, berries,*

sassafras and raisin on the palate. Hefty in style with moderate fine-grain tannins and a touch of warmth on the fruity finish.

2006 Goldeneye Gowan Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 75. Released March 1, 2009. This vineyard is 2 miles north of the Confluence Vineyard and receives more fog. Planted to 8 different Pinot Noir clones matched to site and soil type. Average sugar at harvest was 27.0° Brix. Aged in 77% new medium toast French oak for 16 months. *Deep reddish-violet color. Very attractive heady aromas of earth-kissed cherries and berries with a whiff of oak and herbs. Rich and intense dark berry and plum fruit front and center highlighted by herbs and oak. Feral and gamy with plenty of tannic power and a bit of heat on the finish. A voluptuous wine that delivers more power than nuance.* Tasted twice on two occasions.



2006 Goldeneye The Narrows Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., \$75. A challenging site to farm due to its coolness and threat of frost. *A big wine with a dark fruit, earth and dark oak toast imprint showing significant tannin and some alcohol on the back end. Plenty of structural power in a jammy style.*

Greenwood Ridge Winery This is one of the most well-recognized Anderson Valley wineries. Founded in 1980 by Allan Green, who is also the winemaker, this winery's tasting room and winery is a valley landmark and can be easily spotted by the colorful gates at the entrance and the large solar panels adorning the winery roof. The panels have supplied all the electric power for the winery since 2005. Small amounts of



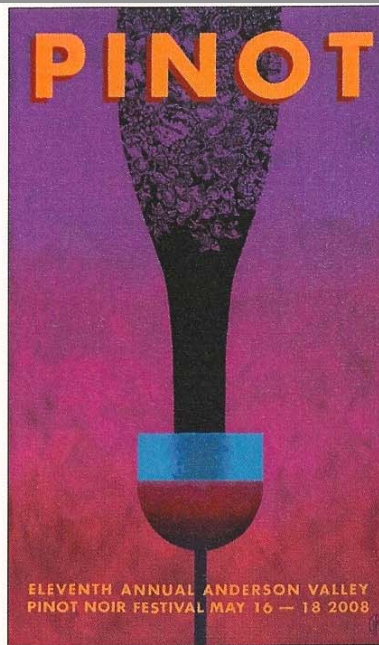
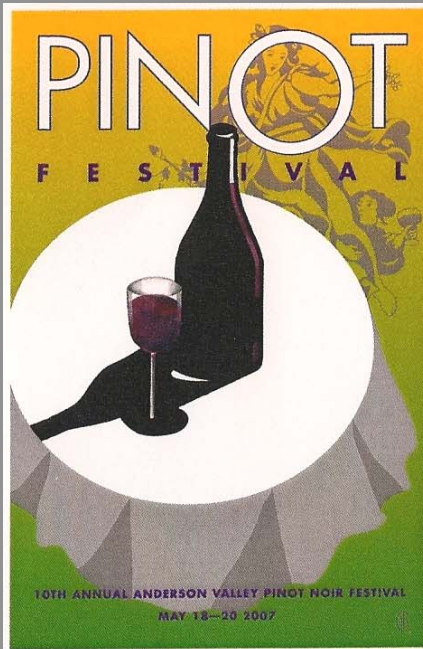
Pinot Noir are crafted from the winery's vineyard on Mendocino Ridge (see history page 7) which is the site of the California Wine Tasting Championships held annually the last weekend in July since 1983. This event was begun to attract visitors to the relatively isolated Anderson Valley. The distinctive Greenwood Ridge bottles feature an etched design of a dragon instead of labels. The stylized dragon is a replica of a dragon sculpture that Allen Green's architect father, Aaron, gave to the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in 1959 and is still on display at Taliesin West in Scottsdale, Arizona. Besides Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, White Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc are produced adding up to 5,000 cases annually. The tasting room, at 5502 Highway 128 in Philo, is a perfect place for a picnic. Inside, you will be awed by the wall of medals won by Greenwood Ridge wines. The wines are sold on the website at www.greenwoodridge.com.



2007 Greenwood Ridge Vineyards Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 875 cases, \$30. Barrel for 8 months. Estate bottled. *Moderate color. Clean aromas of mineral-infused cherries and berries, with some wooded forest in the background. Demure ripe strawberry and cherry flavors with a hint of vinous spice rack, sandalwood and smoke. Light and silky in the mouth with a memorable persistent raspberry note on the finish. Plenty of Pinot bang for the buck.*



To Be Continued in Part II (Volume 7, Issue 19)



Gerald Reis Design

The dramatic painting on page 1 of this issue is the creation of Gerald Reis, an artist working from his studio in Yorkville, California. His approach to art and design combines classic images with a contemporary bent giving his work an unadorned attractive simplicity. His graphic art has won numerous awards in competitions and has appeared in several prominent publications. He has been included in many exhibits including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and many of his works are part of the permanent collections of the Library of Congress and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Gerald also creates identities and product packaging for restaurants, retail stores and major corporations.

Gerald has created original art to commemorate wine festivals in the Anderson Valley and Yorkville Highlands. Prints of the original paintings are available for purchase from the artist. Each print is reproduced from the original on fine archival paper through a high quality printing process called *Giclée*. Phone Gerald at 707-894-0777 or e-mail him at gerald@reisdesign.com. The website is www.reisdesign.com.