



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

Adventures on the Pinot Trail: World of Pinot Noir - The Seminars

On February 27, 2014, I hit the Pinot Trail to attend four major events in California. Like the song, "Sugartime," from the 1950s sung by the McGuire Sisters, it was "Sugar (Pinot) in the morning, Sugar (Pinot) in the evening, Sugar (Pinot) at suppertime. Be my little sugar, And love me (Pinot) all the time." The trail first led me to Santa Barbara for the 14th Annual World of Pinot Noir, then to San Francisco for three more memorable events: a special retrospective tasting of the wines of Ted Lemon titled "30 Years of Winemaking, 20 years of Littorai," at Jardiniere restaurant on March 2, Affairs of the Vine Pinot Noir Summit at The Golden Gate Club on March 9, and the In Pursuit of Balance seminars and tasting at Bluxome Street Winery on March 10.

I will give a full report on each stop along the Pinot Trail in this issue and those to follow, highlighting some of the special wines I tasted. Some have accused me of being a Pinot pimp and rightfully so. One of my readers told me when I asked him what he had been drinking, "As far as what I am drinking, it's Pinot you bastard, and it's your damn fault. Now I empty my bank account at wineries nobody has ever heard of, on wines nobody has ever drank except you, you pr**k. You have ruined me....and I love it."

The World of Pinot Noir successfully relocated this year from its long-standing home in Shell Beach to the Bacara Resort & Spa in Santa Barbara. The switch was an easy choice because of the many participating wineries in the Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Maria Valley and the city of Santa Barbara. This was an impressive upgrade in venue that was thoroughly welcomed by all attendees despite the onslaught of rain throughout the weekend. Gone were the crowded tents at The Cliffs Resort in Shell Beach, replaced by a magnificent ballroom that not only provided plenty of space to comfortably visit and chat with the many producers, but lent an air of hi-collared ambiance that was more fitting for the regal majesty of Pinot Noir. For me, this was the BEST World of Pinot Noir experience ever!



Each year I attend the World of Pinot Noir where over 225 wineries from around the world participate and offer wines to attendees at seminars, dinners and walk-around tastings, and I return with renewed admiration for the dedication of those who craft these marvelous wines. As always, winemakers, winegrowers and winery owners were in abundance and eager to talk Pinot. The World of Pinot Noir is a convivial festival that unites the international community, launches and renews friendships, and allows all present to revel in their good fortune.

Seminar: Burgundy & Oregon: Parallels in Latitudes

Moderator: Katherine Cole, Journalist and Author from Oregon

Panelists Part I: Steve Goff, Colene Clemens Vineyard, Chehalem Mountains AVA
James Frey, Trisaetum Winery, Ribbon Ridge AVA
Lynn Penner-Ash, Penner-Ash Wine Cellars, Dundee Hills AVA
Rebecca Pittock-Shouldis, Ghost Hill Cellars, Yamhill-Carlton District AVA
Robert Brittan, Brittan Vineyards, McMinnville AVA
Isabelle Meunier, Evening Land Vineyards, Eola-Amity Hills AVA



Oregon's Willamette Valley is located between the Cascade and Coast ranges. More than 100 miles long and 60 miles at its widest point, the region has infrequent freezes and wide diurnal shifts (summer average high is 78°F and low 52°F). Acres of vines by variety: Pinot Noir, 11,053, Pinot Gris 2,175, Chardonnay 684, and Riesling 259. 88 percent of Oregon Pinot Noir comes from the Willamette Valley. Vintage notes: 2011 had a late start and was the coldest growing season in 50+ years but a warm, sunny and dry autumn made a November harvest a success resulting in a classic, cool-climate vintage; 2012 had some hail damage but overall was a warm growing season making for rich, full-bodied and approachable wines that will undoubtedly receive high scores.

In this seminar, each of the six sub-appellations of the Willamette Valley were discussed and two wines from each sub-AVA were offered by a representative producer. I sensed that many of the attendees were unfamiliar with Oregon Pinot Noir and were quite impressed by the wines.

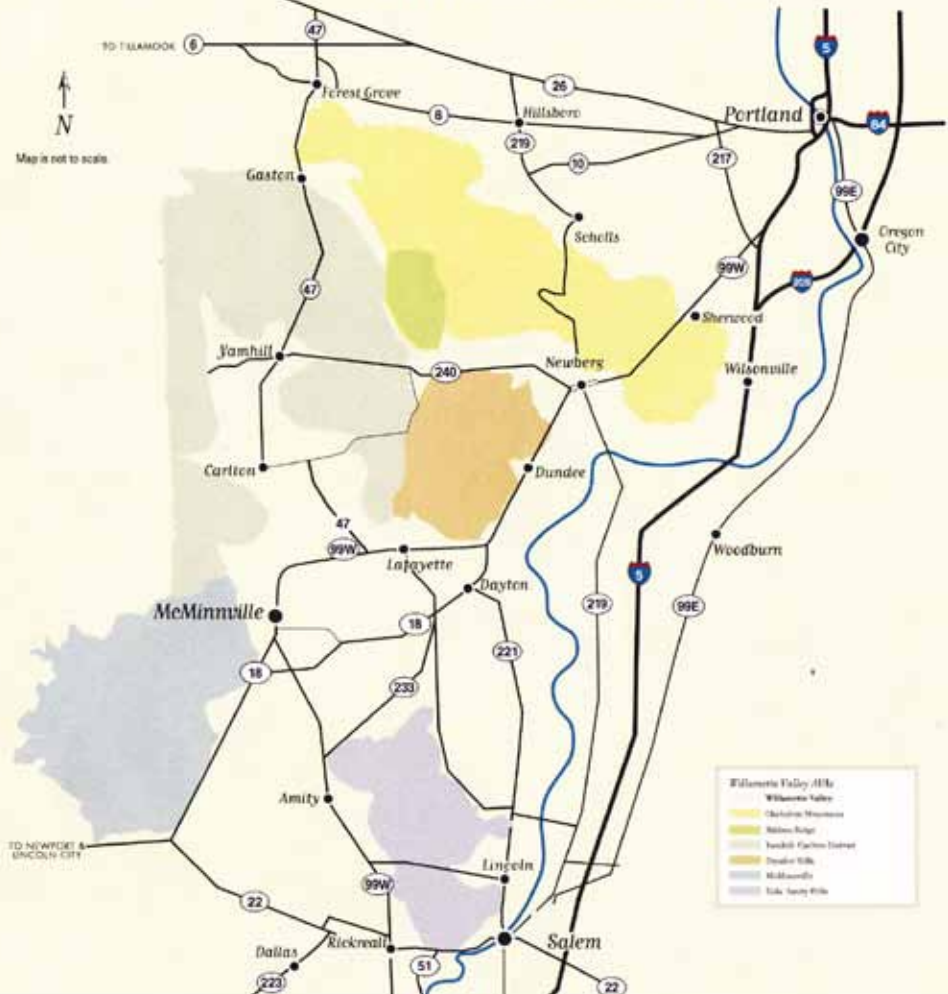
WILLAMETTE VALLEY, OREGON



WILLAMETTE VALLEY AVAS

- CHEHALEM MOUNTAINS
- DUNDEE HILLS
- EDLA - AMITY HILLS
- MCMINNVILLE
- RIBBON RIDGE
- WILLAMETTE VALLEY
- YAMHILL-CARLTON

WILLAMETTE VALLEY



Willamette Valley AVAs

- Willamette Valley
- Chehalem Mountains
- Ribbon Ridge
- Dundee Hills
- McMinnville
- Edla - Amity Hills
- Yamhill-Carlton

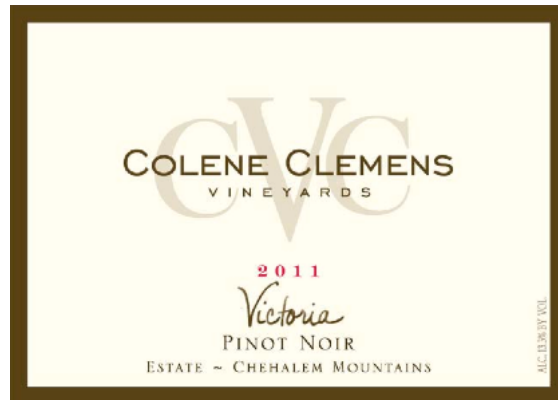
Chehalem Mountains - Colene Clemens

This is the largest of the six sub-AVAs of the Willamette Valley. It is characterized by the highest elevations and diverse soils including uplifted sedimentary seabeds, basaltic lava flows and Laurelwood loess (wind-blown silt). The ridge is up to 1,600 feet elevation with most vineyards located 300 to 800 feet elevation on both the south and north slope of the ridge. Chehalem Mountains has 100 vineyards, 1,600+ acres of vines, and 31+ wineries.

Colene Clemens is located in the northwestern part of the AVA across the street from the Ribbon Ridge sub-AVA at 325 to 650 feet elevation. The soils are primarily sedimentary but with substantial basalt (volcanic) rock. The wines tend to show more of the red spectrum of fruits and are more delicately structured than the wines from Ribbon Ridge, representing somewhat of a middle ground between the wines from the volcanic soils of the Dundee Hills and Eola-Amity Hills and the wines from the sedimentary soils of Yamhill-Carlton and Ribbon Ridge. A total of 40 acres of Pinot Noir were planted (Pommard, Wädenswil, 115, 667 and 777) between 2006 and 2010. The Victoria Cuvée is the winery's top offering each year, named after Colene Clemens' daughter. 50% Pommard and 50% clone 777, aged 11.5 months in 40% new French oak. The wine will easily last 10 years.

2011 Colene Clemens Victoria Cuvée Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 294 cases, \$58. Released fall 2013. 100% de-stemmed, aged 11 months in 42% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Aromas of black cherries, rose petals, and toasty oak. The broad flavors mimic the aromas with balanced tannins, generous acidity and a long finish. Outstanding.*

2012 Colene Clemens Victoria Cuvée Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 14.5% alc.. *More body and density than the 2011 vintage, with copious amounts of black cherry fruit accented by spice, citrus and tea. Nicely integrated tannins and a big, fruit-driven finish. Will benefit from more time in the bottle. Outstanding.*



Ribbon Ridge - Trisaetum

Ribbon Ridge is the smallest sub-AVA in the Willamette Valley. It is a 3-mile-long, 1¼ mile-wide ridge with mostly Willakenzie (sedimentary) soils with some Dupee silt loam. The sub-AVA has 27 vineyards, 500 acres of vineyards, and 10 wineries.

Trisaetum has 3 estate vineyards: one each in Yamhill-Carlton, Dundee Hills and Ribbon Ridge. The Ribbon Ridge Estate Vineyard is 28 acres and has a uniform marine-based sedimentary soil type which is very sandy and drains quickly. The wines from the Estate Vineyard feature darker fruits and a firm tannic structure. Although the wines are made from early ripening grapes, the wines are the last released because of the tannin structure. The Trisaetum Ribbon Ridge Estate Pinot Noir is composed of 40% Pommard, 20% 777, 20% Wädenswil, and small amounts of 667, 115 and Coury "clone."

2011 Trisaetum Single Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Estate Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., \$55. *This wine features dark cherry and cassis aromas with more red fruits showing up on the palate. The very chewy tannins will need time to resolve. Great acidity. Very good.*

2012 Trisaetum Single Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Estate Pinot Noir 14.4% alc.. *Similar to the 2011 vintage with darker berries on the nose and palate showing more depth and very broad tannins. Needs a few years in bottle. Very good.*



Dundee Hills - Penner-Ash Wine Cellars

Dundee Hills was the first sub-AVA planted in the Willamette Valley (1965). It is located in the heart of the Willamette Valley with predominantly Jory (volcanic, clay, red) over sedimentary sandstone soils starting at 350 feet elevation. The area is protected from weather by the coastal mountains and is something of a banana belt. Grapes are generally earlier maturing and harvested first. There are 50 vineyards, and 1,700+ acres of vines and 37+ wineries. Note: Penner-Ash Wine Cellars is located in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA but sources grapes from the Dundee Hills. The Pinot Noirs from the Dundee Hills feature red fruits such as strawberry and it said you can almost taste the red soil in the wines.

Lynn has worked with grapes from almost every sub-AVA, but has a long history with fruit from the Dundee Hills, beginning with her years of making wine at Rex Hill Winery beginning in 1988. Both wines offered have a base of clone 777 but have Pommard (Elleve Vineyard) or 115 (Bella Vida Vineyard) added to provide structure that 777 lacks.

2012 Penner-Ash Èllève Vineyard Dundee Hills Pinot Noir *This wine features sweet, red berry fruits with hints of dried tea leaves and spice. The acidity is bright and refreshing. Very good.*

2012 Penner-Ash Bella Vida Vineyard Dundee Hills Pinot Noir *The darker fruits are lush and mouth filling backed by mature tannins. Rich and long with layers of flavor. Still a bit tight and in need of cellaring. Outstanding.*



Yamhill-Carlton District - Ghost Hill Cellars

Some of the oldest marine sedimentary (Willakenzie) soils in the Willamette Valley are found in the Yamhill-Carlton District. The region's elevation varies from 200 to 1,000 feet and sits in the Coastal Range shadow. There are 45 vineyards, 1,200+ acres of vines, and 41 wineries. In general, the AVA features darker fruits

depending on the vintage with broad, supple and silky tannins, exotic spices including clove and cardamom in warm vintages and minerality.

The Estate Bayless-Bower Vineyard lies on property owned by the Bayless family since 1906. It sits across the street from Ken Wright's Abbey-Claim Vineyard and adjacent Tony Soter's Mineral Springs Ranch. Rebecca said that Soter was attracted to this area because the wines offered "more than simple fruitiness." The Bayless-Bower Vineyard is planted to 5 clones: Pommard, Wädenswil, 114, 115 and 777.

2011 Ghost Hill Cellars Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir *More austerity in this vintage but appealing red fruits, spice, rose petal and earth notes. Very good.*

2012 Ghost Hill Cellars Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir *More sweet, rich fruitiness with a note of sassafras and spice. Outstanding.*



McMinnville - Brittan Vineyards

The coastal influence in the McMinnville sub-AVA makes for drier, windier conditions. Typically, the soils are shallow sedimentary and volcanic over basalt. There are 10+ vineyards, 600 acres of vineyards, and 10 wineries. The Pinot Noirs from McMinnville have a very high concentration of phenolics as well as high acidity and will age extremely well.

Robert Brittan hales from the Napa Valley where he made Cabernet Sauvignon for many years in the Stag's Leap District. He has found it considerably more challenging vinifying Pinot Noir in Oregon. He chose his 128-acre site in McMinnville because it was challenging and had the potential for producing distinctive wines. Brittan replanted vineyards on the property and added vines and now has 25 acres planted to Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Rhone varieties. The vineyard is on the northern edge of the Van Duzer Corridor so although it is fairly windy, it is less windy and rainy than the Eola-Amity Hills and is drier and cooler than McMinnville in general. There are 5 to 6 soil types on the property with variable soil depth. A Basalt Block Pinot Noir is sourced from parts of the vineyard with the largest concentration of sub-marine basalt and a Gestalt Block Pinot Noir from originates from primarily shallower soils.

2011 Brittan Vineyards Basalt Block Willamette Valley Pinot Noir *From a cool vintage with a long maturation period. Bright red and black fruits with fine tannins. Very bright and juicy. Outstanding.*

2012 Brittan Vineyards Basalt Block Willamette Valley Pinot Noir *A warmer, shorter vintage with no rainfall during the summer. Less fruitier and more earthy, yet possessing richness. Outstanding.*



Eola-Amity Hills - Evening Land Vineyards

The Eola-Amity Hills sub-AVA is located in the Van Duzer Corridor so it receives cooling ocean winds, (it is said to be “windy as hell.”). There are many soil types but predominantly Nekia (shallow, volcanic) and Jory. There are 52 vineyards, 1,300+ acres of vineyards, and 27 wineries.

Rajat Parr has only been involved with Evening Land Vineyards for only 3 weeks so his remarks were brief. Evening Land wines are crafted by Isabelle Meunier with consulting winemaker from Burgundy, Dominique Lafon. The wines are from the Seven Springs Vineyard, an east-facing site with Nekia volcanic soils at 300 to 600 feet elevation. Nekia soils are shallower than the volcanic Jory soils in the Dundee Hills. The 120-acre vineyard was first planted in the 1980s, and is located on the east side of the sub-AVA which is less cool and windy than the west side. Although Parr has been a proponent of whole cluster inclusion in fermentation, Lafon is not a fan of stems so there are no stems in the two wines presented at the seminar.

2011 Evening Land Vineyards Seven Springs Estate Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir *A blend of the entire vineyard picked at 19°-20° Brix in mid-October. No tasting notes.*

2009 Evening Land Vineyards La Source Seven Springs Estate Eola-Amity Hills Pinot Noir *Picked 5 weeks earlier than the 2011 wines at 25°-26° Brix. Sourced from the heart of the vineyard and aged in 20% new French oak. No tasting notes.*



Seminar: Burgundy & Oregon: Parallels in Latitudes

Moderator: Katherine Cole, Journalist and Author, Oregon

Part II: Featured Burgundy Producer Frédéric Barnier Mason Louis Jadot.
Featured Vineyard Beaune Clos des Ursules

Maison Louis Jadot was founded in 1859 when Louis Henry Denis Jadot set up as a merchant. Vineyard purchases started with Beaune Clos des Ursules which is featured in the tasting here.

The area covered by the Beaune appellation is vast and complex. The northernmost point is marked by the Maconnets and the southernmost point by Les Boucherottes (see map). There are over 400 hectares of planted vineyards, of which 337 hectares are first growths. There are no Grand Cru vineyards but 36 Premier Crus. Red wines account for 90% of total annual production.



Beaune's terroirs are based on sedimentary bedrock laid down on the floor of a great ocean during the Mesozoic era (Jurassic period some 150 to 160 million years ago), and more recent strata formed during the Quaternary period (the last great ice age). The southern part, where the Clos des Ursules is located, is a watershed zone with numerous alluvial fans (loam soils with layers of clay on the surface). The vineyards are on steepish slopes of up to 20% to the North and gentler slopes to the South. Most of the vineyards face east-southeast.

The red wines from the central and southern parts are powerful, tannic and deeply colored while those from the northern area are generally less intensely colored with softer fruit flavors.

The Clos des Ursules is a walled portion of the Beaune 1er Cru Vignes Franches, an area whose vineyards were exempt from taxes during the middle ages. It owes its name to the religious order of Saint Ursula which was created in France in 1586. The nuns of this order arrived in Beaune in 1626 and based themselves in the building that is now the town hall. The order acquired the Clos in 1676 when it was designated as follows: 'A walled vineyard within the boundaries of Beaune.' Louis Henry Jadot bought the vineyard in 1826 and it has been owned continuously since by the Jadot family.

The most recent plantings date to the mid-1970s, but more than half the vines were planted during the 1950s.

With a total area of little more than 2 hectares, this Clos produces structured wines which are firm and rich. The aromas are complex and slightly earthy and the finish long and lush. Tannins are firm. These wines age extremely well over the course of 10 to 15 years with proper cellar conditions.

Fermentation is carried out naturally in open tanks without stems. The wine usually undergoes a fairly long fermentation of 25 to 33 days to extract color, tannins and aromas. The different lots are vinified separately and then aged in oak barrels for 15 to 18 months. Blending is performed at the end of vinification.



My general impressions of the wines were as follows. All wines had notable acidity and firm, prominent tannins. The red fruit was delicate in comparison to the tannins and acidity, with both of the latter standing out. Some wines had green notes. The 1985, 2005 and 2010 wines had the best balance. The Clos des Ursules wines are definitely food wines and not terribly appealing on their own in lesser vintages.

1985 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *A very charming, well-preserved wine with moderately deep color, aromas and flavors of earthy cherry, brown spice and mocha.*

1990 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *Slightly vegetal in a good way with a long, lush finish showing a hint of baking spices.*

1997 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *A rugged wine with dominant tannins, very delicate red cherry and berry fruits, and an underlying green streak.*

2003 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *Very dusty and rustic with secondary characters of old book, caramel and chocolate truffle. Plenty of tannin. Seems to have aged faster than other wines.*

2005 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *An impressive wine with good richness of black cherry fruit. The fruits are riper and darker in this vintage with noticeable mid palate fullness and length. The firm tannic backbone is well proportioned.*

2008 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *Similar in flavor profile to the 2005 vintage but leaner with more tannin and prominent citrus-driven acidity.*

2009 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *Lean and green, reserved and tight, with muscular tannins overwhelming the submerged fruit. Needs time.*

2010 Louis Jadot Beaune Clos des Ursules *Remarkably forward with a plethora of pretty cherry fruit underlain with spice. Very fresh with balanced tannins, bright acidity, and remarkable length on the generous finish.*

A Maison Louis Jadot Burgundy Dinner was held Saturday night, March 1, in the Miro Restaurant Wine Cellar at Bacara Resort.

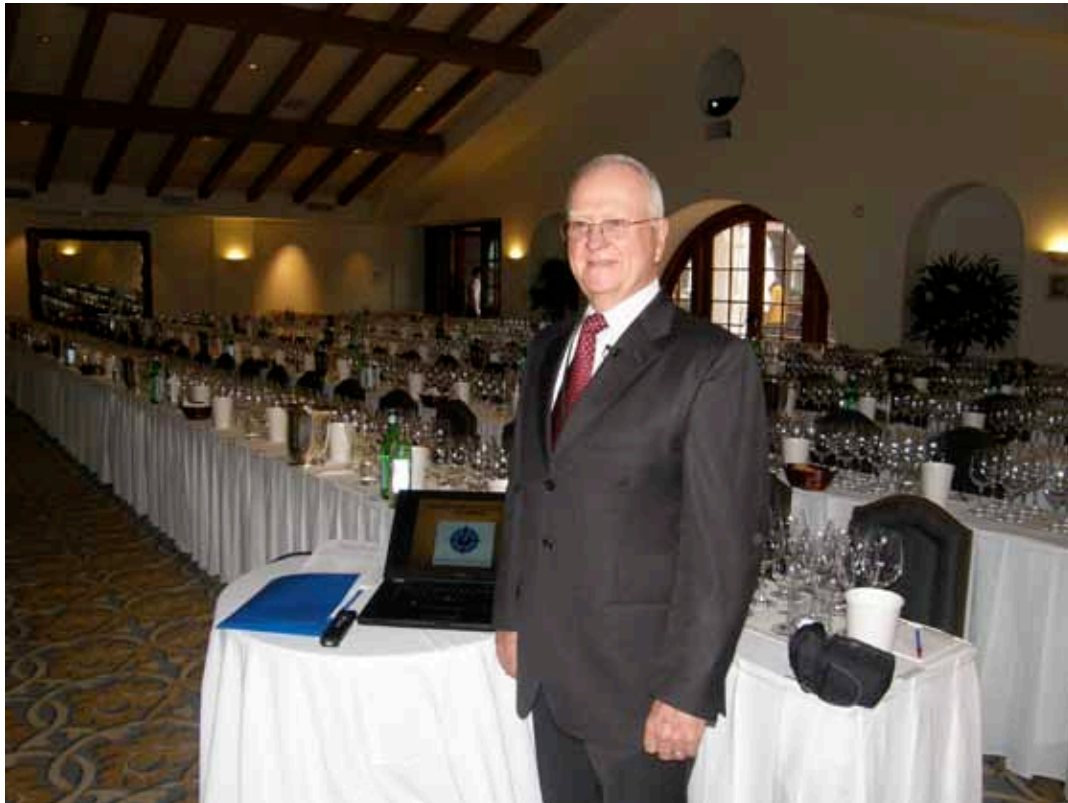
Seminar: The Insider Wines of the Cote d'Or

Presenter: Donald P. Kinnan, CSS, CWE, Secretary of Society of Wine Educators

I did not attend this seminar but it was recorded for later posting on Grape Radio (www.graperadio.com) and the World of Pinot Noir website (www.wopn.com). This was a 3-hour presentation focusing on the "insider wines" of the Cote d'Or. The insider wines are often sought out by knowledgeable Burgundy enthusiasts who enjoy their value and pleasure, while the more expensive, high-profile wines are saved for special occasions. In addition, there was a detailed discussion of the mountain of Corton, location of the Cote d'Or's greatest expanse of Grand Cru vineyard acreage.

The 12 wines presented and discussed:

2012 Domaine Collotte Marsannay Rose
2010 Domaine Bruno Clair Marsannay "Les Longeroies"
2010 Domaine Pierre Gelin Fixin "Clos Napoleon"
2010 Domaine Jean-Marc et Hugues Pavelot Pernand-Vergelesses
2010 Domaine Simon Bize Savigny-Les-Beaune "Les Narbontons"
2010 Domaine Mongeard-Mugneret Savigny-Les-Beaune "Les Narbontons"
2010 Domaine Jean et Giles Lafouge Auxey-Duresses "La Chapelle"
2010 Domaine Philippe Colin Chassagne-Montrachet "Les Chenes"
2010 Domaine Vincent Girardin Santenay "Les Gravieres"
2006 Domaine Vincent Girardin Corton-Charlemagne
2005 Domaine D'Ardhuy Corton "Clos due Roi"



Eric Anderson and I recorded a conversation with Donald about his career and his personal insight into Burgundy. This will also appear on Grape Radio and the World of Pinot Noir website.

Seminar: Hollywood & The Vine

Moderator: Sara Schneider, Wine Editor for Sunset Magazine
Panelists: Frank Ostini, Hitching Post II Restaurant & Hitching Post Wines,
Chris Burroughs, Tasting Room at Sanford Winery in Movie 'Sideways'
DLynn Proctor, Penfolds Winemaking Ambassador
Brian McClintic MS, Les Marchands Wine Bar & Merchant

This was a highly entertaining seminar that was very informative, yet filled with laughs because the panel was very animated and unpretentious. Both Proctor and McClintic appeared in the documentary film 'Somm,' and they spoke about their experience. Burroughs was in the popular film 'Sideways,' and Ostini owns the restaurant that was a central focus of the film and where several scenes were shot. They provided considerable insight into the making of the film and the impact it had on Santa Barbara County wineries. Sara Schneider did a marvelous job harnessing the lively panel.



The most interesting takeaway from this seminar was an outline provided that detailed how potential master sommelier candidates evaluate wines blind to arrive at the final determination of wines including grape variety, country and region of origin, old world versus new world, age of wine, and vintage. Proctor and McClintic were presented with wines blind and went through the outline in the manner they would follow to identify a wine. They didn't guess all the wines, but were remarkably close on ones they missed. One pearl I learned is that the sensation of sweetness on the palate in a wine comes from three sources: ripeness of fruit, alcohol and oak. Here is the outline:

HOLLYWOOD & THE VINE SEMINAR

SIGHT _____

- **Clarity**
Clear/ medium clear/slightly cloudy/cloudy
- **Brightness**
Dull/hazy/bright/day bright/star bright/brilliant
- **Color**
Reds: purple/ruby (red)/garnet/orange/brown
Whites: clear/green/straw/yellow/gold/brown
- **Concentration:** low/medium/high
- **Rim Variation:** color of rim/edge
- **Gas Evidence**
- **Sediment/Particles**
- **Viscosity:** low/medium/high

NOSE _____

- **Flaws**
Corkiness, H₂S, volatile acidity, brett, oxidation, etc.
- **Intensity:** delicate/moderate/powerful
- **Age assessment:** youth vs. vinosity
- **Fruit:** primary and secondary
- **Non-fruit aromas**
Flowers/spices/herbs/botrytis/other aromas
- **Earthiness**
Mineral/chalk/stony/dust/mushroom/barnyard/musty
- **Wood**
Old vs. new–French vs. American–large vs. barrique

PALATE _____

- **Sweetness**
Bone dry/dry/off-dry/sweet/very sweet
- **Body:** light/med-/medium/med+/full
- **Fruit:** confirm nose
- **Non-fruit flavors:** confirm nose
- **Earthiness:** confirm nose
- **Wood:** confirm nose
- **Tannin:** low/med-/medium/med+/high
- **Alcohol:** low/med-/medium/med+/high
- **Acidity:** low/med-/medium/med+/high
- **Finish:** short/med-/medium/med+/long
- **Complexity:** low/med-/medium/med+/high

INITIAL CONCLUSION _____

- **Old World/New World**
- **Climate:** cool/moderate/warm
- **Grape Variety/Blend**
- **Age Range**
1–3 yrs./3–5 yrs./5–10 yrs./more than 10 yrs.

FINAL CONCLUSION _____

- **Grape Variety/blend**
- **Country/Region/Appellation**
- **Quality level**
- **Vintage**



WORLD OF PINOT NOIR

Adventures on the Pinot Trail: World of Pinot Noir: The Tastings

The walk-around Grand Tastings at the World of Pinot Noir, like similar tastings at other events, are not a venue for serious, extensive wine tasting. Admittedly, the best way to critically evaluate or even thoroughly enjoy Pinot Noir is to taste it over time. As wine writer Eric Asimov said several years ago, "Part of what makes Pinot Noir so exciting is its elusive nature. From one moment to the next, the aromas and flavors of a good Pinot Noir change in the glass, making it difficult to pin down." Not infrequently at these tastings, the host pops the cork on a bottle in front of you and pours you an ounce or so without giving any time for the wine to open up. That said, evaluating wines in this setting is an acquired skill that enables the experienced taster to develop lasting impressions gained by brief flings with a wine. It has been said that Pinot Noir is like love, when the right one comes along, you know it.

The photos below will give you a feel for the Grand Tastings held in the large ballroom at the Bacara Resort, and you can sense the buzz in the room.





Some of the wines were available in a quiet setting in a room for members of the media to taste and I took advantage of this as well. This is not as fun as tasting in the presence of winemakers that you can get to know. As Tim Atkin MW has said, “The character, ambition and talent of the person who made it is highly relevant to how that wine tastes. I want to know about these things, just as I want to know about vintage conditions, personal eccentricities, and a winemaker’s take on the world. All those things make wine different; all these things make wine special.”

Clearly, I could not taste every wine or even all the offerings of every producer. There were, however, select wines that grabbed my attention and I have listed them here and in some cases provided brief comments. These are wines that are worth further exploration. Do not stress if you cannot find a particular wine, and do not feel that my choices are sacred cows. I have learned at these events by asking others what their favorite wines were, that more often than not their choices do not match all the wines that I preferred. In spite of the potential differences in palate preference, I do recommend paying attention to the producer’s name.

Many of the wines tasted are from the glorious 2012 vintage and not released yet. I did not taste wines from wineries that I review regularly in the *PinotFile*.

Exceptional (90-94)

2012 Alma Rosa La Encantada Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir Dependable Richard Sanford tirelessly promotes his wines and region, and never seems to lack for enthusiasm at the many events at which he pours his wines. He has put his financial setbacks behind him, and continues to eagerly offer a range of top flight wines at sensible prices. He knows this vineyard intimately as he originally planted it. *Still very young, but offering an appealing floral nose and a luscious core of earth-kissed red fruits backed by bright acidity. A quintessential Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir.*

2012 Babcock Winery Slice of Heaven Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir From Block 14 at Rita's Crown Vineyard. The lengthy story of "Slice of Heaven" is detailed by Brian Babcock on the winery's website. *A cherry bombast with plenty of likable cherry aroma and flavor with a substantial finish of uncommon length.*

2012 Barden Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.60, 178 cases, \$82. My first experience with this wine from Margerum Wine Company vinified by winemaker Jason Barrette. 30% whole cluster, natural fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels for 9 months, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Beautifully balanced with a tasty core of middleweight cherry fruit.*

2011 Bernardus Pinot Noirs This excellent wines are detailed in a feature elsewhere in this issue.

2011 Brittan Vineyards Basalt Block McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Sourced from parts of vineyard that have the heaviest concentration of sub-marine basalt resulting in low yielding vines that produce intense flavors. *Impressive fruit intensity and vividness with a balanced, firm tannic backbone, and a long, pleasing finish with a spark of citrus.*

2011 Brittan Vineyards Gestalt Block McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Sourced from the west-facing and most exposed blocks in the vineyard, resulting in a wine that is transparent to its vintage. *A little darker in color than the Basalt, offering luscious plum and blackberry fruits, substantial tannins, and a lip smacking, acid-driven finish.*



Charlie Heintz produces less than 1,000 cases of Pinot Noir Rosé, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah from Heintz Ranch under the Heintz and Dutch Bill Creek labels. The winemaker is veteran Hugh Chapelle. I spent quite a while talking with Charlie who is extremely passionate about his vineyard and wines. I have always relished Chardonnays from Heintz Vineyard but the Pinot Noir was a surprise and the Syrah was one of the most memorable wines I tasted at World of Pinot Noir. Most of Charlie's fruit is sold to name California producers including Ceritas Wines, DuMOL, DeLoach Vineyards, Flowers Winery, Freeman Vineyards & Winery, Littorai, Moone Tsai, Peay Vineyards, Peirson Meyer Wines, Williams Selyem, and Zepaltas Wines.



2012 Charles Heintz Vineyards Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 143 cases, \$45. Aromas of lemon curd, roasted nuts, and citrus lead to a full-flavored core of rich citrus fruits and chalky minerality.

2012 Charles Heintz Vineyards Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Syrah 200 cases, \$46. I wasn't going to taste this wine as I rarely drink Syrah, but Charlie insisted and was I glad. This is cool-climate Syrah at its best. 2 acres of Swan clone Syrah grown with very low yields. *Drinks like a Pinot Noir, with a silky texture and impeccable balance. Enticing flavors of red stone and berry fruits with hints of spice and oak. A flat-out gorgeous wine.*



2012 Cirq Estate Treehouse Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir Winemaker Michael Browne's own label made from his own vineyard farmed by partner Charlie Chenoweth. California's next cult Pinot Noir. *Despite being bottled only two weeks prior, this wine was very forward and giving. Velvety soft tannins caressed the intense core of plum, blackberry and black raspberry fruits. My notes say, "Drinking great." Allocated.*

2012 Couloir Wines Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 33% whole cluster fermentation. *The bright acidity of the Sta. Rita Hills is on full display bringing the layers of red and black fruits to life. Beautifully crafted with impeccable balance and a finish that is reluctant to go away.*

2012 Couloir Wines Chileno Valley Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., TA 0.68, 193 cases, \$44. 25% whole cluster. Aged in about 15% new French oak barrels, unfinned and unfiltered. *Relatively light in color, but packs a wallop of well-spiced red fruits. A very generous wine that ranks among the best I have ever tasted from this small appellation. Love this!*

2012 Couloir Wines Monument Tree Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., TA 0.50, 197 cases, \$46. Clones 777, 667 and 115, 50% whole cluster, aged 11 months in 35% new French oak barrels. *A lovely, but powerfully flavored wine with plenty of well-ripened red cherries and berries with a hint of spice and oak.*

2012 Couloir Wines Campbell Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir *This wine has the typical whole cluster floral display on the nose which I find extremely enticing. Modest in weight, but tasty, with an array of berry fruits backed by sinewy tannins. Still young, but provocative.*

2011 Domaine Carneros La Terre Promise Carneros Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.68. Translated as "The Promised Land," this bottling features Dijon 667 from La Terre Promise Vineyard. Some of the grapes from this vineyard go into Domaine Carneros sparkling wines as well. *Very soft and smooth on the palate with a hardy core of sappy fruit, backed by complimentary oak. The tannins are quite suave and the wine is thoroughly satisfying.*

2012 FEL Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., \$50. A new label established in March 2014 by Lede Family Wines in Napa Valley who purchased the Savoy Vineyard. FEL represents Florence Elsie Lede. The winemaker is Ryan Hodgins. The winery also offers a special selection of four barrels of Savoy Vineyard labeled Breggo Spiritus. *Glorious aromas of black cherry pie glaze, spice, earth and oak come together beautifully. The mid weight earth-kissed dark cherry core is delicious and carries its intensity through a long finish. Very silky in the mouth, with soft tannins and easy drink ability. One of the top Pinots I tasted at the World of Pinot Noir. Allocated.*



2012 Gary Farrell Hallberg Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir Theresa Heredia has now settled in as winemaker and has put her stamp on the wines. They feature the Gary Farrell style with a little more structure and aromatic charm. *This wine features the luscious fruit this vineyard is known for especially in this glorious vintage accented with an array of exotic spices. Great.*

2012 Gary Farrell Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir *A typical Bien Nacido offering with aromas of violets and herbs, earthy red and black fruits, and an uplifting finish showing a touch of dried herbs.*

2010 Ghost Hill Cellars Prospector's Selection Bayless-Bower Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir *A bright wine with appealing red cherry and blueberry fruits with seamless balance and a refreshingly crisp finish. Just now flashing its best stuff.*

2010 Gundlach Bundschu Winery Heritage Selection Carneros Pinot Noir \$55. The winery's 153-year-old estate 320-acre vineyard, Rhinefarm, is located at the southernmost point in Sonoma Valley. This limited bottling is made from some of the oldest vines on the property dating to 1934. This was a surprise for me as I had never sampled this Heritage Selection bottling and found it to be a very special wine. *Highly aromatic with scents of black cherries, black plum sauce and floral attaché. Intensely flavored and very complex, yet polished and refined with soft tannins and an amazingly long finish displaying copious black cherry goodness accented with oak. Allocated.*

2011 Gypsy Canyon Trois Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir No tasting room, a smart beautiful woman on stunning acreage doing what makes her happy. Deborah Hall pretty much single handedly tamed the large property into a haven of grapes, rescued dogs and fulfilled dreams. Consistently one of my favorite wines from this AVA, this three vineyard blend is a special selection of barrels. Each wine is presented in special hand-blown glass bottles. *A very feminine, elegant wine with fresh aromas and flavors of red cherries and baking spice. Reflective of the vintage in its delicacy, but highly satisfying. Wait List.*

2011 Hartford Family Winery Velvet Sisters Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.81, TA 0.52, \$65. The "Velvet Sisters" are local Anderson Valley historical figures who in the language of Boontling lore became known for wearing plush velvet dresses that they had bought on a trip to British Columbia. Sourced from a block within the Falk Vineyard planted to Pommard, 115, 667 and 777. Aged 14 months in 50% new French oak barrels. *All the 2011 Hartford Family Pinot Noirs poured at the event were quite special but this one really stood out for me. Very bright and vivid fruit extract featuring aromas and sappy flavors of black cherries, boysenberries, and baking spice. Concentrated, yet refined and silky. Gorgeous.*

2011 Hartford Family Winery Hailey's Block Arrendell Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.57, TA 0.60, 270 cases, \$65. This block, named after Don and Jennifer Hartford's daughter, Hailey, was planted in 1996 to Dijon 114 and 777 when Hailey was 6 years old. Unfined and unfiltered. *Hi-tone aromas of red plum and raspberry echoed on the palate with added nuances of spice. The electric backbone of acidity charges the wine with energy and leads to a mouth watering finish.*

2011 Hartford Family Winery Arrendell Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.36, TA 0.67, 235 cases, \$90. This vineyard is located in the coldest spot in the Green Valley sub-appellation of the Russian River Valley AVA. First planted in 1975, it struggles to ripen one ton per acre of heirloom selections of Pinot Noir. The high natural acidity creates the potential for extended aging. *Enticing aromas of black cherry pie glaze, red raspberry jam and dried herbs. Crisp on the palate with a bright cut of acidity, bringing to life the core of cherry, blueberry and raspberry fruits. The finish is juicy and long.*

2012 Masút Block 6 Estate 115 Mendocino County Pinot Noir Brothers Ben and Jake Fetzer are the owners, growers and winemakers. They work with several clones of Pinot Noir planted on 35 acres in Mendocino County's coastal mountains. *Nicely perfumed with aromas of black cherries and black plums with hints of spice. Dreamy softness on the palate with flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and cola with a subtle note of supportive oak in the background.*

2011 Masút Estate Vineyard Mendocino County Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$40. Aged 11 months in 35% new French oak barrels. *Highly aromatic with scents of black raspberry preserves, black cherries and toasty brioche. The flavors echo the aromas with an underlying touch of spice and earth. Mild tannins make for easy drinking now and the finish is quite generous and memorable.*

2012 Pfenner Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and 2012 Pfenner Sonoma Coast Chardonnay - see feature in this issue. Both are extraordinary wines and the best ever from this producer.

2012 R2 Wine Company S&B Sanford & Benedict Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir <150 cases, \$56. One of the limited quantity Pinot Noirs from the team that formerly owned Roessler Vineyards. Winemaker is Drew Huffine. *A beautiful wine with highly expressive dark red fruits on the nose and palate, filling the mouth with pleasure, and exiting with a persistent, earth-toned, fruit-driven finish. Impeccable balance.*



2012 R2 Wine Company 3-3-3 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 150 cases, \$50. A blend of the three best barrels of the vintage. Aged in 60% new French oak barrels. *A gorgeous wine that exudes charm and elegance, featuring bright cherry, strawberry and cola aromas and flavors. Harmonious with a generous finish.*

2012 Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 1,000 cases, \$70. This vineyard was planted in 2000 and comprises 12.2 acres of Pinot Noir (Calera and two Burgundian suitcase selections) and 2.2 acres of Chardonnay selections from Montrachet Vineyard. After selling fruit to Aubert and Peter Michael for ten years, owners Tim and Jackie Reuling decided to produce their own wines with winemaker Matt Taylor. 25% whole cluster. *Lovely aromas of cherries, spice and subtle oak. Mid weight flavors of black cherry with a savory, spicy undertone and bright supporting acidity.*



2012 Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.0% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.56, 350 cases, \$70. Pressed whole cluster to barrel, barrel fermented, 100% native yeasts, aged 10 months in 50% new and 50% used French oak barrels. *This wine really caught my attention with its aromas of lemon, peach and petrichor (dirt after rain). The creamy palate featured white stone fruits, lemon curd, and crème brûlée supported by lively acidity. The finish is long and refreshing. An extraordinary offering.*

2009 Sonoma Coast Vineyards Balistreri Family Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 50 cases (re-release), \$75. Vinified by winemaker Anthony Austin. Harvest ended at the start of November ahead of the rains. 25% whole cluster. Extended 10-day cold soak, spontaneous wild fermentation. *Drinking now in its prime with rich black cherry and black raspberry fruit complimented by earthy flora notes and spice. Seamless, with a bombastic finish.*

2010 Talisman Wines Adastra Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir 243 cases, \$56. Pinotcentric winery with exquisite Pinot Noirs crafted by Scott Rich. 113, 2A and Pommard. *Darkly colored and dark fruit driven with aromas and flavors of blackberries, boysenberries and subtle oak. Very sleek and soothing on the palate, finishing with a burst of fruit. Has some bottle age and drinking beautifully now. Check out feature with review of all 2010 releases in this issue.*

2011 Trombetta Family Wines Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 530 cases, \$58. Mother and daughter duo Rickey Trombetta Stancliff and Erica Stancliff share a passion for fine Pinot Noir. This wine is crafted by Erica and consulting winemaker Paul Hobbs. Clones 777, Swan and "828." Harvest Brix 25°. Native fermentations, aged 9 months in 50% new French oak barrels. *Effusive aromas of mixed berry preserves with hints of earth and mocha. Bright and lively on the palate with a broad array of berry fruits accented by spice and vanilla. An elegant, polished wine of great charm.*

2012 Twomey Monument Tree Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir A new release and the first Twomey Pinot Noir with the Monument Tree Vineyard designation. *A seamless wine in the Twomey style with juicy acidity charging the discreetly concentrated dark red cherry and berry fruit. Hedonistic flavor, yet refined in character. Highly enjoyable.*

Wayfarer Pinot Noir was the most exciting find at this year's World of Pinot Noir. This new label from Jayson and Celia Pahlmeyer features estate grown Wayfarer Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The Wayfarer Vineyard is 30 acres of Goldridge soil hidden among the redwoods two coastal ridges from the Pacific Ocean. Formerly a family owned organic farm known as 'Wayfarer,' and just down the mountain road

from Marcassin Vineyard in the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA, Helen Turley declared it destined to be “the La Tache of California.” Considerable effort was needed to transform the property in the remote Sonoma Coast wilderness into a world-class vineyard. Viticulturist David Abreu divided the site into 30 one-acre blocks, each dedicated to a single clone determined to be the best match for the block: 16 clones in all. The Wayfarer fruit was blended into Pahlmeyer’s Sonoma Coast wines beginning in 2005. I visited the vineyard in 2004 with then Pahlmeyer winemaker Erin Green (see *The PinotFile*, Volume 3, Issue 24). The wines are vinified now by talented winemaker Bibiana González Rave who was trained in viticulture and winemaking in the vineyards of France. I have been impressed with her talent and drive since our first meeting at the World of Pinot Noir when I interviewed her for Grape Radio. The scheduled inaugural releases will be in the fall of 2014. My advice is to get on the mailing list now while you can at www.wayfarervineyard.com.



2012 Wayfarer Estate Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 5-7% whole cluster.

2012 Wayfarer Golden Mean Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 25% whole cluster.

2012 Wayfarer The Traveler Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 32% whole cluster. A DRC suitcase selection.

The wines are still a bit tight and thus won't be released until fall. That said, these were the best Pinot Noirs I tasted at the World of Pinot Noir. I was so enraptured that I failed to write any tasting notes except “a fiesta in the mouth: WOW!”

Very Good (86-89)

2012 Alma Rosa Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$35, screwcap. Very approachable, ideal dinner wine.

2011 Babcock Winery Appellation's Edge Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$60 (sold out). Sourced from Radian Vineyard Blocks 32 (Pommard) and 33 (Dijon 115). Grown at the extreme western edge of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA.

2011 Baxter Winery Valenti Vineyard Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., \$45. Fermented with 30% whole cluster using native yeast. Aged in all neutral French oak barrels for 20 months and then aged 12 months in bottle.

2012 Bruliam Wines Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir Dijon clones 777 and 115. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels.

2012 Cebada Vineyard Estate Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir \$42. Part of Forbidden Fruit Orchards, a boutique farm and winery located between Buellton and Lompoc, just west of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Clones 2A, 115, Calera and Pommard 4. Aged in about one-third new and two-thirds neutral French oak barrels.

2012 Charles Heintz Vineyards Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 200 cases, \$48.

2013 Charles Heintz Vineyards Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Rosé \$19.

2011 Domaine de la Côte Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 645 cases, \$45. 50% whole cluster.

2012 EnRoute Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

2012 Hartford Family Winery Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

2011 Hartford Family Winery McEvoy Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir

2011 Joseph Jewell Floodgate Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

2011 Joseph Jewell Hallberg Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

2011 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Estate Pinot Noir \$55. 59% Pastoral Vineyard and 41% Quarter Moon Vineyard. 17% whole clusters. Aged 14 months in 40% new and 60% two-to-three-year-old French oak barrels.

2012 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Estate Pinot Noir

2011 Kitá Wines Hilliard Bruce Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$60. Wines produced by winemaker Tara Gomez and assistant winemaker Tymari LoRe. Aged in 40% new French oak barrels.

2012 Kitá Wines Hilliard Bruce Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir Unreleased.



2012 Left Coast Cellars Cali's Cuvée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$24. A blend of grapes from the Left Coast vineyards, crafted from a wide variety of clonal and rootstock combinations. Dijon clones 115, 667 and 777.

2011 McEvoy Ranch "The Evening Standard" Marin County Pinot Noir 195 cases, \$45. Known for olive oil, but now producing wine under the McEvoy Ranch label. The winemaker is Dr. Maurizio Castelli assisted by Blake Yarker.

2012 Paul Lato "Atticus" Sebastiano Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$70. A blend of 115 and Swan selection. As usual, the Paul Lato booth was swamped with people so I gave a wave and tasted a bit of this wine out of magnum format.

2012 R2 Wine Company Hein Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir \$48. Limited production.

2011 R2 Wine Company Black Pine California Pinot Noir \$26. 80% Sonoma Coast fruit.

2012 RN Estate Solomon Hills Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 205 cases, \$55. Clones 115, 667 and Pommard. Aged 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels.

2012 Seagrape Wine Company "Jump Up" Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 192 cases, \$40. Produced by Dave Steinwachs and winemaker Karen Steinwachs, the winemaker for Buttonwood Farm Winery and a long time board member of World of Pinot Noir. A blend from Rancho la Viña Vineyard (777) and Rancho Santa Rosa Vineyard (667). 25% whole cluster from Rancho la Viña aged in 15% new French oak and 100% de-stemmed from Rancho Santa Rosa aged in once-used French oak.



2012 Seagrape Wine Company Rancho La Viña Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 24 cases, \$40. From a 1-acre "Seagrape block" planted to clone 777. 25% whole cluster.

2011 Sonoma Coast Vineyards Bodega Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 196 cases, \$50.

2012 Twomey Soberanes Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

2011 Wren Hop Vineyards "Wisdom & Chaos" Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 375 cases, \$62. Dijon clones 115 and 667. Raised in 100% new French oak barrels.

Talisman: 2010 Pinots are a Giant Step Up from the Ordinary

I need to do a shout out about the outstanding 2010 Talisman Pinot Noirs. I have been a long time fan of the wines, but somehow I drifted away and did not taste the lineup of the 2009 wines. I am here to tell you that the 2010 Pinot Noirs are incredibly beautiful wines with impeccable balance and superior age worthiness. The 2010 vintage is the current release for Talisman as winemaker Scott Rich holds the wines back a minimum of one year since he feels strongly that they benefit from extra time before release. Believe me, they are READY to drink now. The impeccable balance suggests a long life ahead and I would not hesitate to cellar these wines for ten years.

Winemaker Scott Rich learned his craft under Tony Soter while working at Etude in Carneros. Along with his spouse Marta, who is also the National Sales Manager for Calera, they started their own label in 1993. Scott is a lover of unique terroir and he searches judiciously for vineyards that are challenging and on the edge. He says, "I like to express terroir and that is the beauty of Pinot Noir. Terroir comes through in the more extreme vineyards."

Each of his wines are vinified in about 5 barrel lots. I have tasted a number of older vintages and can testify that they age extremely well. The wines were bottled in July of 2012 and represent both fall 2013 and spring 2014 releases.

The winery is in a bare bones warehouse in Sonoma as part of the Eighth Street Wineries. Nothing fancy, just great wines. The winery is open several times a year during regional and local open house events, and Scott and Marta pour at many major Pinot Noir festivals including this recent World of Pinot Noir event in Santa Barbara. Tasting by appointment is available in a building that is over 110 years old in the heart of historic Glen Ellen. The tasting room is open Thursday through Sunday by appointment. Visit www.talismanwine.com.



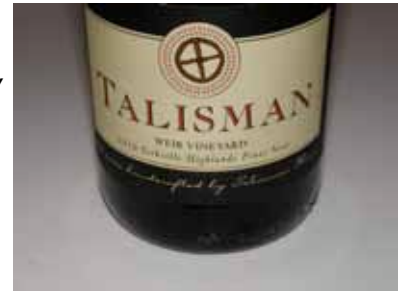
I can't tell you how impressed I was with every Pinot Noir I tasted in the 2010 lineup. They are all outstanding, so the scores simply reflect my personal taste and critical preferences. In any case, you can't go wrong with any of the wines.

2010 Talisman Spring Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 244 cases, \$44. Release April 2014. The vineyard is located on a wind-blown ridge west of the town of Petaluma. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas are so appealing one wants to dive into the glass. Scents of red cherry, spice, herbs and oak in perfect harmony. The cherry core of fruit is complimented by an oak sheen. Lighter in weight with mild tannins and some finishing intensity and length, offering good lip-smacking acidity. A good example of how oak brings out the best in Pinot Noir. The most interesting wine I have had from this vineyard. 92.*



2010 Talisman Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 243 cases, \$65. Released October 2013. A unique site with very cold night time temperatures and gravelly, well-drained soils. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of cherry, raspberry, blueberry and dark chocolate. Charming essence of sweet, dark red cherries and berries with a hint of lovable spice on the palate.*

Seamless with integrated tannins and a long, intensely fruited finish. This wine just speaks class. Everything you like in Pinot Noir from a very special vineyard. 96.



2010 Talisman Wildcat Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 242 cases, \$44. Release April 2014. This vineyard has the highest elevation of any vineyard in the Los Carneros AVA. Red, pebbly clay loam soils born of decomposed volcanic basalt. The site is exposed to a cool air flow from San Pablo Bay. Clones are Dijon 115, 667, 777 and Swan. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose is spectacularly endowed with aromas of boysenberry, wood spice and anise. Soft in the mouth with a plethora of purple and blue berry flavors underlain with an earthy riff. Very mild fine grain tannins, perfect integration of oak, and a satisfying, intensely flavored finish. An evocative wine. 94.*

2010 Talisman Red Dog Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 241 cases, \$52. Released October 2013. This vineyard is located high above Bennett Valley at 800 feet elevation on the northwestern side of Sonoma Mountain. A very low-yielding site. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of red cherries, cinnamon and other spices, and old cask. Round and polished on the palate, featuring flavors of black cherries with a hint of tobacco and oak in the background. The most rustic, earthy and savory of the lineup. A noticeable lift of acidity on the finish is refreshing. 92.*



2010 Talisman Aداstra Vineyard Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 243 cases, \$56. Release April 2014. An organically farmed and certified vineyard tended by Chris Thorpe and his son-in-law Edwin Richards. Clones are Wädenswil, Swan, 113 and Pommard. *The nose brings you to attention with deeply fragrant notes of Hoison sauce, black grapes, blackberries and cardamom spice. Very softly textured, perfectly composed with a judicious use of oak. Typical Los Carneros*

flavors of darker berries, black plum, mushroom and damp soil pervade. The sweet, perfectly ripened fruit attack makes an impression on the front of the palate, expands its reach across the mid palate like a silk sheet, and finishes with a flourish. A transcendent, "Oh My God" wine. 95.



Pfendler Vineyards: Exceptional Wines in 2012 Honor Peter Pfendler

I have been following Pfendler Vineyards since it was founded in 2007 by Kimberly Pfendler. Her late spouse Peter was the first to plant vineyards in the Gap's Crown region, and today she honors his legacy with continued dedication to producing premium Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from her estate vineyards in the Petaluma Gap region of the Sonoma Coast appellation.



Pfendler Vineyards farms Pinot Noir and Chardonnay on four estate vineyards under the direction of viticulturist and winemaker Greg Björnstad. This unique region in the Petaluma Gap exhibits a combination of foggy mornings, sunny days and windy afternoons, allowing cool climate grapes to mature through an extended growing season.

The 2012 vintage in the Sonoma Coast was described by Greg as a “relief” after two very challenging and low yielding vintages in 2010 and 2011. The harvested fruit in 2012 was plentiful in contrast, with remarkable consistency, quality and ideal balance and structure.

The two 2012 wines reviewed here are the best from Pfendler Vineyards to date and Kimberly must have considerable solace knowing that she has fulfilled Peter’s legacy. Both wines were released in February 2014 and were poured for the first time at the recent World of Pinot Noir.

Pfendler Vineyards wines are sold on the website at www.pfendlervineyards.com and through a mailing list.



2012 Pfendler Vineyards Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.618, 300 cases, \$38. Clones 4 and Hyde-Wente. Brix at harvest 24° 100% barrel fermented and 100% malolactic fermentation. 8 months sur lees aging and 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderate golden yellow color with a slight haze (unfiltered) in the glass. An array of appealing aromas emerge over time in the glass including lemon, grilled grapefruit, fresh brioche, pastry cream and*

toffee. Delicious core of discreetly rich lemon, grapefruit and pineapple fruits accented with a buttery toffee note. Crisp on the palate with a slight creamy texture and a bright, refreshing finish. The wine became more appealing over time in the glass to the point that I hated to stop sipping. My wife, who is quite the Chardonnay connoisseur, loved this wine as well. 94.



2012 Pfendler Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.586, 350 cases, \$45. Pommard clone and Swan and Calera selections. Harvest Brix 23°. 100% de-stemmed, 7-day whole berry cold soak, 8 months sur lees aging, 11 months in 50% new French oak barrels. Unfiltered. *Moderate reddish-purple color in the glass. Alluring aromas of fresh red cherries, with hints of spice, mushroom and cedar.*

Very polished and elegant in the mouth, featuring ripe darker red cherry and berry flavors accented with spice and earthiness. Impeccably balanced with gossamer tannins and a bright, persistent, lip-smacking finish. This wine conveys a special sense of richness, roundness and brightness you don't find everyday in Pinot Noir. 94.



Bernardus Winery: Pinot Noir Transcends the Ordinary

Bernardus Winery owner Ben Pon appreciates wine as an art and his wines reflect this aesthetic. Bernardus was the fifth winery to establish vineyards in the Carmel Valley and currently has 50 acres planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Sauvignon Blanc. Pon's goal has been to make a red wine equal to the finest from Bordeaux and the winery's resulting Marinus Estate Bordeaux-style red wine has met that goal and is the centerpiece of the winery's production. Additionally, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc are sourced from cool coastal vineyards for vineyard designate wines.

I have had only passing interest and experience with Bernardus Winery Pinot Noir in the past. Recently, the winery sent me several 2011 Pinot Noirs to review and this was quite an eye-opening experience. Winemaker Dean De Korth has applied his training and apprenticeship in Burgundy to craft some extraordinary wines that are consistently stellar across the entire lineup.

De Korth (pictured below) obtained a degree in Viticulture and Enology at the Lycee in Beaune and the University of Burgundy in Dijon. He worked for Jean-Marc Pavelot in Savigny-les-Beaune, Domaine des Comtes Lafon in Mersault, and Olivier Leflaive in Puligny Montrachet, before being offered the position of cellar master with Pierre Morey in Meursault. Upon returning to his native Monterey Bay area to be closer to his family, he worked as the winemaker for several prestigious Central Coast wineries including Morgan, Talbott and David Bruce. He is ideally qualified to apply Old World winemaking techniques in the New World setting at Bernardus.



After hand-sorting, the Pinot Noir grapes are de-stemmed and gently pumped to small fermenters retaining as many whole berries as possible. Each fermenter is hand-punched or pumped-over twice daily until fermentation is complete. The solids are then pressed and the wine is aged in barrel 10 months before final blending and bottling. Vineyard sources are at the top end.

2012 Bernardus Santa Lucia Highlands Saignée de Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 569 cases, \$24. Made from fresh pressed Pinot Noir grapes. As the grapes are crushed, a small percentage of the juice is blend off before it has a chance to absorb much color from the grape skins. The barely colored juice is then cold fermented in stainless steel in the winery's coolest cellar to dryness. A blend from multiple Santa Lucia Highlands vineyards including Pisoni, Rosella's, Sierra Mar, Soberanes, Tondré Grapefield, Fairview, Highlands and Paraiso. *Magnetic pinkish red color and clear in the glass. Lovely nose perfumed with strawberries, red cherries, mangoes, redwood and allspice. The wine is fresh, crisp and bright on the palate with flavors of strawberry, red cherry and cotton candy with a hint of citrus. Drink this wine slightly chilled with sushi for a big smile. 88.*



2011 Bernardus Soberanes Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., 312 cases, \$55. Vineyard farmed by Gary Pisoni and Gary Francioni and located adjacent Garys' Vineyard. Pisoni "clone" and Dijon 667. Aged 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Medium reddish-purple color in the glass. I really liked the nose on this beauty featuring bright aromas of black cherry, blackberry jam, cassis, brewed tea and oak. The delicious fruit including dark cherries and blackberries really jumps out. Nicely composed with integrated tannins, and a lengthy, intensely fruity finish. This wine has broad shoulders but is refined. 94.*



2011 Bernardus Sierra Mar Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 336 cases, \$55. A newer vineyard planted by Gary Francioni on a hilltop at the southern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands. Pisoni "clone" and "828." Aged 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Medium reddish-purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of black cherry pie filling, plum reduction sauce and complimentary oak. Intensely flavored with layers of black cherry, black raspberry and plum fruit with an earthy underpinning. Bright acidity, balanced tannins and modest finishing length complete the picture. 91.*



2011 Bernardus Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., 429 cases, \$65. This vineyard was planted by Gary Francioni and named after his wife. Pisoni "clone" and Dijon 777. Aged 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish-purple hue in the glass. Highly aromatic and intoxicating, with scents of cherries, dark strawberries and spice. The delicious core of cherry fruit is accented with hints of cola and oak-driven mocha. Very approachable with harmonious tannins and a lovable finish. Shows off the typical red-toned fruits and femininity characteristic of this vineyard. A dancing Pinot. 94.*



2011 Bernardus Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 165 cases, \$65. Planted to the Pisoni "clone" by Gary Pisoni and Gary Francioni. Aged 10 months in about 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish-purple color in the glass. A masculine wine with a notable earthy accent. Aromas of darker red cherries and berries and some oak spice. Full-bodied, filling the mouth with layers of deep red cherry and berry fruits, yet has a pleasing soft texture and nicely integrated tannins. The most extracted and structured wine in the 2011 Bernardus Pinot Noir lineup that will benefit from more cellaring. 92.*

2011 Bernardus Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 508 cases, \$70. Aged in 50% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish-purple color in the glass. Demure aromas of dark red and purple stone and berry fruits with some forest floor compliment. The fruit explodes on the palate with some fervor, yet with more delicacy in this vintage. Very polished and beautifully balanced, with superb fruit purity. A whiff of alcohol shows up on the finish. A sophisticated offering that is atypical for Pisoni Vineyard but reflective of the cool vintage: Pisoni unplugged. 92-93.*

The Bernardus tasting room is open daily at 5 West Carmel Valley Road in Carmel Valley. The wines are also available through the winery's wine club and online on the website at www.bernardus.com (the 2011 vintage wines are net available at the online store offering at the time of this publication).

Winter Games: Taste of International Pinot Noir

Winemaker Jeff Fink held an extensive blind tasting of Pinot Noirs from around the world on February 19, 2014. The lineup included 2009, 2010 and 2011 Pinot Noir from Burgundy, California, Oregon, South Africa, Italy, Germany, New Zealand, Australia and Argentina. The tasting was conducted in six flights of four wines each with a seventh flight at the end consisting of the four highest scoring wines judged to determine the consensus favorite wine of the evening. This final flight was followed by an unmasking of the identities of all the wines. The tasters consisted of about 30 Pinot Noir enthusiasts who were friends of Jeff (I didn't know he had that many friends).

Oregon's Pinot Noirs scored highest, as four out of the top six wines were Willamette Valley selections. Seasmoke was the grand champion for the second year in a row. Not just any Sea Smoke, but the same wine in both tastings: the 2009 Southing Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir. Hyppe meets reality!

Here is a list of the wines:

WINTER GAMES TASTING WINES FEBRUARY 19TH, 2014				
INTERNATIONAL PINOT NOIR TASTE-OFF				
GOLDEN TRUFFLE		COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA		
REGION	VINTAGE / WINE	DATA by region and vintage		PRICE
BURGUNDY				
1	GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN	2010 PIERRE GELIN	CHAMBERTIN CLOS DE BEZE GC	CLASSIC YEAR/ GREAT BALANCE JF
2	CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY	2011 JADOT	CHAMBOLLE - MUSIGNY 1ER LES SENTIERS	\$75
3	VOSNE-ROMANEE	2010 JOSEPH DROUHIN	VOSNE-ROMANEE	FRESH, LOW YIELD, SCULPTED \$82
4	NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES	2009 HENRI GOUGES	NSG 1ER CLOS DE PORRETS	RIPE, TEXTURAL, EARLIER DRINKER \$82
5	CORTON	2010 POUSSE D'OR	CORTON BRESSANDES GC	\$108
6	VOLNAY	2010 MARQUIS D'ANGERVILLE	VOLNAY PREMIER CRU	\$88
CALIFORNIA				
7	SANTA RITA HILLS	2009 SEASMOKE	SOUTHING GC	RIPE, VG STRUCTURE, AGEABLE \$92
8	SANTA MARIA VALLEY	2009 TANTARA	BIEN NACIDO VINEYARD ADOBE	AROMATIC, TEXTURAL YR, VG TANNIN JF
9	SANTA LUCIA HIGHLAND	2010 MIURA	SIERRA MAR VINEYARD	LATE HEAT SPIKE/ BIG FRUIT \$56
10	RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY	2011 DONUM	RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY ESTATE	DIFFICULT/LOW YIELDS/RAIN JF
11	SONOMA COAST	2011 LITTORAI	HIRSCH VINEYARD	SITE DRIVEN TRANSPARENCY, AGER \$85
12	ANDERSON VALLEY	2010 DREW	FOG EATER	WARMER THAN AVG/FULL RIPENESS JF
OREGON				
13	WILLAMETTE	2010 DOMAINE SERENE	EVENSTAD RESERVE	REPUTED TO BE A CLASSIC YEAR FO \$68
14	DUNDEE HILLS	2010 BERGSTROM	BERGSTROM VINEYARD	THE ENTIRE WILLAMETTE VALLEY \$68
15	EOLA-AMITY	2010 CRISTOM	JESSIE'S VINEYARD	\$42
16	RIBBON RIDGE	2010 BEAUX FRERES	UPPER TERRACE	\$78
17	CHEHALEM	2010 ADELSHEIM	ELIZABETH'S RESERVE	\$45
18	CARLTON-YAMHILL	2010 SHEA VINEYARD	ESTATE BLOCK 7	\$54
WORLD				
19	SOUTH AFRICA	2010 HAMILTON RUSSELL	HEMEL-EN-AARDE VALLEY	AVG + YR FOR WALKER BAY REGI \$39
20	ITALY	2009 HOFSTATTER	BARTHENAU V.S URBANO ALTO ADI	GREAT VINTAGE THROUGHOUT ITALY \$78
21	GERMANY	2011 MEYER-NAKEL	SPATBURGUNDER AHR	VG YEAR - QUALITY + QUANTITY \$54
22	NEW ZEALAND	2010 CRAGGY RANGE	TE MUNA ROAD MARTINBOROUGH	LOW YIELD, VG QUALITY, AGEABLE \$39
23	AUSTRALIA	2011 MOOROODUC	MORNINGTON PENINSULA VICTOR	COOL, WET, DIFFICULT YEAR, \$35
24	ARGENTINA	2011 BODEGA CHACRA	CINCUENTA CINCO PATAGONIA	WARM, DRY YEAR, VG RIPENING \$59

The wines I preferred in each flight were (see the chart below under "RG," taster #8.

- 2010 Pierre Gelin Chambertin Clos De Beze (Also the flight winner for the group of tasters)
- 2009 Sea Smoke Southing Sta. Rita Hills (Also the flight winner for the group of tasters)
- 2010 Shea Vineyard Estate Block 7 Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley (Also the flight winner for the group)
- 2010 Bergstrom Bergstrom Vineyard Willamette Valley (Also the flight winner for the group of tasters)
- 2009 Tantara Bien Nacido Vineyard Adobe Santa Maria Valley
- 2011 Meyer-Nakel Spätburgunder Ahr Germany

My overall favorite wine was the 2009 Sea Smoke Southing Sta. Rita Hills. 14.5% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.67, \$52. Exclusively Sea Smoke Estate Vineyard.



WINE #	INDIVIDUAL TASTER RANKINGS																								WINE NAME	TOT		RNK
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	21	23	24				
	JF	MB	BB	BC	BC	WK	JK	RG	MO	JJ	JC	JE	RR	GP	RM	WP	MC	SB	MB	DR	FS	AG	TM	TM	FLIGHT WINNER BOLD			
1	2	1	4	2			4	4	2	4	4	1	4	3	4	4	2	2	1	4	1		4		HAMILTON RUSSELL	57	18	
2	1	3	2	1			3	3	3	1	1	4	3	2	3	2	4	3	3	2	3		2		LITTORAI	49	11	
3	3	2	1	3			2	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	1	3	3	1	2	3	2		1		GELIN CLOS DE BEZE	40	3	
4	4	4	3	2			1	1	4	3	3	2	1	4	2	1	1	4	4	1	4		3		DOMAINE SERENE	52	14	
5	1	4	3	2			3	4	2	1	3	3	2	3	4	1	1	2	3	4	3		4		D'ANGERVILLE VOLNAY	53	16	
6	3	3	2	1			4	3	1	3	2	2	1	4	3	2	2	4	2	3	1		2		Craggy Range	48	10	
7	2	2	4	3			1	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	3	1	1	2		3		SEASMOKE	41	4	
8	4	1	1	4			2	2	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	4	4	1	4	2	4		1		ADELSHEIM	58	21	
9	4	1	2	1			2	3	4	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2	3	3		4		DREW- ANDERSON VLY.	62	24	
10	1	3	4	3			4	4	1	1	4	1	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	4	1		1		DROUHIN - VOSNE-RO	51	13	
11	2	2	1	4			1	1	3	3	3	3	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	4		3		SHEA	42	5	
12	3	4	3	2			3	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	1	4	1	2		2		HOFSTATTER	45	7	
13	1	1	3	1			1	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	4	1	4	1	3	2	2		3		BERGSTROM	39	1	
14	2	4	2	2			4	4	2	3	4	1	4	3	3	3	3	2	4	1	3		1		BODEGA CHACRA	55	17	
15	3	2	1	3			2	2	4	4	1	4	2	4	2	2	1	3	1	3	1		4		DONUM	49	11	
16	4	3	4	4			3	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	4	2	4	2	4	4		2		GOUGES - NUITS-ST.-GE	57	18	
17	2	1	3	3			3	3	1	2	4	3	3	2	3	2	4	2	3	2	3		3		POUSSE D'OR CORTON	52	14	
18	1	2	4	2			2	4	3	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	3	4	2	3	2		2		BEAUX FRERES	44	6	
19	4	4	1	4			4	1	2	4	1	2	4	4	4	4	2	3	4	4	1		1		MOOROODUC	58	21	
20	3	3	2	1			1	2	4	3	2	4	2	3	1	3	1	1	1	1	4		4		TANTARA	46	8	
21	4	1	4	4			1	2	4	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	4	4	1	2	3		1		MEYER-NAKEL	46	8	
22	2	4	3	1			4	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	2	3	2	1	2		4		MIURA	57	18	
23	3	3	2	2			2	3	1	3	4	4	4	4	2	3	3	2	4	3	4		2		JADOT- CHAMBOLLE-MUS	58	23	
24	1	2	1	3			3	1	2	4	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	1		3		CRISTOM	39	1	
F1	2	2	2	1			3	1		1		3	3	3	4					4			1	2	GELIN CLOS DE BEZE	32	2	
F2	1	1	1	3			1	2		3		1	1	4	1					2			3	4	SEASMOKE	28	1	
F3	4	3	3	4			4	3		4		4	2	1	3					3			2	1	SHEA	41	4	
F4	3	4	4	2			2	4		2		2	4	2	2					1			4	3	BEAUX FRERES	39	3	
GC																									SEASMOKE			

Sips of Recently Tasted California Wines

Balverne

The Balverne name was reintroduced by Windsor Oaks Vineyards & Winery in the 2010 vintage. In the 1970s, Balverne was a leading name in artisan wineries in Sonoma County. The inaugural Balverne Pinot Noir was vinified by the original winemaker for Windsor Oaks, Julie Lumgair. The current winemaker is Margaret Davenport, who has refined the style, adding elegance and nuance to Pinot Noir from this site. Balverne's first winemaker, Doug Nalle, consults on the wines. Owners Bob and Renee Stein bought the Balverne property in 1992 and renamed it Windsor Oaks Vineyards. It is located just south of Healdsburg and spans both the Russian River Valley and Chalk Hill AVAs. Wines have been offered under the Windsor Oaks label since 2005 and three Windsor Oaks wines are reviewed below.



2012 Balverne Estate Grown Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 300 cases, \$30. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Lovely aromas of ripe cherries, dried stone fruits, cola and vanilla. The bright cherry core is accented with notes of spice, vanilla and cola, with supporting dry tannins. Admirable balance with some finishing persistence. 89.*

2012 Balverne Estate Grown Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 240 cases, \$40. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing aromas of Bing cherries and baking spice arrive over time in the glass. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry, raspberry, spice and cola, finishing with graceful length. Very polished, elegant and refined with modest tannins. Quite accessible for a reserve wine. Definitely deserving of the designation "reserve," although it is not a big, oaky version of the regular Russian River Valley bottling which is so often the case with reserve wines. 91.*

Cosa Obra

Sometimes a pleasant surprise shows up unannounced in my wine locker. This was the case with Cosa Obra Pinot Noir, from a producer I was unfamiliar with. The name Cosa ("thing") Obra ("a hand-crafted body of work") refers to the winery's thing, what they do, their hand-crafted body of work. Owner Gregory Hayes, with over two decades of experience in the wine industry, has chosen to produce small amounts of exceptional wines from multiple unique terroirs. The consulting winemaker is Kent Humphrey (Eric Kent Wines). The winery's single Pinot Noir is sourced from the best blocks of vineyards in the Russian River Valley and Bennett Valley regions.



2012 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.53, 294 cases, \$27. After rigorous hand sorting, 100% de-stemmed with whole berries to tank. A 5 to 7-day cold soak was followed by fermentation managed with a combination of delestage and pumpovers. Extended maceration ranged from 3 to 4 weeks. Aged 12 months in 25% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of Bing cherries, raspberry coulis and spice. The nose is literally intoxicating and persistent in volume even when sampled later in the day from a previously opened bottle. Bright, refreshing and light on its feet, with a delicious core of light to mid weight Bing cherry fruit accented with notes of tobacco, mocha, sassafras and sweet oak. The combination of balance and a light touch is hard to resist in Pinot. 94.*



2012 Cutruzulla Vineyards Gloria San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir

14.4% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.59, 290 cases, \$40. "Koo-troot-ZOL-a." The Riven Rock Vineyard responded to the ideal 2012 growing season by producing its largest crop to date, but still less than 1 ton-per-acre! The vineyard is located in a coastal valley just outside the town of Cambria on California's Central Coast.

5 acres are planted to Pinot Noir and 2 acres to Riesling. Many of vineyard blocks contain limestone soils. The winemaker is Stephen Dooley of Stephen Ross Wine Cellars. Pommard 5, 115, 667, "828," and 23. Aged 10 months in 30% new French oak barrels.

Medium reddish-purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of black cherry, sarsaparilla, and baking spices including nutmeg and cola. The medium to full bodied and fully ripened cherry, dark berry and plum fruits fill the mouth with pleasure. A dash of oak-driven toast and vanilla adds interest. The soft demeanor on the palate is particularly appealing and the finish is long and pleasurable. 92.



2011 Gary Farrell Russian River Selection Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.62, 6,062 cases, \$45. Released October 2013. A blend of 8 vineyards in the Russian River Valley. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 8 months in 40% new French oak barrels. The wine was racked and returned just once out of barrel before final blending and bottling. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Highly aromatic, with bright scents of Bing cherries, baking spice, sassafras and oak. Mid weight flavors of dark cherries are framed by oak in a crisp, juicy style with pleasing acidity. Easy to drink, and food friendly, although showing a little more cloak of oak than I like. 88.*

2011 Gary Farrell Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.62, 143 cases, \$60. Release June 2014. Sourced from one of the newer Bacigalupi vineyards, Frost Ranch bought by the Bacigalupi family in 1993 and Block 9 is planted entirely to a Wente selection of Pinot Noir. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 13 months in 40% new French oak barrels. Racked and returned once out of barrel before final blending and bottling. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Appealing aromas of black cherry, forest floor, spice and rose petal emerge over time in the glass. The exuberant black cherry and raspberry core provides good richness on the mid palate, carrying over to a generous and sleek finish replete with notes of dried herbs and tea leaves. The fine-grain tannins and forward fruit make for easy drinking now. 90.*



2012 Kessler-Haak Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 425 cases, \$38. Estate grown fruit. Vineyard owned by Dan Kessler and his spouse Ellen Haak Kessler. Winemaker is Dan Kessler. Yield 0.96 tons per acre. Clones 114, 115, 777 and 2A. Aged 9 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddishpurple color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of dark berry preserves, cardamom spice and briar. Light in weight but flavorful, with notes of blackberry, cassis and plum infused with bright, juicy acidity. A vein of savory, dried herbs and oak is in the background. The tannins are well integrated and the wine is quite open now. 88.*

2011 Kessler-Haak Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 13.4% alc., , RS 0.96, 50 cases, \$29. Estate grown fruit. Yield 0.46 tons per acre. Clones 95, 76. Barrel fermented and barrel aged 8 months sur lie in 50% new French oak, 100% MLF. *Pale golden yellow and clear in the glass. The nose exhibits aromas of lemon rind, ripe apple, buttered brioche and pavement after rain. Bright flavors of lemon, poached pear, blonde caramel and vanilla infused with a spark of nervy minerality, complimented by nutty oak in the background. 88.*

2012 Kessler-Haak Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 14.6% alc., pH 3.41, TA 0.61, dry. 65 cases, \$29. Estate grown fruit. Yield 1.7 tons per acre. Clones 95, 96, 76. Barrel fermented and barrel aged sur lie for 8 months in 15% new French oak barrels. *Mild golden yellow color and clear in the glass. The pleasing fruit aromas of lemon and golden apple are somewhat obscured by a toasty, nutty oak topcoat. Discreetly rich on the palate with flavors of baked apple, poached pear and citrus peel, finishing with a burst of refreshing citrus. Slightly creamy in texture. Oak is less intrusive on the palate than on the nose. Improves over time in the glass. 88.*

2012 La Crema Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 13.5% alc., \$23. *Moderate yellow color and clear in the glass. Scents of lemon zest, green apple, green herbs and oak lead to a light weight palate of lemon and pear flavors and well-integrated acidity. Delicate and nicely crafted, but nothing stands out. 86.*

Les Voleurs

Les Voleurs is an urban San Francisco winery founded by Matthew Purdon and Keith Crowell. The name, "Les Voleurs," is French for "The Thieves." The winery originated as an underground wine club in San Francisco in 2008 called the Wine Thieves. The name was chosen because of the club's liberal use of the "wine thief," a glass siphon made for stealing wine out of the barrel for tastings. Purdon developed an interest in wine in college, undertook winemaking studies at the University of California at Davis, and started a winemaking club in San Francisco that evolved into Les Voleurs Wines. Crowell has a background in beer, wine and sake making. This was my first experience with Les Voleurs wines and I was impressed by the capable winemaking and high quality of the wines. This is a newer winery worth following. A member of a small group of Pinot Noir producers vinifying their wines in neutral oak barrels. Visit www.lesvoleurswines.com.

2012 Les Voleurs Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.63, 76 cases, \$32. A blend of several vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged in neutral French oak barrels with regular lees stirring. *Very fragrant array of aromas including strawberries, cherries, leather and spice. Delicate, but pleasing flavors of strawberry, red cherry, and cranberry caressed by gossamer tannins and finishing with palate cleansing acidity. An elegant offering that lacks mid palate and finishing intensity but has some charm.* **87.**

2012 Les Voleurs Rodgers Creek Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.71, 37 cases, \$45. Dijon 667 and 777 planted in volcanic ash soils. 5-day cold soak, fermented with 30% whole clusters using native yeasts over 2 weeks. Aged in neutral French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deeply perfumed with scents of raspberry, strawberry, rose petal and vanilla. Delicious ripe strawberry, cherry and plum flavors in a mid weight style with modest tannins, very bright acidity, and a long finish featuring citrus-infused strawberries. Strawberry lovers will cherish this wine.* **89-90.**

2012 Les Voleurs Hurst Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.65, 46 cases, \$45. The vineyard is southwest of Sebastopol. Clones 115 and 777 planted in Goldridge soil. 5-day cold soak, fermented with 30% whole clusters using native yeasts. Aged in neutral French oak barrels with regular lees stirring. *Light garnet in color in the glass. Enticing aromas of cherry, baking spices, sandalwood and flinty minerality. Aims to please with a seamless presence on the palate, featuring flavors of strawberry, cherry, Moroccan spices and sandalwood. The tannins are very suave and the acidity elevates the refreshment level. Even better later in the day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **91.**



2012 Les Voleurs Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.62, 73 cases, \$22. This vineyard is a few miles southwest of Sebastopol. 15-year-old vines. One lot fermented with native yeasts in barrel and underwent 100% MLF. The second lot was fermented using native yeasts in stainless steel without completing MLF. The wine was blended, received a light fining and was bottled unfiltered. *Very pale yellow color and clear in the glass. Shy, clean aromas of lemon zest, green apple and petrichor. Soft in the mouth with vivid lemony citrus and tropical fruit flavors and a hint of nutty oak. Demure and polished leaving a pleasing finish of lemon-lime gusto.* **90.**

2010 Lula Mendocino Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 400 cases, \$42 (sold out). Lula is the winemaker's maternal grandmother. Grapes are grown near Comptche 16 miles south east of the coastal village of Mendocino. Vineyard planted in 1998. 60% Pommard, 35% 115, and 5% 777. Aged 12 months in 50% new French oak. Aged an additional 6 months in barrel after final blending. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Oak dominates the nose with appealing ancillary notes of black cherry, blackberry, cola, earthy flora, and spice. Tasty black cherry and boysenberry fruit offers dramatic mid palate intensity and finish. Mid to full bodied with balanced tannins and a long finish.* **89.**

2011 Lula Mendocino Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 700 cases, \$42. 65% Pommard, 30% 115 and 5% 777. Aged 14 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of old wood, mushroom, fire pit and peat lead to lighter weight flavors of dark cherry and black raspberry with an earthy undertone. Generous dry tannins arrive with a rush on the crisp, short finish.* **87.**

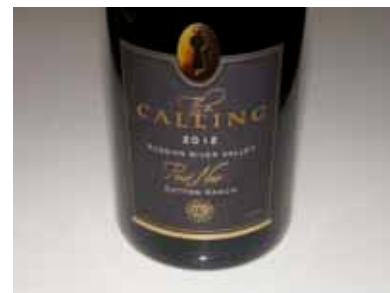
2012 Masterpiece Vineyards Estate Grown Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 2,500 cases, \$13.99. A second label from Windsor Oaks Vineyards. Artwork on the label is In The Woods at Giverny by Claude Monet, 1887. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of red rose petals, honeysuckle and green herbs. Lighter weight flavors of red cherries, red berries, dried herbs, and edible flowers. Easy to drink, with modest tannins and some fruit presence on the brief finish.* **85.**

2011 Pillow Rd. Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., \$50. Proprietors are Pat and Anne Stotesbery, the creators of Ladera Vineyards on Howell Mountain in Napa Valley. The winemaker is Jade Barrett and consulting winemaker is Karen Culler, both of whom have experience in working in notable Napa Valley wineries. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherries, straw and toasty oak lead to a light to mid weight core of bright cherry, cranberry and pomegranate flavors accented by savory dried herbs and spice. The fruit is backed by vibrant acidity and supple, dry tannins, and the soprano finish is flush with citrus-infused cherries. The wine displays a lack of ripeness reflective of this cool vintage.* **87.**

2012 Ryan Cochrane Wines Solomon Hills Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 143 cases, \$43. 50% clone 115, 50% Pommard 5. 30% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 10 months in 1 new and 5 neutral French oak barrels. Ryan Cochrane trained under Roger Nicolas of RN Estate for four years before launching his own label. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Upon opening, the shy nose offers aromas of cherry, raspberry and sandalwood. Over time in the glass, more oak-driven notes emerge including coffee. Light to mid weight array of red fruit flavors including strawberry and cherry with a shadow of oak in the background. Charming and elegant with juicy acidity and balanced tannins. Tasted twice.* **88.**

2012 Ryan Cochrane Wines Fiddlestix Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 134 cases, \$43. 75% clone 115, 25% Pommard 5. 30% whole cluster fermentation. Aged 10 months in 1 new and 4 neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color and slight haze (unfiltered) in the glass. Demure aromas of dark red berries and leafy herbs build in intensity over time in the glass. Mid weight core of dark red berry fruits with a riff of savory herbs in the background and a touch of citrus on the finish. Bright acidity, managed firm tannins and a graceful presence. Better the next day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Tasted twice.* **88.**

2012 The Calling Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., TA 0.65, \$37. From the Mill Station Vineyard, one of the coolest sites in the Russian River Valley. Aged 10 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is highly expressive with bright aromas of Bing cherry, spice, cinnamon stick, graham, saffras and oak. Luxurious cherry core with accents of cola, anise, spice and oak. Nicely balanced with great verve and grace, finishing with respectable length.* **91.**



2012 Windsor Oaks Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 280 cases, \$30. Clones 777, 667, 115, 114 and 459. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The appealing nose leads with aromas of raspberries, cherries and damp forest floor. The middleweight flavors of black cherry and cola are juicy and vivid. Very well crafted with a seamless presence of oak, acidity and tannins, finishing with plenty of cherry goodness. The potentially lush Russian River Valley fruit is held in check, making this wine particularly appealing.* **90.**



2012 Windsor Oaks Vineyards Reserve Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 230 cases, \$33.75. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass (slightly deeper in color than the regular RRV bottling). Shy, but pleasant aromas of dark Bing cherries and spice. Very polished and refined on the palate, with flavors of dark cherries, fraise du bois, cola and spice pulled into line with fine acidity. The complimentary oak is not intrusive, and the tannins are suave and integrated. A graceful interpretation of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir that is quite evocative.* **92.**



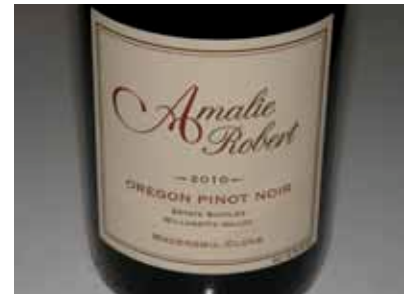
Sips of Recently Tasted Oregon Wines

1789 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., 185 cases, \$48. French winemaker Isabelle Dutartre's own label. 1789 marks the year of the French revolution and the name is a symbol of Dutartre's family's revolution when they moved from the south of France to Oregon wine country. She is currently the winemaker for De Ponte Cellars in the Dundee Hills. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Intriguing nose with aromas of cherry liquor, spice and a hint of fresh oak. Demure but flavorful on the palate with tastes of cherry, spice, citrus and oak. Crafted with modest tannins with bright acidity. Pinotosity at work here.* **92.**



2010 Amelia Robert Pommard Clone Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 45 cases, \$44. Fermented with whole clusters and indigenous yeast. Aged a minimum of 12 months in French oak barrels. Unfiltered and unfiltered. *Light garnet color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of red cherry pie glaze, baking spices, sandalwood and damp earthy flora. Light in weight and very delicate, with red cherry and raspberry flavors backed by soft fine-grain tannins and nervy acidity. A hint of dried herbs and spice add interest. An elegant and charming wine that forces the drinker to search for nuance. Very delicate for a Pommard based wine.* **89.**

2010 Amelia Robert Wädenswil Clone Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.7% alc., 45 cases, \$44. Estate grown, produced and bottled in Dallas, Oregon. Fermented with whole clusters and indigenous yeast. Aged a minimum of 12 months in French oak barrels. *Light garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of berry jam, sassafras, nutmeg, perfumed leather glove and a hint of smoky oak. Delicious light to mid weight core of red cherries and berries with accents of dried herbs, toasted oak and sassafras. Very delicate but flavorful and juicy with a good cut of acidity on the finish. May pick up heft over time in the cellar.* **91.**



2010 Ancient Cellars One Toe Duck Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$30. The inspiration for the name came from a Mallard duck struck by a car who recovered and thrived with an obvious scar and namesake. A portion of the sales of the wine go to Benefit Wildlife Rehab. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas emerge slowly over time in the glass revealing notes of red cherry, baking spice, sandalwood and nutty oak. Darker fruits are evident on the palate including black cherry and black raspberry accented with spice. Good mid palate intensity, balanced tannins, bright acidity and a hi voltage finish featuring tangy and slightly tart cherry and raspberry fruits.* **88.**

2011 Ancient Cellars One Toe Duck Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., \$N/A. *Light garnet color in the glass. Shy aromas of black cherry hard candy and black raspberry jam with a vinegary note (? acescence) showing up over time. More pleasant on the palate with light weight fruit flavors of candied cherry, strawberry and red raspberry with a complimentary hint of cinnamon. The tannins are supple and the acid is vibrant. Similar to the 2010 vintage, but lighter in weight with redder fruit.* **85.**

2011 Beaux Frères The Beaux Frères Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 1,900 cases, \$72. Grown, produced and bottled by Beaux Frères. From estate fruit planted from 1987 to 1991 primarily to Pommard and Wädenswil clones on their own roots. The vineyard has been farmed following the principals of biodynamics since 2002. Unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of red cherries, rose petals and other floral notes, and lacquered wood. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry and cranberry with a hint of oak. Very pleasant to drinking and charming in character, with modest tannins and very bright acidity, but a bit shallow on the mid palate and finish. Clearly the wine suffers from ripeness challenges, but is a commendable effort in a very difficult vintge. About the same the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **88.**



2012 Bergström Gregory Ranch Yamhill-Carlton District Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$47.50. From an estate-farmed vineyard owned by Wine Club members Dr. Kenton and Cindy Gregory. The vineyard was planted in 2007 to Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. 21 acres with 15 different clonal blocks on a steep hillside. Soils are sandstone-based marine. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass.*

Highly aromatic and alluring with bright aromas of black cherries, black raspberries, plum reduction sauce and spice. Exuberant and luscious on the palate with waves of black cherry, boysenberry and black raspberry fruits accented with spice. Velvety in texture with suave tannins and beautifully integrated oak. Highly pleasurable, this wine shows up the ripe, forward fruit of Oregon's 2012 vintage. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was even more aromatic and flavorful. Wow! 95.



2012 Broadley Vineyards Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$28. *Dark violet color in the glass. Brooding aromas of dark cherries and berries with a faint note of anise and vanilla. Rich, deep and concentrated with a hedonistic core of sweet black raspberry, cassis, and spiced plum flavors with a shadow of oak in the background. Matching tannins and a generous fruit-filled finish complete the picture. Still very young and slightly awkward, becoming more expressive and refined with time in the glass. Cellar this wine for a few years. 90.*



2012 Plowbuster (Carabella) Oregon Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., \$20. Second label of Carabella sourced from several AVAs in Oregon including the Chehalem Mountains. A fruit forward style that is a popular by-the-glass pour at restaurants in New York, New Jersey and Florida. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of vanilla-infused plum sauce, blackberries and hard cherry candy. Intense blackberry, ollaliberry and black plum fruit flavors that bring your palate to attention. Amazing phenolic ripeness with balanced tannins and a lingering finish. Will have many fans. 89.*

2011 Carabella Inchinnan Chehalem Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 150 cases, \$54. A blend of "darker" clones from Carabella Vineyard which was originally part of the Inchinnan Farm, a hazelnut orchard owned by the McDonald family. This special cuvée honors their support. The stony soils are lie on a protected southeastern flank of the Chehalem Mountains. Seven blocks are fermented separately. Clones 115, 114, Wädenswil, and 777 (first time). 25% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in 40% new French oak barrels. Mike Hallock, winemaker. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherries, herb garden and bay leaf lead to a light to mid weight core of herb-infused red cherry and purple grape fruit flavors accented with spice. Elegant and very enjoyable now with modest tannins and bright acidity. Impressive wine in this challenging vintage. 92.*



2012 de Lancellotti Famiglia Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 75 cases, \$35. A blend of estate fruit and sourced fruit all farmed Biodynamic. This wine is the least expensive in the de Lancellotti lineup, but I thought it was terrific. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Delicate aromas of cherry, spice and oak vanillin. Very smooth and likable on the palate, with an impressively intense mid palate attack of dark red*

cherry and black raspberry flavors with a compliment of cinnamon spice and oak in the background. Very crisp with a generous and persistent cherry-driven finish that is mouth watering. An impressive offering that was still pumping out the pleasure the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. No need to wait on this beauty. 94.



Chapter 24

Mark Tarlov, the former owner of Evening Land Vineyards launched Chapter 24 in 2012. He brought on Burgundian vigneron Louis Michel Liger-Belair as a consultant to work with winemaker Mike ("Mikey") D. Etzel, the son of Beaux Frères winemaker Michael Etzel. The entry level wines are produced under the Two Messengers label (a joint project with Patricia Green Cellars). The mid-range label is Fire + Flood that explores the two main soil types in the Willamette Valley, Jory (Fire) and Willakenzie (Flood). The high end release is Last Chapter, named for the final scene in "The Odyssey," and priced at \$90. Tarlov plans to build a winery and acquire one or two vineyards in the Willamette Valley while signing long-term contracts with several other vineyards.



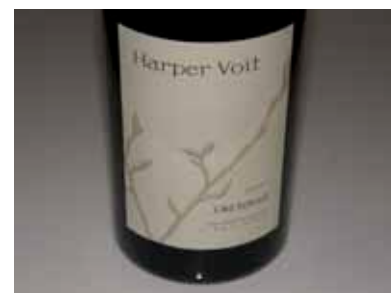
2012 Fire + Flood (Chapter 24) The Flood Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$60. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Penetrating aromas of darker stone and berry fruits flow from the glass and hold up over time. Full-bodied and boisterous flavors of Bing cherries, boysenberries and cassis caress the palate and persist with uncommon intensity on the very long finish. The wine still has an oak sheen which will integrate over time in the cellar. The soft texture is particularly appealing. A very special wine. 94.*



2012 Fire + Flood (Chapter 24) The Fire Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$60. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Demure aromas of black cherry, cranberry and spice. Middleweight flavors of black cherries, raspberries and baking spice with an earthy undertone. Slightly muscular tannins balanced with vibrant acidity make for a very seamless, polished impression. Much more aromatic and flavorful the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle suggesting good age ability. 93.*

2011 Harper Voit Strandline Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 250 cases, \$35. Old School Vineyard in the far southwest corner of the Willamette Valley and Bieze Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills. Bieze Vineyard shares its eastern fence with the famed Seven Springs Vineyard. Planted in 2008 in Nekia, Jory and Ritner volcanic soils, the vineyard is situated at 600 to 680 feet above sea level. Possibly the best new vineyard in the AVA. *Moderately dark reddish-purple color in the glass. The nose shows off aromas of blackberry, black plum reduction sauce, vanilla and smoky oak. Mid to full bodied with a pleasing core of black cherry, boysenberry and black plum flavors accented by oak vanillin. Impressive fruit ripeness in this vintage with well-integrated tannins and some finishing length. Needs more time to shed some oak influence. 89.*

2012 Harper Voit Old School Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 50 cases, \$55. Old School Vineyard is situated at 800 feet elevation and the vines are planted in well-drained and nutrient deficient Bellpine soil. Dry-farmed using draft horses, compost and natural weed suppression, the vineyard is treated as a holistic organism. Dijon, Wädenswil and Pommard clones. *This wine drinks more Old World so the name fits. Shy aromas of dark red berries and cherries with a dash of smoky oak. Middleweight flavors of darker cherries and cranberries with a juicy, acid-driven finish of noticeable length. Should improve over time in the cellar but hard to resist now. 90.*



2012 Harper Voit Surlie Willamette Valley Pinot Blanc 13.6% alc., 225 cases, \$20. Crannell and Meredith Mitchell vineyards. Barrel fermented and age sur lie. *Very light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Highly aromatic with effusive aromas of baked apple, Limoncello, pear, pastry cream and lees. Delicious flavors of apple, pear and citrus, finishing long with a bright green apple note and palate cleansing acidity. Pinot Blanc can be watery and uninspired, but this wine is everything but, possessing nuance, body and flair. One of the best Pinot Blancs I have experienced from Oregon. 91.*

La Crema Releases First Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

Jackson Family Wines was a large part of a significant land grab in the Willamette Valley in 2013. They have become the largest family owned winery possessing property in the Willamette Valley with at least 900 acres of potential vineyard land. The new acquisitions include Gran Moraine Vineyard and Soléna Estate in the Yamhill-Carlton District, Zena Crown Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills, and Maple Grove southwest of Eola-Amity Hills. Jackson Family Wines began making wine for the La Crema label and a new label called Gran Moraine at Soléna's former winery. A Zena Crown brand is also planned and possibly a new winery on this property as well.

Jackson Family Wines is well established in California with large vineyard holdings in the Russian River Valley, Mendocino County, Carneros and Monterey. The excellence of Willamette Valley Pinot Noir and the relatively less expense to acquire vineyard property in Oregon relative to California led the company to add another cool-climate Pinot Noir region to their collection.

The 2012 La Crema Willamette Valley Pinot Noir bottling is the inaugural Willamette Valley wine for Jackson Family Estates, vinified by La Crema winemaker Elizabeth Grant-Douglas. It was fortuitous that the production of this wine coincided with a beautiful growing season in the Willamette Valley.



2012 La Crema Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.55, 12,224 cases, \$30. A blend of fruit from ten different vineyards including the sub-AVAs of McMinnville, Eola-Amity Hills and Dundee Hills. 8 different clones (667, 777, 23, Pommard, 2A, 113, 114, 115) and a variety of climatic and soil profiles. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak. Aged 9 months in 25% new French oak barrels with medium to medium-plus toast. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Classy aromas of black cherry, forest floor, rose petal and spice hold up nicely over time in the glass. Generous and forward in character with a lip-smacking core of dark cherry, raspberry and pomegranate fruits accented with a hint of mocha and savory dried herbs. Very accommodating, with mild tannins and a juicy, fruity finish. I sampled this wine against several premium Willamette Valley Pinot Noirs and it held its own. A solid everyday Pinot that is in wide retail distribution at the right price. 90.*



2012 Owen Roe The Kilmore Yamhill-Carlton District Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$42. Winemaker David O'Reilly is one of the few Irish-born winemakers in the United States. This wine is named after the Kilmore Doorway which is displayed on the label in a photo. This Romanesque doorway was a sculpted entrance to the ancient Trinity Island Abbey in County Cavan, Ireland. Here the great patriot Owen Roe O'Neill sought solace during his quest for Irish

independence. Pommard, Wädenswil and Dijon clones from vineyards in the Yamhill-Carlton District. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers an array of enticing aromas including raspberry, dried cherry, sassafras, leather saddle and sandalwood. Modest in weight, but highly flavorful, the wine offers notes of black cherry, black raspberry, spice, dark chocolate and coffee. Very gracious and easy to drink now, this beauty has the balance and tannic backbone to age effortlessly in the cellar for 5 to 10 years. I loved the 2010 vintage of this wine, and this vintage is a hair better. 95.*



2011 Phelps Creek Vineyards Cuvée Alexandrine Columbia Gorge Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$50. Fourth generation Burgundian winemaker Alexandrine Roy joins Phelps Creek in Hood River, Oregon, each fall after placing her Gevrey-Chambertain wines in barrel. This wine is made from a selection of estate fruit. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Elusive aromas upon opening that emerge over time in the glass to reveal scents of cherry, raspberry and vanilla. Intensely*

flavored on the mid palate and finish exhibiting ripe cherry and raspberry fruits with a little dash of herbs and earth. A striking wine that has the tannins in the forefront at this young age, but is uniquely interesting. The finish is particularly noteworthy for its persistence and charm. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-



corked bottle. This wine has obvious French breeding and will require patience. Over time, there will be plenty to discover. 93-94.



2010 Siltstone Guadalupe Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$32. Joel and Louise Myers & Sons of Vinetenders manage this vineyard for owners Jim Stonebridge and Kathleen Boere. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Haunting aromas of black cherry, wilted rose, wine cave and wet stones. Plenty of fruit sap, boasting concentrated flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with an earthy underpinning. Much bigger than the previous two vintages, filling the mouth with pleasure and departing with a generous amount of fruit goodness and some dry tannin residue. A bold wine that dances on its toes. 91.*

Pinot Briefs

17th Annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival There is no better way to spend a in May than at the annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival. I never miss this spectacular event which this year will be held May 16-18. More than 45 producers will be pouring Pinot Noir, Pinot Noir Blanc, Blanc de Noirs and Vin Gris of Pinot Noir. On Friday, May 16, is a day-long technical conference aimed at members of the trade and avid Pinot Noir consumers. Conference topics include viticulture and winemaking in a drought, the multiple personalities of Pinot Noir, a tasting of Angel Camp Vineyard Pinot Noirs, and a presentation of Clark Smith on his book, "Postmodern Winemaking." The conference will be followed by an outdoor barbecue at Foursight Wines featuring grilled lamb from Bones Roadhouse in Gualala, California and live music. After a press tasting on Saturday, May 17, in the morning, the Grand Tasting will again take place in the vineyards at Goldeneye Winery in Philo. A list of participating wineries is on the Anderson Valley Winegrowers website at www.avwines.com. Saturday evening local wineries will host three winemaker dinners in Anderson Valley. The weekend concludes on Sunday, May 18, with open houses at Anderson Valley wineries featuring special tastings, music and food. Tickets for the event are now on sale at www.avwines.com.



Wally's Napa/Sonoma All-Stars Wine Tasting This event has gotten so big it has been moved from the store to the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. 100 "All-Star" wineries are pouring on Sunday, April 13, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Pinot producers on the list include Belle Glos, Chanin, DuMOL, El Molino, Etude, Flowers, Freestone, Goldeneye, Hartford Court, LIOCO, Merry Edwards, Reuling Vineyard, Twomey and WALT. Tickets are \$75 at www.wallywine.com.



Burgundy Report Extra Launched Extra is a monthly subscription report that runs as part of the existing Burgundy Report. The first issue concentrates on the 2012 vintage - Bill Nanson's thoughts on its intrinsic quality plus what and where you should buy. You can see what it contains and subscribe at www.burgundy-report.com/01-2014-burgundy-report-extra/. The annual charge is 85 Swiss Francs per year, converted to your local currency at the prevailing rate. This charge is non-recurring so you can elect to re-subscribe if you like the Extra. The traditional Burgundy Reports, published three times a year will still be available (sign up for email alerts on the website).

Willamette Valley Vineyards Estate Tasting Room Grand Opening The Grand Opening of the Estate Tasting Room and Barrel Cellars will be Saturday, May 3, from 11:00 to 6:00. There will be a progressive wine tasting and tour of the new facility with food pairings. The 2012 Bernau Block Pinot Noir, sourced from the original Estate plantings will be released to mark the occasion. Club Members and Shareholders will receive special futures tasting in the new members exclusive Club Room. Admission is \$40

per person, \$25 for Wine Club Members, Shareholders and their guests. Call 503-588-9463 or email info@wv.com to reserve a tasting and tour time.



Patz & Hall Sonoma House Opened Patz & Hall has announced the opening of its new Sonoma House at Patz & Hall at 21200 8th Street East, just a few miles south of the Sonoma town square. The Sonoma House features a luxurious new Tasting Salon where private, by-appointment seated tastings (Wednesday through Sunday) will be paired with gourmet food complements from Chef Natalie Niksa of La Saison. The Salon experience is \$50 per person and lasts approximately one hour. The new location will also include by-appointment tastings at the tasting bar Wednesday through Sunday at a cost of \$25 per person, a drop-in tasting bar accommodating guests if space is available, a member-exclusive Reserve Room, and an expansive patio surrounded by 12 acres of estate vineyards newly planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. In addition, throughout 2014 and 2015, Patz & Hall will be partnering with *California Home + Design* and *7x7* magazine to host installations by artists and designers featured in both publications. For more information, visit www.patzhall.com.

Zalto Denk'Art Stemware These wine glasses are the new darlings of the sommelier world. Handblown in Austria, these glasses are light and thin, yet tough enough to put in the dishwasher. The reason they are tougher is that they are handblown in one piece from the bowl all the way down to the base of the stem eliminating the weak point where the stem meets the bowl. The best prices online are now offered by Collectible Fine Wine, LLC for \$53 a stem (minimum of 6) with free shipping. Order the Burgundy stems at www.collectiblefinewine.com.



Russian River Valley Winegrower's Pinot Classic A multi-day series of events will be held Memorial Day weekend, May 23-26, 2014 including a Paulée Dinner at DeLoach Vineyards on May 24 and Passport to Pinot barrel tastings on Saturday and Sunday from 11:00 to 4:00. In addition, a special seminar on the Russian River Valley's neighborhoods initiative will take place on Saturday, May 24, from 10:00 to 11:30 at the Fountaingrove Inn. The Paulée Dinner will be special this year with a Pinot-inspired menu prepared by

Michou Cornu, Director of Cuisine and Hospitality at Bosset Family Estates. Host wineries include Arista, Benovia, DeLoach, Joseph Swan, Hartford Family, Kosta Browne, Merry Edwards, Thomas George, Williams Selyem and more. A full VIP experience will be offered to 36 ticket holders to include an intimate VIP reception hosted at Kosta Browne with Russian River Valley winegrowers and producers. For more information and tickets, visit www.rvww.org.

Winesong 2014 Charity Auction & Tasting This marks the 30th year of this annual event is produced by the Mendocino Coast Hospital Foundation with profits used to enhance equipment, facilities and services at the Mendocino Coast Hospital. Since 1985, Winesong has raised over \$6 million for improvements in local healthcare. On Friday, September 5, 25 Pinot Noir producers who are members of the Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association will be pouring at the Little River Inn overlooking the Pacific Ocean (a list of participating wineries is on the Winesong website). On Saturday, September 6, the Winesong Wine & Food Tasting will be held in the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens, and features food from 50 of Mendocino County's finest food purveyors, wines from many highly acclaimed Mendocino County wineries, and music from 9 different music groups. Also on Saturday, September 6, is the Charity Auction featuring both a silent and live auction. I have donated a Chehalem Mountains trip that includes signed trading cards from 28 members of the Chehalem Mountains and Ribbon Ridge Winegrowers Association and 28 signed bottles of wine from the producers. For information and tickets, visit www.winesong.org.



Elk Cove Vineyards Buys Goodrich Vineyard Anna Campbell announced that Elk Cove has purchased the Goodrich Road Vineyard, a 69-acre property (21 acres of vines, 4 acres of Chardonnay and 17 acres of Pinot Noir) planted with Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris in the heart of the Yamhill-Carlton AVA. The vineyard was planted in 2007 in high-density format. The property has the same marine sediment (Willakenzie) soil as Elk Cove's Mount Richmond Vineyard, also located in Yamhill, and is just a few miles from Elk Cove's original Estate Vineyard in Gaston. Reserve quality and single-vineyard Pinot Noirs have been produced from this site by Raptor Ridge, Soter, King Estate and many others. This year marks Elk Cove's 40th year growing grapevines in Oregon. Currently, winemaker Adam Campbell sustainably farms over 300 acres of primarily Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris grapes on 6 separate sites in the Northern Willamette Valley: Elk Cove Estate, Windhill Vineyard, Five Mountain Vineyard, Mount Richmond Vineyard, Clay Court Vineyard, and this newly acquired Goodrich Road Vineyard. The winery's website is www.elkcove.com.



New Partners with Evening Land Vineyards Rajat Parr and Sashi Moorman have been searching for the right opportunity to become a part of the Oregon wine community and consider Evening Land Vineyards an ideal complement to their portfolio of terroir-driven wines including Sandhi, Domaine de La Côte and Maison L'Orée.

Alex Sokol Blosser Becomes Winemaker at Sokol Blosser For the first time in the history of the Oregon wine business, someone with the last name of Sokol Blosser is the head winemaker at Sokol Blosser Winery in the Dundee Hills. The son of Sokol Blosser founders Bill Blosser and Susan Sokol Blosser, Alex succeeds Russ Rosner, who retired after 15 years as winemaker at Sokol Blosser. Alex had previously taken over vineyard operations when his mother retired in 2006. His sister, Alison, is the the director of sales and marketing.

Malolactic Bacteria's Proteins Mapped According to www.thedrinksbusiness.com (February 26, 2014), a team of Spanish and Italian scientists have partially genetically mapped a bacterium that causes malolactic fermentation (MLF) in wine. The bacterium helps convert malic acid in wine to lactic acid to give the finished wine a smoother, less acidic profile. It is a process to which all Pinot Noir is subjected, as are some white wines to a greater or lesser extent. The study should be helpful in further research on the biochemistry of *O. oeni* ATCC BAA-1163.

Hello Vino Launches New Wine App Hello Vino 3.7.1 is an all-in-one wine app developed for Apple's iOS7, combining a wine recommendation engine with label scanner capabilities and personal wine ratings. This free app recommends the perfect bottle of wine according to meals, special occasions, or personal taste preferences. The enhanced wine label scanner utilizes image recognition in real-time to deliver information for a particular bottle of wine. The wine scanner feature adds an innovative fail-safe process, where an actual person will identify the wine label photo in real-time if the computer-based image recognition does not find a match. The wine label is then added to a database, enabling the Hello Vino app to identify millions of wines within thirty seconds or less. The new "vintage 3.7" update is currently featured on Apple's "Best New App" and "Great Free Apps" lists in the App Store. Visit www.hellovino.com.



Hello Vino acquired the "instagram" app of the wine world Corkbin recently. Corkbin is an app that allows wine enthusiasts to save and post photos of their wines similar to the photo sharing app Instagram. While the Hello Vino app assists consumers before they buy wine, Corkbin helps the tracking and sharing of wine purchases. The combining of two mobile apps is the first of its kind in the wine industry.

Human Nose Better Than Previously Thought At www.thedrinksbusiness.com (March 21, 2014), a study is reported published in the journal *Science* that suggests the human nose is capable of detecting billions more smells than the 10,000 smells previously assumed by scientists. The researchers believe the result is still an underestimation of the abilities of the human nose, because there are far more odorous molecules than the 128 studied.

Results of The Pinot Noir Masters 2013 *The Drinks Business* Global Pinot Noir Masters event was a judging competition involving almost 300 bottles divided only by price bracket and whether style was oaked or unoaked. The judges had no sense of where the wines came from, but 16 countries were in the line-up. Wines scoring over 95 points were awarded the title of Master. New Zealand won the highest proportion of medals, gaining 25 medals from 27 wines entered. The United States had the sole Master, the competition's highest accolade, awarded to the 2011 Schug Winery Carneros Pinot Noir. The United States also dominated the Gold Medals, gaining 6 of the 11 awarded in total. In total, North America (California and Oregon) gained 27 medals from 32 wines submitted to the competition. Chile got the most accolades overall, achieving 28 medals, but from 44 entries meaning Chile also had a large number of wines which did not receive high scores. France did not score well because there were few entries from the expensive end.

Update on Sonoma Town Plaza Tasting Rooms As a followup to my article on tasting rooms in downtown Healdsburg and Sonoma, I should note that the Sonoma City Council voted this week to not limit the number of wine tasting rooms in the Sonoma Town Plaza area.

Santa Barbara County Vintners Festival Spring Weekend Santa Barbara Vintners present the Vintners Spring Weekend on April 10-13, 2014. Winemaker lunches and dinners, wine-focused seminars, winery and tasting room open houses, vineyard walks, a golf tournament, a Farm-to-Table picnic and concert, and the Grand Tasting where every one of the 100+ member wineries gather to present and sell their wines, usually poured by the winemakers themselves. Visit www.sbvintnersweekend.com

Most Popular Restaurant Wines The *Wine & Spirits* 25th Anniversary Restaurant Poll of sommeliers was published in the April 2014 edition. The average restaurant price for Pinot Noir was \$74.31, a few dollars more than Chardonnay and Merlot and about \$24 less than Cabernet Sauvignon. The average price of a glass of wine has been slowly climbing, reaching \$12.94 in 2013. The most popular choices by the glass were Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. The most popular by the glass Pinot Noirs were Belle Gloss Clark & Telephone Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir and Meiomi Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (#2 overall ranking), Decoy Sonoma County Pinot Noir (#5), La Crema Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (#26) and La Follette Van de Kamp North Coast Pinot Noir and La Follette Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (#29). Pinot Noir is the second most popular varietal selection behind Cabernet Sauvignon. Oregon and California Pinot Noir were about equally popular. The ten most popular Pinot Noirs were in order: Cristom, Belle Glos, La Crema, Domaine Serene, Domaine Drouhin, Emeritus, Hirsch Vineyards, Failla, Decoy and Ken Wright Cellars. This issue of the magazine also reviews 122 exceptional Pinot Noirs. I personally believe *Wine & Spirits*, along with *The Journal of Fine Wine*, are the two best wine periodicals in the marketplace.

Pigs & Pinot Winners The 9th Annual 2014 Pigs & Pinot winners: Pinot Cup - 2010 MacPhail "The Flyer" Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (Runner up was 2011 Twomey Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir); Sommelier Smackdown - 2010 Soliste Foret Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (with over 90% of consumer votes) and 2011 Trombetta Gap's Crown Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir.



On The Pinot Trail: Rocking K Vineyard Cottages

Bobby and Char Kiel own Rocking K Vineyard, located in Sonoma Carneros just two miles from the historic Sonoma Town Plaza across the street from Sangiacomo Vineyard. My wife and I recently stayed in one of two cottages that are for rent on the property and thoroughly enjoyed our time there.

I visited Bobby and Char last year and was enamored with their small production, single vineyard Rocking K Vineyard Pinot Noir. The reviews of the 2010, 2011 and 2012 vintages are at www.princeofpinot.com/winery/2222/.

The location is ideal for exploring the town of Sonoma and its tasting rooms and restaurants, the wineries of Carneros and Sonoma Valley, and the Eighth Street Wineries of Sonoma. The one bedroom and two bedroom cottages have been completely updated and decorated, and have all the amenities including a kitchen. They have vineyard views and large outdoor patios.

Call Char at 415-609-4299 or email her at char@rockingkvineyard.com for information and to reserve a cottage. Tell her you are a fan of the *PinotFile*, and she might give you a discount depending on the season and availability. Ask her to show you her classic AMC Pacer which she toots around Sonoma in drawing plenty of looks.

