



PinotFile

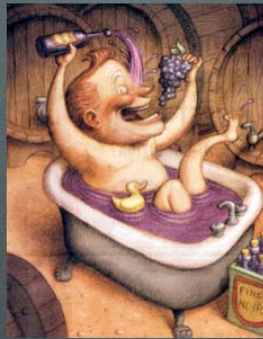
The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 8, Issue 38 June 5, 2011

Pinot Noir: Only sexual analogies can do it justice

A Tour of California Pinot Noir

Recently I gave a talk, "A Tour of California Pinot Noir," and conducted a tasting, "A Tasting Tour of California Pinot Noir," for health care professionals at the Ritz Carlton in Laguna Niguel, California. The event was very well received and I decided to provide this Keynote presentation to *PinotFile* readers. Some of the material is basic, but it provides a good over view and summary of the subject. The wines chosen for the tasting were considered representative of each appellation.



A Tour of California Pinot Noir

If You Drink No Noir, You Pinot Noir

Rusty Gaffney, M.D., "The Prince of Pinot"

What is Pinot Noir?

A red wine grape variety of plant species **Vitis vinifera** - one of a 10,000-15,000 varieties.

Wine made from the fruit of the Pinot Noir vine.

Name "pinot" derived from French word for "pine" alluding to the pine cone shape of clusters. Name "noir," or French for black, refers to the dark purple skin of the grape.

Pronunciation: "PEE-no-NWAH" in French; most Americans pronounce final "r" as "PEE-no-NWAR,"



Origins of Pinot Noir

Exact origins unclear but it is very old.

Appeared in Burgundy prior to 14th century, possibly as early as the 1st century AD.

Either arose from a single mother vine in Burgundy or derived from cuttings of **Vitis vinifera** brought to France by Greeks and Romans.

Initially called **noirien** long before the word **pinot** was added.



A Short History of Pinot Noir in California

1850-1856: First importer of Pinot Noir into California was either Frenchman Pierre Pellier Colonel Agoston Haraszthy de Mokesa, founder of Buena Vista Winery, or Charles LeFranc, who immigrated from France in 1850 and founded New Almaden Vineyards.

1880: Gustav Niebaum planted Pinot Noir at Inglenook, the basis of Martini clones of Pinot Noir.

1880s: Significant plantings of Pinot Noir at Stanly Ranch in Carneros.

1930s: Fountaingrove Winery north of Santa Rosa said to have grown Pinot Noir. A 1935 vintage wine was labeled "Sonoma Pinot Noir."

1946: Pinot Noir planted at Chalone (source and identity of scion material unknown).

1945-1949: Martin Ray planted Pinot Noir at Mount Eden and was the first to produce a 100% Pinot Noir varietal table wine in California.

A Short History of Pinot Noir in California

1953: Zellerbachs planted 6 acres of Pinot Noir in Sonoma Valley and produced first vintage of Hanzell Pinot Noir in 1957. Original 4.04-acre block now called Ambassador's Vineyard. Scion is from Martin Ray.

Late 1950s: Van der Kamp Vineyard planted to Pinot Noir at top of Sonoma Mountain.

1964: Bacigalupi family planted Pinot Noir on Westside Road in RRV. David Bruce bonded his namesake winery and made his first commercial Pinot Noir in 1966. Uriel Nielsen and Bill De Mattei planted Pinot Noir among more than 100 acres of vineyards known as Nielsen Vineyard in Santa Maria Valley.

1968-1969: Joe Rochioli planted East Block of Rochioli Vineyard in RRV. West Block followed in 1969. Joseph Swan planted Pinot Noir in Vill Hill region of RRV in 1969.



Ambassador's Vineyard overlooking the town of Sonoma



A Short History of Pinot Noir in California

1970: Carneros Creek Winery founded in Carneros by Francis Mahoney.

1970s: Plantings of Rich and Claudia Smith at Paraiso Vineyards, Nicky Hahn, McFarland family at Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, and Phil Johnson at La Estancia, all in Monterey County.

1971 Sanford & Benedict Vineyard planted by Richard Sanford and produced first commercial Pinot Noir from Santa Rita Hills in 1976. Camelot Vineyard and Katherine's Vineyard planted in Santa Maria Valley.

1972: Partners acquired Martin Ray Estate, produced first Pinot Noir and renamed property Mount Eden Vineyards.

1973: Davis Bynum released first vineyard-designated RRV wine (Rochioli Vineyard Pinot Noir).



Sea Smoke Vineyard in foreground; Fiddlestix Vineyard beyond and Sanford & Benedict Vineyard in the far distance

A Short History of Pinot Noir in California

1973: Mike Bohan became first winegrower to farm Pinot Noir in the true Sonoma Coast. Davis Bynum released first vineyard-designated RRV wine (Rochioli Vineyard Pinot Noir).

1975: Randall Grahm started Bonny Doon with the intention of producing Pinot Noir in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Josh Jensen planted his first three Pinot Noir vineyards on Mt. Harlan at Calera Wine Co.

1979: Kistler Vineyards was launched in Russian River Valley. Williams Selyem born in a garage in Forestville as Hacienda Del Oro.

1980: Hirsch Vineyard planted in Sonoma Coast. First plantings of Pinot Noir in Marin County at Devils Gulch Ranch.

1981: Saintsbury founded in Carneros, the first California winery to make Pinot Noir entirely from Dijon clones. Dijon clones first planted in Santa Barbara County.

A Short History of Pinot Noir in California

1982: Gary Farrell made his first commercial Pinot Noir. Robert Stemmler released the first Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. Pisoni Vineyard planted by Gary Pisoni in Santa Lucia Highlands. brand launched. Etude founded by Tony Soter in Carneros. Jim Clendenen founded Au Bon Climat. Robert Stemmler released his first Pinot Noir and later was first to produce a Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, long before it became a well-known appellation.

1983: Burt Williams & Ed Selyem started Williams Selyem label in a leased garage in Fulton in RRV.

1984: Ken Brown and partners founded Byron Vineyard & Winery in the Santa Maria Valley.

1987: Williams Selyem Rochioli Vineyard RRV Pinot Noir wins Sweepstakes at California State Fair.

Why is Pinot Noir Special?

- It is grown in practically every wine growing region in world.
- It contains less than half the tannins of most other red varieties.
- It ripens more satisfactorily in cooler sites than most other red varieties. Pinot Noir thrives on the edge.
- It is uncommonly site expression (the matter of terroir). Its flavor is dependent on the soil in which it is grown.
- It is harder to grow and more susceptible to vine diseases than other red varieties (thus the name, "heartbreak grape"). "God made Cabernet Sauvignon, whereas the devil made Pinot Noir." (Andre Tchelistcheff).
- It is the parent variety of many other varieties, both red and white (Chardonnay, Aligoté, Melon - Muscadet, Gamay). Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc are white mutations of Pinot Noir.

Rhapsodizing About Pinot Noir

"The most romantic of wines, with so voluptuous a perfume, so sweet an edge, and so powerful a punch that, like falling in love, they make the blood run hot and the soul wax embarrassingly poetic."Joel Fleischman

"Sex in a glass."Madeline Triffon MS

"Falling in love with Pinot Noir is easy to do, but be prepared, for a tempestuous love affair it will be."Cathleen Francisco

"It leads us a terrible dance, tantalizing with an occasionally glimpse of the riches in store for those who persevere, yet obstinately refusing to be tamed."Jancis Robinson MW

"The flavors of the great red Burgundies are sensuous, often erotic, above rational discourse, often beyond the measures of criticism as they flout the conventions in favor of something rooted in emotions and passions too powerful to be taught."Oz Clarke

"Good Pinot Noir has a delicate elegance and a luscious succulence that can transport you to another place. It is not the stop-traffic beauty of bombshell Jessica Alba or thick-lipped Angelina Jolie, but more the classic elegance of Catherine Deneuve."Jake Lorenzo

"You fall in love with Pinot Noir. The fragrance in a good Pinot Noir makes you close your eyes. It is the most seductive wine. It's very, very hard to say no to."Madeline Triffon MS

"Let's be honest: there's only one activity more satisfying than drinking good Pinot Noir with good food; and if you're drinking Pinot Noir in the right company, the one pleasure, more often than not, will lead to the other."Jay McInerney

"I remain unconvinced that there is a single definition of 'Pinotosity' - the charm is that the grape can wear so many different clothes, and sometimes none at all."Jasper Morris MW

"Pinot Noir is the drink of choice for serious lovers on Valentine's Day. It is heaven in a glass. Look for places where you can drink it with one hand under the table."Konrad Fjebich

Substances in Pinot Noir are closely related to human sex pheromones.

All the aromas in the Pinot Noir grape like spice, musk, earth and barnyard are associated with the principal male smell, andosterone. Truffles, vanilla and oaky smells of Pinot Noir aged in oak barrels are also androsterone-like.

These smells can unlock powerful memories and open the door to lust and desire. With both the olfactory system and our emotional center located in the frontal lobes, is it any wonder that a great Pinot Noir gets you a sure thing?



Send In The Clones

A clone is a genetically identical plant taken from a single mother vine.

All Pinot Noir clones planted in California came from France.

Each clone makes a personality statement.

Three classes: **Mother clones** (Pommard, Wädenswil, Mariafeld); **Suitcase or Heritage clones** (originally smuggled in from France, ie Wente, Martini, Mount Eden, Swan, Calera, Pisoni); **Dijon clones** (113,115,667,777,828).



Pinotspeak

There is no other wine that evokes such a cornucopia of aromas and flavors.

A good portion of the entire human repertoire of smell and taste descriptives have been invoked to convey a taster's Pinot Noir drinking experience.

Pinotspeak: Aromas & Flavors

Red Fruits: cherry, cranberry, raspberry, strawberry, pomegranate

Purple Fruits: blackberry, boysenberry, black currant, cassis, plum

White Fruits: apricot, grapefruit, orange peel, melon

Dried Fruits: fig, prune, raisin, fruitcake, jam

Spices: clove, nutmeg, bay leaf, Herbs De Provence, pepper, cardamom, Asian 5-spice, allspice, mint, cumin, spearmint, vanilla bean

Candies: Red Vines, tutti-fruity, candied apple, dark chocolate

Vegetal: bell pepper, truffle, mushroom, olive, soy sauce, fennel, beets, licorice

Floral: rose petals, violets, lavender, dried flowers

Animale: game, bacon, musk, kid leather

Plant: wet leaves, forest floor, loam, peat, barnyard, grass, tree bark

Earth: rock dust, charcoal, fresh earth, mineral,

Wood: oak, cedar, sandalwood, redwood, pine pitch, resin, tar, creosote

Drink: tea, Coca-Cola, root beer, Dr. Pepper

Pinotspeak: Oak Derived Aromas & Flavors

Oak Earthy: ash, musty, leather, mushroom

Oak Woody: sawdust, pencil lead, sap, pine, tar, resin

Oak Herbaceous: weedy, grass, hay, tobacco

Oak Astringent: tannic, drying, harsh, bitter

Oak Spice: clove, cinnamon, coconut, vanilla

Oak Sweet: brown sugar, bourbon, chocolate, maple syrup, caramel, butterscotch, molasses, honey, toffee, coffee

Oak Creamy: cream soda, marshmallow, butter, creme brulee

Oak Toast: popcorn, baked bread, hazelnut, walnut, graham cracker, brioche, mocha, barbecue, grilled meats, sweet smoke, burnt sugar, smoke, char

Advanced Pinotspeak

For the advanced practitioner of Pinotspeak, more colorful expressions of Pinotspeak vernacular can be used to impress others. When out socially with friends, Pinot Noir aficionados like to throw out impressive phrases like:

“Texture of Persian silk”

“Like beef stew on a bed of roses”

“Enough t (tannin) and a (acid) to fill a chorus line”

“Sweet brown sugar sprinkled on top of oatmeal”

“Leathery but in a \$2000 Prada coat kind of way”

Pinocabulary: Talk the Pinot Talk

Pinotosity: The unique essence or soul of Pinot Noir. A Pinot Noir is said to have pinotosity when it is irresistible and brings you to your knees.

Pinotholicism: The religion of Pinot Noir. Members join the church after an epiphany with Pinot Noir. Followers offer a significant percentage of their monthly income to the high priests of Pinot Noir such as winemakers Ted Lemon, Tom Rochioli and Michael Browne.

Pinot Geek: A hopeless devotee of Pinot Noir who revels in all the minutia related to the grape. Seen in flocks at Pinot Noir festivals.

Pinotphile: Similar to a Pinot Geek but less geeky. A lover of Pinot Noir in all of its glorious forms. The pinotphile usually knows the UPS delivery person on a first name basis. Also known as pinoiristes.

Pinot Pimp: A procurer of Pinot Noir. Always someone good to know if you love Pinot Noir.

Pinot Noir & Food

Pinot Noir is the greatest food wine on the planet: silky tannins + acidity = endlessly adaptable.

Natural partner for foods from the sea (salmon, ahi), the air (quail), the water (duck), and the earth (venison, pork, ham).

Other partners include mushrooms, truffles, beets, cheese (Camembert, Eplosses, brie, blue, goat, jack), bacon and BLT, corned beef, pasta with carbonara, marinara, bolognese, practically any grilled fish or vegetable. List goes on and on.



Sage Advice about Pinot Noir

There are a bewildering number of labels and variety of styles. Don't fret, dive in and drink, drink, drink. Knowledge comes with experience.

Be weary of proclamations written by winemakers, retailers and wine critics. They can enhance and direct your wine experience, but they cannot BE your wine experience.

Don't drink labels. It is not the year, the producer, or even the label that determines the quality of the wine; it is the wine in the glass, whatever the label or producer or year.

Trust your own palate. If you like it, then it is a good wine. There is no accounting for taste. Your taste is your own; your patrimony.

As you would never judge a book by its cover, never judge the quality of a Pinot Noir by its color.

Pinot Noir is not typically blended with other varieties except in the case of sparkling wine or Champagne.

Serve Pinot Noir at cellar temperature (58 to 63 degrees F). Serving it too cold will dull the aromas and flavors; serving it too warm will accentuate alcohol which is volatile.

Purchase some proper glassware, preferably a large bowl Burgundy-styled stem which will enhance the aromas and maximize the flavors.

Smell the calm wine in the glass first. You will perceive the most volatile aromas. Swirl gently with a circular motion to release the less volatile and more subtle aromas.

Give the wine time to open fully in the glass. Take a sip and leave it in your mouth. To intensify the tasting, you can take in some air with your lips slightly open which intensifies the aromas.

Pinot Noir is a chameleon of a wine, notoriously variable and changing both in the bottle and in the glass.

California Pinot Noir will improve up to 5 years in the bottle and extraordinary ones can last up to 15 to 20 years.



There are basically two types of California Pinot Noir: blended and single vineyard. Blended Pinot Noirs are sourced from several vineyards, can be very good, are often less expensive, and are not as subject to the vagaries of vintage. Single vineyard Pinot Noirs can have a distinctive range of flavors speaking of terroir or site and can be outstanding. They may or may not justify their higher price.

There are generally two styles of California Pinot Noir but many variations in between. Classic or Old World style: more elegant, feminine, subtle, palatable acidity, sensuality. Caliesque or New World: masculine, fruit-driven, plush ripe flavors, intensity, healthy note of oak and alcohol.

There are many ways to judge quality and often it boils down to the simple judgment of whether you like or dislike the wine.

Great Pinot Noir is produced in small quantities (50 to 500 cases). The best source for these wines is the wineries' mailing lists.

Be ready to open your wallet. Pinot Noir is expensive to grow and produce. Pinot loves oak and best French barrels are \$1000 apiece. Still, there are many excellent Pinot Noirs in sweet spot (\$25-\$40).



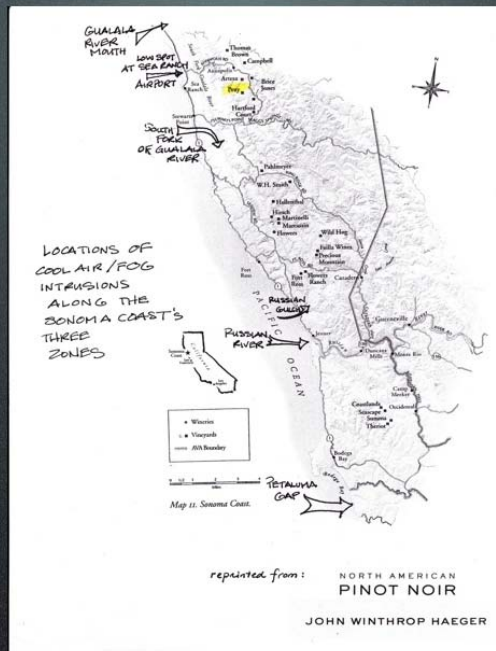
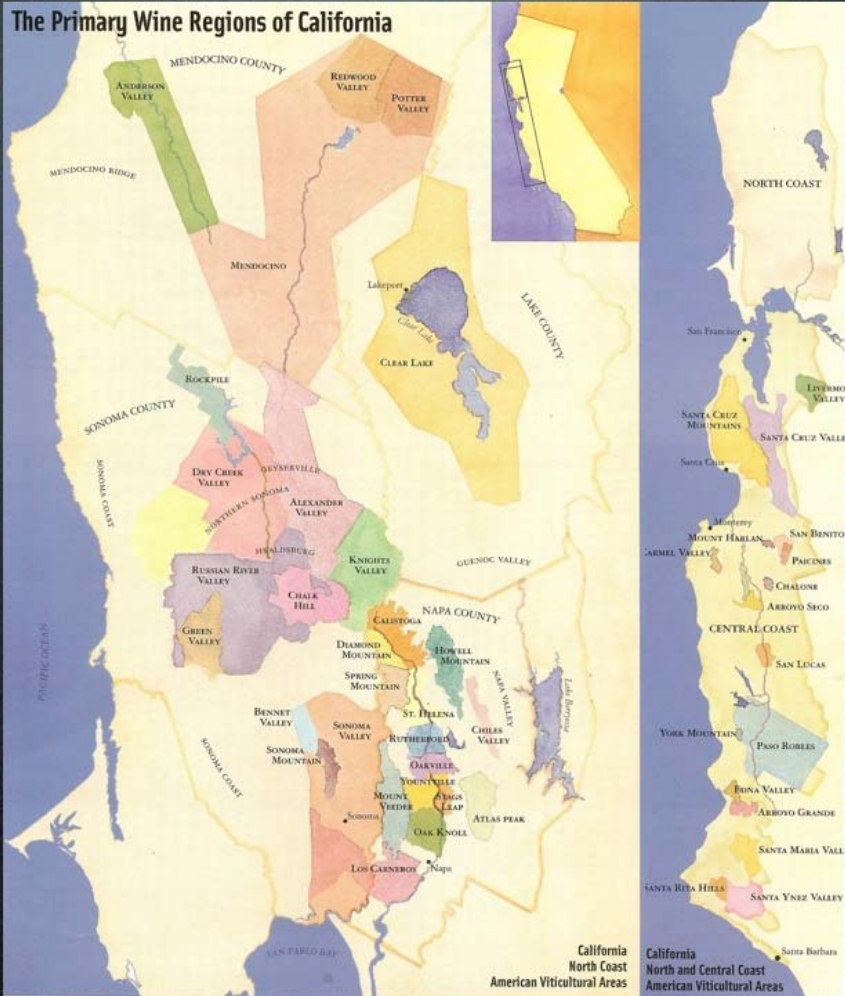
Pinot Noir Favors Selected Cool Climates

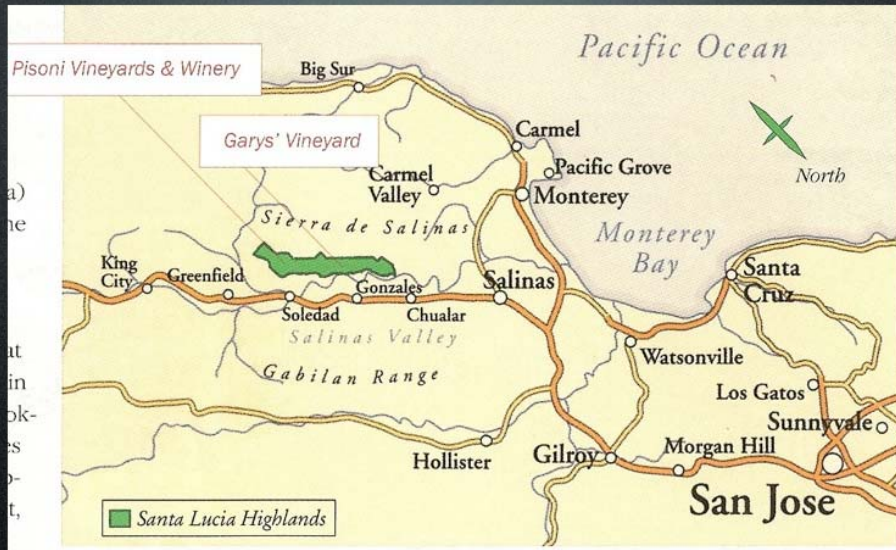
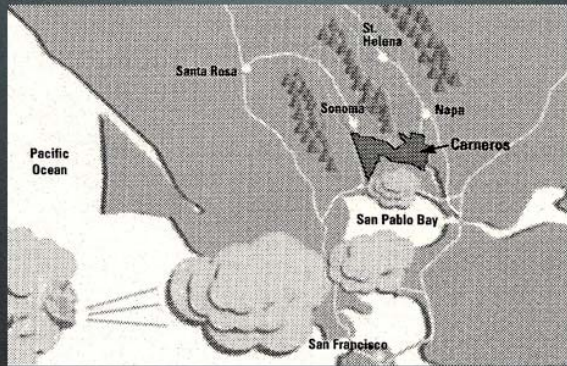
Marine-influenced cool climates that are temperate, foggy, and blessed with ocean breezes allow extended hang times for Pinot Noir and bring out more acidity and more complex aromas and flavors.

The cool appellations most suitable for growing Pinot Noir have only been well-defined over the last three decades. From south to north:

Sta. Rita Hills
Santa Maria Valley
Chalone and Mt. Harlan
Santa Lucia Highlands
Santa Cruz Mountains
Marin County
Carneros
Russian River Valley
Sonoma Coast
Anderson Valley

AVA designation requires a minimum of 85% of grapes within bottle.





Tasting Tour of California Pinot Noir

Tasting Tour of California Pinot Noir

- Sta. Rita Hills
- Santa Maria Valley
- Santa Lucia Highlands
- Santa Cruz Mountains
- Carneros
- Russian River Valley
- Sonoma Coast
- Anderson Valley

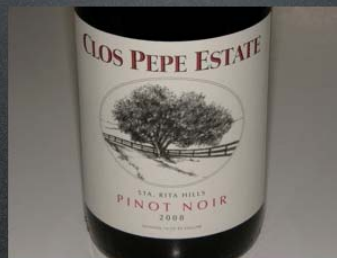
Sta. Rita Hills

- **Numbers:** 30,720 acres, 1,700 grape acres, primarily Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. 28 wineries. AVA approved 2001, amended 2005, name change 2006.
- **Terroir:** Mountains run east-west instead of north-south creating a gap which allows cool Pacific Ocean winds to flow inland. Fog hovers over the vines until mid-morning and the temperature barely gets above 75° F in western reaches of AVA. Winkler Region I (< 2,500 degree-days to ripen grapes). Soils are calcareous and well-drained. Santa Barbara County.
- **Aromas & Flavors:** Darker fruit expression is the rule. Blueberries and wild berries are common. Deep, concentrated fruit, substantial tannin structure, minerality, high acidity, and usually high alcohol (but can be in balance).
- **2008 Clos Pepe Estate Vigneron Select Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$54**

Clos Pepe Vineyards

- A 28-acre vineyard in the heart of the appellation on Hwy 246. Dijon clones 115, 667, 777 and Pommard (1996, 2001)
- Primarily small lots of Pinot Noir (700 cases) and Chardonnay
- Grapes in high demand and sold to several California producers (Ojai Vineyards, Ken Brown, Copain, Roessler)
- Owners are “vigneron” Stephen Pepe and spouse Catherine
- Vineyard manager and winemaker is Wes Hagen
- Wines sold primarily through mailing list. Tasting by appt.
- Website: www.clospepe.com

2008 Clos Pepe Estate Clos Pepe Vineyard Vigneron Selection Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 235 cases, \$54. Three favorite barrels aged in 66% new French oak. “Light in color, but don’t be put off by this as the wine is well-structured and full-flavored. Delicious strawberry and cherry flavors peek out that are vivid and satisfying. Toasty oak is prominent in the background. The tannins are restrained leading to a pleasingly soft mouth feel. Immature and closed, this wine will need at least two years in the cellar.”



Santa Maria Valley

- **Numbers:** 80,000 acres, 7,500 acres of vineyards. 33 wineries. 50 wineries outside Santa Maria Valley source fruit from the Santa Maria Valley AVA. AVA approved in 1981, amended in 1985.
- **Terroir:** East-west orientation and Pacific fog and coastal breezes permeate the valley leading to extended growing season. Low rainfall and warm summers. Winkler Region I (<2,500 degree-days to ripen grapes). Santa Barbara County.
- **Aromas & Flavors:** Similar to southern Russian River Valley but more spicy. Red and black raspberry, strawberry, red and black cherry, earthiness, truffles, forest floor, savory herbs, cola, soy sauce, pepper. Intense color in most years due to long hang times. The signature feature is “Santa Maria spice.”
- **2007 Lane Tanner Julia’s Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir** (\$36).

Lane Tanner Winery

- Launched in 1984 at a time when there were few women winemakers in California.
- Lane was previously married to owner of Hitching Post restaurant and made the house wine for that restaurant made famous in the movie ‘Sideways.’
- 1,500 cases of Pinot Noir and Syrah.
- Elegant style with understated oak.
- One-woman show.
- Retail and mailing list sales. Tasting by appt.
- Website: www.lanetanner.com.

2007 Lane Tanner Julia's Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir
13.8% alcohol, 447 cases, \$36. Vineyard is 3 miles east of Bien Nacido Vineyard. Aged 11 months in 33% new and 44% one year French oak. Unfined, gently filtered. "Watch out for this spiced-up mother as it will seduce you. On the extroverted nose there are lovely scents of framboises des boise and cassis liquors which draw you into the glass. The lush berry fruit is rich and opulent with well-integrated tannins and a whisper of oak. Balance is spot on. The mouth feel is satiny and the long, powerful finish is seductively perfumed. This is a wine with considerable cleavage that is hard to say no to."



Santa Lucia Highlands

- **Numbers:** 5,900 grape acres; 2,700 acres planted to Pinot Noir. 34 growers, 11 wineries. 62 wineries from outside the SLH AVA source fruit from the SLH AVA. AVA established 1991.
- **Terroir:** Natural southeast exposure overlooking Salinas River Valley. Cool mornings with fog and afternoon breezes from Monterey Bay. Long growing season. Winkler Region I (<2,500 degree-days to ripen grapes). Well-drained granitic soils.
- **Aromas & Flavors:** Rich blackberry flavor, with subtle herbal and mineral character. Some vineyards produce very bold, purple fruited, and highly structured wines.
- **2007 Lucienne Lone Oak Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** (\$50).

Lucienne (Hahn Estates)

- An estate winery within the Hahn Estates umbrella of wines launched with the 2005 vintage. A winery within a winery.
- Owned by Nicholas Lucien Hahn.
- Premium Pinot Noir crafted in small lots from two exceptional estate vineyards: Lone Oak and Doctor's.
- Winemaker is Paul Clifton.
- Available through website store at www.luciennevineyards.com.
- Hahn Estates tasting room in Soledad open daily.

2006 Lucienne Lone Oak Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir
14.5% alc., 217 cases, \$45. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 12 months in 50% new and 50% neutral French oak. "A thoroughly enjoyable wine with attractive spiced black cherries on the nose, dark cherries and raspberries on the palate framed by notes of coffee, leather and brown spice, augmented by supple tannins and ending with a lasting and silky finish."



Santa Cruz Mountains

- Numbers: 350,000 acres over 3 counties. 1,350 acres of vines. 90 wineries. 7 wineries outside the SCM AVA access grapes from the SCM AVA. AVA approved in 1981 - the first defined by geophysical, altitudinal and climatic factors.
- Terroir: Marriage of fog and sun. Harsh climate. Extended growing season. Mountainous terrain with many vineyards located in remote and rugged locations. Irrigation water limited. Top soil poor in many areas. Yields very low. Winkler Region I (<2,500 degree-days to ripen grapes).
- Aromas & Flavors: Lovely aromatics, red and dark fruits, easily approachable tannins, lively acidity, minerality, light to medium bodied.
- **2008 Mount Eden Estate Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir (\$55)**

Mount Eden Vineyards

- Viticultural island at 2,000 feet planted to Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon. 34 acres of Pinot Noir. Clones are Mount Eden, Winery Lake, Swan, Calera, Dijon 115, 667, 777, 828. Estate Pinot Noir is mosaic of all clones.
- Originally Martin Ray Winery in early 1950s. Mount Eden Vineyards began in 1972.
- Longest lineage of estate bottled Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in California. 4,000 cases annually.
- Winemaker and owner Jeffrey Patterson since 1981.
- Retail and mailing list. Tours w/o tasting by appt.
- Website: www.mounteden.com.

2008 Mount Eden Estate Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc, 985 cases, \$55. “Nicely composed aromatic profile of cherries, strawberries, savory herbs and oak blossoming in the glass over time. A magnificent Burgundian styled wine with vivid, high-pitched red cherry, raspberry and cranberry flavors framed by lively acidity and fine grain tannins. After so many years at the helm, winemaker Jeffrey Patterson knows his vineyard and consistently offers Pinot Noirs styled with the type of charm and restraint that is often lacking in so many fruit driven California Pinot Noirs. A great food wine that should be cause for celebration.”



Carneros

- **Numbers:** 90 square miles, 8,000 planted acres, 1,100 acres of Pinot Noir, 37 wineries, 75 growers. 124 wineries outside the Carneros AVA access fruit from the Carneros AVA. AVA approved in 1983, amended in 1987 and 2006.
- **Terroir:** Heavily influenced by adjacent San Pablo Bay and Pacific Ocean. Cool breezes with evening fog. Moderately long growing season. Soils are thin and full of clay which holds water but slowly releases it. This factor plus low rainfall make it necessary to irrigate. Mostly Winkler Region I (<2,500 degree days to ripen grapes).
- **Aromas & Flavors:** Bold flavors of black fruits, spice, earth, grilled fruit and mushrooms. Newer styles have higher alcohol, and may be more jammy.
- **2008 Donum Estate West Slope Carneros Pinot Noir** (\$85).

The Donum Estate

- Latin for “gift,” Donum refers to grapes as a gift of the land.
- 200 acres split off from the Buena Vista Estate in 2001 by viticulturist Anne Moeller-Racke.
- Small lots of estate Pinot Noir and Russian River estate Pinot Noir. First estate Pinot Noir in 2001.
- Clones planted are Calera, Hanzell, Swan, Dijon 777 and an unknown Roederer selection known as the “Donum clone.”
- Winemaker is Kenneth Juhasz.
- Wines sold on website. Not open to the public.

2007 Donum Estate Grown West Slope Carneros Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 150 cases, \$70. Inaugural release. 100% Donum Roederer selection. Destemmed, aged 16 months in 70% new French oak. Best barrel selection. Unfined and unfiltered. “Hold on to your seat when you pop the cork on this one. Terrific nose that is heavily nuanced with aromas of cherries, berries, spice, oak toast and garden bouquet, all coming and going in the glass over time. The earth-kissed dark stone and berry fruit really attacks the senses and holds on with a firm grip as it coats every nook and cranny in the mouth and lingers for what seems like several minutes. The creamy texture and soft tannins add to the wine’s sensuality. Descriptors don’t do this wine justice. In short, flat-out great.”



Russian River Valley

- **Numbers:** 126,600 acres, 15,710 acres of vineyards. 4,600 acres of Pinot Noir (29% of AVA), 19% of the total in the state. 155 wineries, >200 growers. 171 wineries outside the RRV AVA access fruit from the RRV AVA. RRV AVA approved in 1983, amended 1987, 2003 and 2005. Overlaps the Green Valley and Sonoma Coast AVAs.
- **Terroir:** Fog is drawn inland each day and dissipates by late morning. The growing season is long. The Middle Reach is warmer and produces ripe and voluptuous fruit. The southern Russian River Valley is cooler and creates wines with crisper elegance and greater age ability. Many varied soil types. Winkler Region II (2,500-3,500 degree-days to ripen grapes).
- **Aromas & Flavors:** Bing cherry, strawberry, raspberry, cranberry, plum, roses, Asian spice, clove, cola, lavender, violets. Soft tannins. Typically a voluptuous texture.
- **2007 Davis Family Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$40.**

Davis Family Vineyards

- Owner and winemaker Guy Davis farms 7 acres of Pinot Noir from which he produces an estate Pinot Noir each year. He crafts many other varietals as well.
- Soft-spoken and cerebral winemaker.
- Reliably good in each vintage since launch in 1997.
- Wines are sold online and through retail channels. Tasting room in Healdsburg.
- Website: www.daviswines.com

2007 Davis Family Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$40. Tenth anniversary vintage. “Bright reddish-purple color in the glass. Intense and penetrating aromas of Bing cherries, raspberries, strawberries, spice and cola. Discreetly rich, slightly confected flavors that mimic the aromas. Fresh, clean and juicy with caressing tannins, refreshing acidity and an underlying mineral edge. A perfectly harmonious wine that is quintessential Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.”



Sonoma Coast

- **Numbers:** Over one half million acres. 7,000 acres of vineyards (less than 1.4% of total area). The largest Sonoma County AVA. 228 wineries. 56 wineries outside the SC AVA sources grapes from the SC AVA. The “true” Sonoma Coast has 6 wineries and less than 50 growers. SC AVA approved in 1987.
- **Terroir:** Extends from coastline up to 30 miles inland from the north shore of San Francisco Bay in south to the northern Mendocino County border at north extreme. A sub-division has been labeled “true” Sonoma Coast, extending from Pacific Ocean to 4-5 miles inland. Most Sonoma Coast vineyards are soaked with sun and waiting for fog to come in. The true Sonoma Coast is in the fog waiting for the sun to come out. Relatively heavy rainfall. Vineyards are primarily above fog line on hilltops. Soils are varied. Primarily Winkler Region I (<2,500 degree-days to ripen grapes).

- **Aromas & Flavors:** More backbone, structure, grit, muscle, sinew. Mineral element. Notable tannins. Dense and concentrated with tightly wound acidity. Black cherry, sage, savory, earth, peppery, beet.
- **2008 Littorai Platt Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (\$60).**



Littorai

- Ted and Heidi Lemon founded Littorai (lit'or-i, a plural derivative of Latin word littor, meaning "coasts.") in 1993.
- Lemon is only American ever to be winemaker at a major Burgundy Domaine (Domaine Roulot).
- 90% of vineyard sources are farmed organically, 54% are farmed biodynamically. Vineyards are in Sonoma Coast, Russian River Valley and Anderson Valley.
- Wines display balance and harmony, resulting in age ability, both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.
- Sold strictly through a mailing list. Tasting by appointment at winery in Sebastopol.
- Website: www.littorai.com

2008 Littoral Platt Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$60. "Very shy and demure perfume of raspberry tart, vanilla and baking spices elevating over time in the glass. A curvy, saucy wine that is somewhat forward offering a lovely array of black cherry and berry fruits with subtle spice and citrus in the background. Seamless, with a good core of ripe tannins and balancing acidity that gives the wine a caressing sensation in the mouth. The best comes last, as the generous fruits cascade on the amazingly persistent finish. Pick any superlative you want. My choice would be 'heavenly.'"



Anderson Valley

- **Numbers:** 2,300 acres of vineyards, 1,197 acres of Pinot Noir. 30 wineries, >28 wineries outside AV AVA source Pinot Noir from the AV AVA. 88 vineyards, primarily Winkler Region I.
- **Terroir:** 10-15 miles from the Pacific Ocean. Receives fog incursions and ocean breezes, particularly in the northern or deep-end of the valley. Wide diurnal range in temperature (40 to 50°F) allows acid development to remain in line with sugar and flavor formation during the long, warm summers. Winkler Region I (<2,500 degree-days) in northern end of valley and Region II (2,500-3,000 degree-days to ripen grapes) in the southern end of the valley.
- **Aromas & Flavors:** Both 'classic' and 'neuvo' styles. Classic: fresh red berries, cherries, white pepper, spice, cedar. Firm, yet feminine, moderate oak. Neuvo: dark berries, jammy, high extraction, color and tannin, overt oak with caramel and spice, dark herbs, more masculine.
- **2007 Navarro Deep End Blend Anderson Valley Pinot Noir** (\$49)

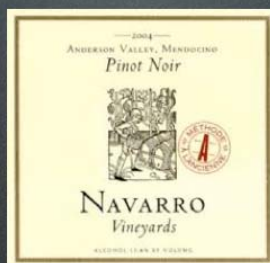
Navarro Vineyards

- Ted Bennett and Deborah Cahn bought a 900-acre sheep ranch in 1973. Now have 33 acres of estate Pinot Noir, 9 clones on 6 rootstocks.
- Winemaker Jim Klein since 1992.
- Also a leading producer of Alsatian-style wines.
- Wines are sold online with limited retail distribution. Sign up for informative newsletter. Tasting at winery in Philo on Hwy 128 daily.
- Website: www.navarrowine.com

2007 Navarro Vineyards Deep End Blend Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

13.9% alc., 1,572 cases, \$49. Clones 114, 115, 667, 777 and Pommard.

"This is a precocious wine that is very approachable now. Charming perfume of a fresh cherry pie with a hint of oak spice. Plums and berries lead the balanced attack with a perfect tug of acidity. Smooth and refined with an appealing elegance. Pick any superlative you want. Quintessential classic Anderson Valley Pinot Noir."



Pinot Briefs

False Claims About High & Rising Alcohol Content of Wine A paper published by the *American Association of Wine Economists* (AAWE Working Paper No. 82, www.wine-economics.org). Time-series data on alcohol content of wine from a large number of countries that experienced different patterns of climate change and influences of policy and demand shifts and the relationship between the actual alcohol content of wine and the alcohol content stated on the label were explored. There has been an 11 percent increase in the average alcohol content of wine between 1980 (21.4 degrees Brix) and 2007 (23.8 degrees Brix). The authors conclude that rising alcohol content of wine may be a nuisance by product of producer responses to perceived market preferences for wines having riper, more-intense flavors, possibly in conjunction with trends in the heat index. A common discrepancy between label claims and actual alcohol content indicates that label claims are biased towards a perceived norm or desired alcohol percentage for a given wine. Label claims on average understate the true alcohol content by 0.45% for New World wine and 0.39% for Old World wine. Consumers are satisfied to pay for a stated rather than an actual alcohol percentage.

Pinot On The River 2011 The 8th Annual Pinot On The River Grand Tasting will be held this year on Sunday, October 23 on the downtown Healdsburg Plaza Square with 100 Pinot Noir wineries participating. Visit www.pinotfestival.com for early bird discount tickets and more information.

Smartphone App for Monterey Wine Country Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association (MCVGA) has released a smartphone app that functions as a personal tour guide in Monterey Wine Country, providing maps, directions, profiles, and details on Monterey vineyards, wineries and tasting rooms. The app is available for installation from iTunes (www.bit.ly/montereyiphoneapp) and directly from the MCVGA website (www.MontereyWines.org/app). The same information is also available as an online database tool at www.MontereyWines.org.

Domaine Serene Changes Winemakers For the third time in three years, Domaine Serene has a different winemaker. Tony Rynders was Domaine Serene's winemaker since 1998 and left in 2008 under acrimonious circumstances. He now has his own label, Tendril, and consults for other wineries. Eleni Papadakis took over for Rynders, but was replaced amicably by Erik Kramer in April 2011.

Pinot Days San Francisco Discount Over 200 producers are participating in this year's Pinot Days Grand Festival on Saturday, June 18. Use code PRINCEPINOTSF11 for a special discounted price of \$50 for the Festival.

Wine Summit in Oregon The 6th International Wine and Heart Health Summit will be held at the Addison Inn & Spa in Newberg, Oregon. Researchers from throughout the United States and the world will present their latest research on the health benefits of wine and alcohol. Not for physicians only, but 11 hours of CME credit are offered to physicians attending the event. Speakers include David Adelsheim, Harvey Finkel, M.D., Roger Corder, M.D., Curtis Ellison, M.D. and noted wine critic, Matt Kramer. Visit www.winesummit.com for more information and to register.

Benovia Winemaker Promoted to General Manager Benovia Winemaker and Co-Owner Mike Sullivan has been promoted to General Manager and will take the lead in all day-to-day operations of the winery as well as continue as winemaker. Sullivan joined Benovia in 2005 after a successful tenure at Hartford Court and has been with the winery since the beginning, including the planting of 45 new acres of vineyards in the Russian River Valley. Bob Mosby will assume the position of Director of Sales. Benovia has enjoyed three sold-out vintages of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. The name, Benovia, is derived from co-owner Joe Anderson's and his spouse Mary father's names, Novian Anderson and Ben Dewane.



Auction Resources Do you have too much wine and need to sell some of it? The following major auction houses can help. (1) Acker Merrall & Condit: New York City and Hong Kong, no seller's fee, contact 877-225-3747 or info@ackermerrall.com. (2) Bonhams & Butterfields: New York City and San Francisco, seller's fee is 0 percent and up, minimum value \$300, contact Richard Pike 917-206-1644 or richardpike@bonhams.com. (3) Christie's: New York City, London, Hong Kong, seller's fee 0 to 10 percent, minimum value \$10,000, contact Christine Erickson 212-636-2267 or cerickson@christies.com. (4) Hart Davis Hart: Chicago, seller's fee based on value of consignment, contact 312-482-9996 or consignments@HDHwine.com. (5) Morrell & Co.: New York City, no seller's fee, minimum value \$2,000, contact Kimberly Janis at 212-307-4200 or morrellvin@aol.com. (6) Sotheby's: New York City, London, Hong Kong, seller's fee 0 to 10 percent, minimum value \$20,000, contact Duncan Sterling 212-606-7050 or duncan.sterling@sothebys.com. (7) Spectrum Wine Auctions: Irvine, CA, Hong Kong, seller's fee depends on size of consignment, no minimum value, contact Dan Rhodes at 888-982-1982 or drhodes@spectrumwine.com. (8) Winebid.com: Internet only, seller's fee 6 to 18 percent of reserve, minimum value \$2,500, contact Jennifer Sugden at 888-638-8968 or jsugden@winebid.com. (9) Winegavel.com: San Francisco, Internet, seller's fee 0 to 8 percent, minimum value \$1,000, contact Gence Alton at 800-774-2130 or consignments@winegavel.com. (10) Zachys: New York City, Hong Kong, seller's fee 0 to 15 percent, minimum value \$5,000, contact 914-448-3026 or auction@zachys.com.

Latest California Pinot Noir Acreage California's 2010 Grape Acreage Report from the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) reveals that the total wine-type grape acreage in California is estimated at 535,000 acres with 37,290 acres of Pinot Noir. Total bearing and non bearing Pinot Noir acreages: Marin 131, Mendocino 8,578, Merced 621, Monterey 8,569, Napa 2,871, Sacramento 1,373, San Benito 498, San Joaquin 1,610, San Luis Obispo 1,710, San Mateo 32, Santa Barbara 4,258, Santa Clara 72, Santa Cruz 206, Solano 645, Sonoma 11,013, Stanislaus 116, Trinity 25, Tulare 18, and Yolo 722. The Report listed 7,626 wineries in the United States and 3,364 wineries in California.

Latest Oregon Pinot Noir Acreage The 2010 Grape Acreage Report from NASS for Oregon indicates that planted acreage in Oregon was 20,300 acres. Total acreage has grown in Oregon by 44 percent over the last five years. Pinot Noir acreage is 12,265. From 2005 to 2010, Pinot Noir tonnage increased from 12,193 tons in 2005 to 21,364 tons in 2009, dropping back to 16,445 in 2010. With about 50% of the Pinot Noir acreage of California, can Oregon, with a significantly smaller population, absorb all this production?

Durell Vineyard Celebration Proprietor Bill Price of Price Family Vineyards and Three Sticks Wines hosted the Second Annual Durell Vineyard Spring luncheon on May 18, 2011 in the Sonoma Valley. Guests were treated to new releases of 2008 Durell Chardonnays from Tor, Auteur, Saxon Brown, Three Sticks, Chasseur, Kistler and Loring. Older Durell Chardonnay vintages were also sampled including 2005 Robert Craig, 2005 Three Sticks, 2004 Chasseur, 2004 Kistler and 2003 Patz & Hall. The wines proved the point that Durell Chardonnay can age gracefully. The tasting closed with 2007 Durell Pinot Noirs from Chateau St. Jean, Three Sticks, Loring, Saxon Brown and DeLoach.



Many Wine Festivals in California as Summer Begins Pinot and Paella Cook-Off in Templeton, June 5 (www.pinotandpaella.com). Ojai Wine Festival at Lake Casitas Recreational Area June 12 (www.ojaiwinefestival.com). Roll Out the Barrels Wine Festival, San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande June 23-26 (www.slowine.com). Atascadero Wine Festival at Atascadero Lake Park (www.atascaderowinefestival.com).

Popular Oregon Pinot Noir Winemakers with Own Label Here is a partial listing. Own label listed second. Isabelle Dutartre (Deponte Cellars, 1789 Wines), Drew Voit (Shea Wine Cellars, Harper Voit Wines), Chris Mazepink (Benton Lane, Ebony Wines), Michael Lundeen (Walnut City Wineworks, Genius Loci Wines/Lundeen Wines), Anna Matzinger and Michael Davies (Archery Summit - Matzinger, A to Z - Davies, Matzinger Davies Wine Company), Kelley Fox (Scott Paul Wines, Kelley Fox Wines, Michael Stevenson (Panther Creek, Barrie Cellars), Jason Lett (The Eyrie Vineyards, BlackCap), Tony Rynders (Revana, Tendril). Chris Berg (Evesham Wood, Roots Wine Company & Vineyard)

International Pinot Noir Celebration 25 Years of Celebration, Collaboration & Community, July 29-31, 2011. The 25th Anniversary IPNC will reunite winemakers, chefs, media and guests from the first event in 1987 and the following 23 celebrations. The featured seminar will explore how the exchange of ideas between peers and regions has affected the evolution of Pinot Noir and will include noted winemakers David Adelsheim, Jim Clendenen, Veronique Drouhin, Dominique Lafon, and Larry McKenna. The Friday night La Grande Fete: From the Côte D'Or to the Côte D'Oregon, will feature a Burgundian-inspired menu and magnums of Pinot Noir from around the world. Along with the Vineyard & Winery Tours, Northwest Salmon Bake, Alfresco Lunches, and the Sparkling Brunch Finale, this event is always nirvana for pinotphiles. The IPNC benefits ¡Salud! Visit www.ipnc.org for information and tickets.



Yeasts Part of Terroir? Dr. Jamie Goode reported on a new study from New Zealand that offers some proof that indigenous yeasts do originate in particular vineyards (*The World of Fine Wine* Issue 29, 2010). Research published by University of Auckland researcher Dr. Mat Goddard indicated that strains in the wild ferments they analyzed at Kumeu River were brought into the winery with the grapes. Previously, it was thought that yeasts primarily responsible for indigenous fermentations, *S. cerevisiae*, only inhabited wineries and represented escaped domestic commercial strains. Ongoing research is attempting to determine if different regions in New Zealand harbor different wine-yeast communities.

Wine Fed Beef Sezmu Meats in the Okanagan region of British Columbia raise Angus cattle on a diet of grass until they reach a desirable size at which point they are fed a proprietary blend of grains with a cow sized glass of red British Columbia wine every day until production. A cow sized glass is well over a bottle of wine. The folks at Sezmu claim the beef is exceptionally well marbled with a distinct beef flavor, is extremely tender, and has a longer shelf life than traditional beef. Visit www.sezmumeats.com.



Spitting Wine

Have you ever wished you could spit wine like the “winery guys” do? Do you find yourself attempting to spit wine into a bucket or drain and the wine either ends up on the front of your shirt and pants, or you cough and sputter as a small amount finds its way down your throat and windpipe? Do you decry projectile spitting as uncouth because you can’t succeed in doing it?

It makes considerable sense to spit when you taste at wineries. After tasting several wines, a significant amount of alcohol takes hold and numbs your tasting capabilities. The result is that all wines taste the same and you begin to ask silly questions of the winemaker. If you can spit well, it is a badge of experience and winemanship that brings you into the wine fraternity and may get you access to tasting reserve wines that ordinary non-spitters would never experience.

I have never seen a course at wine conferences and little advice about projectile spitting is forthcoming in the wine press or on the internet. A Master Sommelier friend, Rene Chazottes, told me years ago that the best way to learn to spit is to practice with water, preferably when sober, before wasting any good wine. Take a somewhat larger than normal gulp in your mouth from a glass of water, purse your lips and draw in some air through the water two or three times, swish the wine around in your mouth, and then expel it by narrowing the opening between your lips to an oval, avoiding any dribble on your chin at the end. Do this when your spouse and kids are out of the house to avoid any embarrassing ridicule.

Emile Peynaud (*The Taste of Wine*, 1987) describes the technique as follows. “To spit out the wine, gather it in the front of the mouth, tighten and slightly purse the lips, and increase the pressure inside the mouth until the wine is completely forced out, using the tongue as a piston. Just how adroitly you can do this will depend on how skillfully your lips can shape the wine’s trajectory. Understandably, the art of spitting is treated with a certain amount of circumspection, yet it is a hallmark of the professional taster who can spit in an almost clinical fashion from the edge of his lips, and control the force of the jet according to the distance of the spittoon, all without dribbling.”