



PinotFile

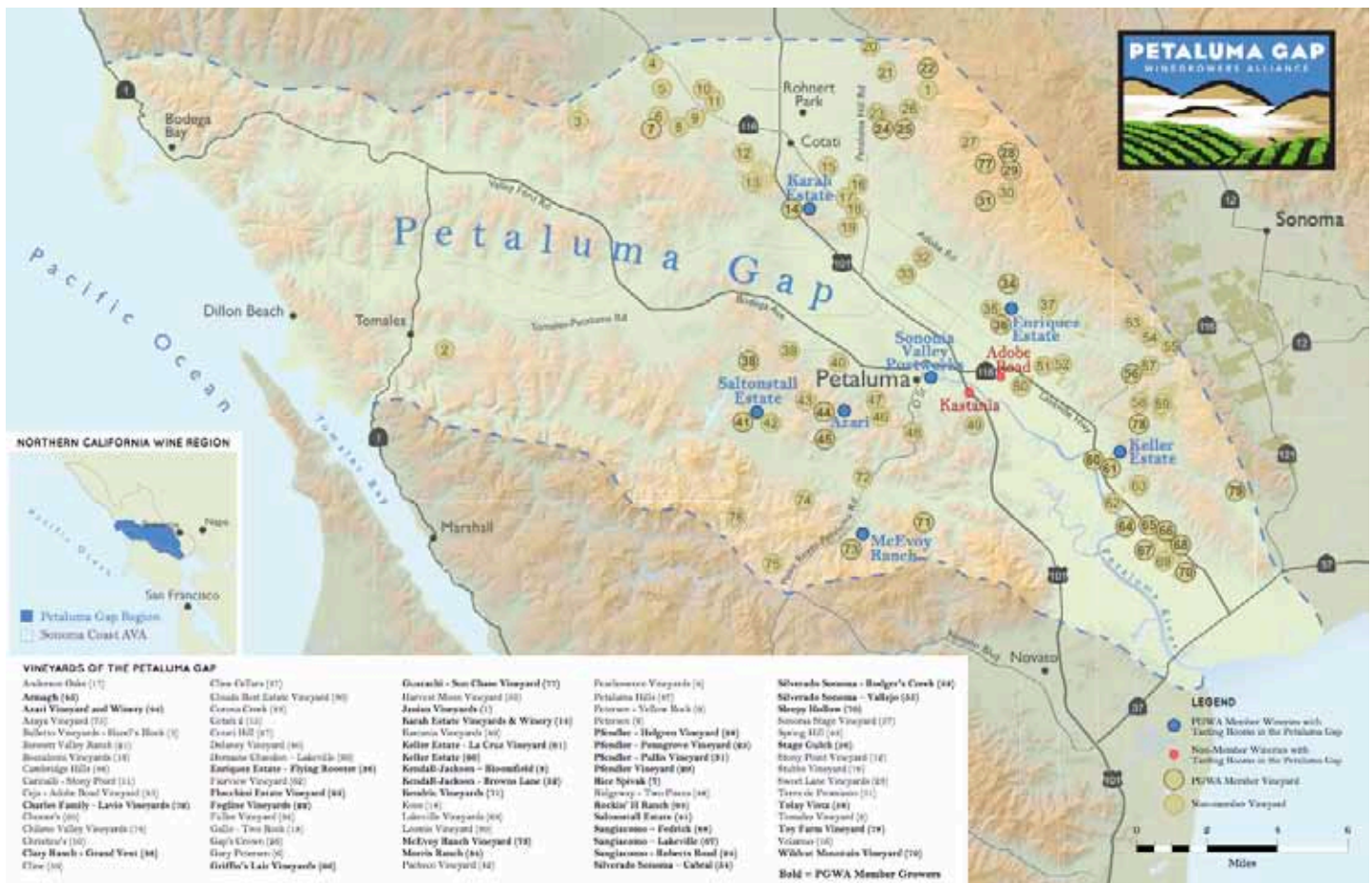
The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

Petaluma Gap: Cooling Wind is the Recipe for Fine Wine

The Petaluma Gap is both an opening in the coastal hills of southwestern Sonoma County allowing marine air to pass into the Bay Area and Russian River Valley (a term coined by local winegrowers over 15 years ago), and a geographic winegrowing region defined by the cooling “wind tunnel” effect resulting from this break in the coastal mountain range. This region, part of the large, 50,000-acre Sonoma Coast appellation (AVA), extends from the Pacific Ocean to San Pablo Bay, comprising an area of low lying land 21 to 30 miles wide.



Because of the low terrain in the Petaluma Gap, there is little resistance to the marine air that rushes in daily, bringing with it the cooling coastal fog. A typical day in the Petaluma Gap begins with a blanket of cool, damp, morning fog. By 11:00 am, the sun chases away the fog and the temperature rises as much as 50° F. By mid-afternoon, the cool on shore breezes begin, gathering speed as the afternoon progresses, and bringing in the almost nightly fog, and a temperature drops returns.

The predominant wind pattern in the Petaluma Gap is for funneled marine air to move eastward from the coast toward Sonoma Mountain, then to split into northward and southward paths. The northward path enters Cotati

and diminishes as it travels toward Santa Rosa. The southward path travels unabated through the Lakeville area before dissipating at San Pablo Bay.

The nature and speed of the wind makes the Petaluma Gap region distinctive from other California winegrowing regions. The PGWA has emphasized this with their tagline, "From Wind to Wine." Hourly average wind speeds throughout the Petaluma Gap exceed 8 miles per hour more than 90% of the time every afternoon during the wine grape growing season. Winds exceeding 20 miles per hour are not uncommon. This cooling "wind tunnel" effect prolongs hang times and slows photosynthesis, allowing wine grapes to reach physiological ripeness at lower sugar levels while maintaining ideal levels of acidity.

Michael Browne, winemaker at Kosta Browne Winery in Sebastopol has sourced grapes from three vineyards in the Petaluma Gap: Gap's Crown, Terra de Promissio and Griffin's Lair. He told me, "I feel the Petaluma Gap is a very special place. The wind and influence from Bodega Bay is epic. Some sites close to the coast are pretty warm due to their location although some are very cold. The Petaluma Gap receives direct fog influence, therefore cooler than most regions resulting in more even ripening of fruit. We tend to get fruit from this region that is elegant yet intense in character due to the fog and wind. I feel the Petaluma Gap is a very high quality region for Pinot Noir and one in which we have invested quite a lot due to its quality."

The photo below was taken at Pfendler Vineyards on the eastern face of Sonoma Mountain. Beyond the vineyard, one can see the low-lying Petaluma Gap region in the distance and the break in the coastal mountains in the far distance.



The Petaluma Gap has a 150-year tradition of growing grapes and producing wine. General Vallejo was the first to plant grapevines in the Petaluma Gap region near Petaluma Adobe. The area's first winery was founded in 1884 by G.V. Fischer, and about the that time, two other large wineries prospered in the Lakeville area.

The resurgence of interest in planting premium wine grapes began in the early 1990s. Today, according to the Sonoma County Winegrowers and Sonoma County Vintners, there are over 4,000 acres of vines (about 12% of the Sonoma County total), producing 12,000 tons of grapes and 720,000 cases of wine annually with a retail value of \$900 million. Of the 80+ vineyards, most are 4 to 20 acres in size. The leading varieties are Pinot Noir (75%), Chardonnay (13%), and Syrah (12%). 9 licensed wineries are located in the Petaluma Gap region.

In 2005, the Petaluma Gap Winegrowers Alliance (PGWA) was established. The PGWA has promoted Petaluma Gap wines to the media and consumers, with the goal of establishing a reputation for wines crafted from Petaluma Gap grapes and distinguish themselves from the West Sonoma Coast growers who are also in the Sonoma Coast AVA. Members of the group have found recently that the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) is disallowing the term “Petaluma Gap” anywhere on wine labels, because they consider the Petaluma Gap to be “viticulturally significant.” As a result, the PGWA has begun the process of developing a petition for a Petaluma Gap AVA that would allow vintners to clearly label their wines as “Petaluma Gap, Sonoma County.”

The PGWA is currently in the preparation stage of creating a Petaluma Gap AVA petition and plan to submit it to the TTB the first quarter of 2015. The process is complicated and expensive, and may take two years or longer for approval. Considerable climate and wind data must be collected to establish distinguishing features that differentiate the proposed AVA from surrounding regions in all directions, as well as establishing the exact boundaries of the proposed Petaluma Gap AVA. There are at least 30 different soil types in the Petaluma Gap so this will not be a distinguishing feature.

The boundaries as shown on the map above are subject to change. A few vineyards in the southwestern corner of the proposed boundary are in Marin County. One issue is the overlap of the current Petaluma Gap boundary in the northeastern corner with the Russian River Valley. There are eleven vineyards in this overlapped area. The original Petaluma Gap map was drawn in 2005, but since then, the boundaries of the Russian River Valley AVA have been extended twice despite opposition that claimed the area was more aptly included in the Petaluma Gap region. It is unlikely that the Petaluma Gap AVA submission will include the overlap, since guidance from the TTB indicates that such a petition would not be approved.

On November 17, 2014, I attended a presentation in San Francisco by the PGWA regarding the proposed Petaluma Gap AVA with an accompanying tasting of Petaluma Gap wines. This sampling of 5 Chardonnays, 10 Pinot Noirs and 5 Syrahs did not lend itself to establishing a discerning character of the wines from the Petaluma Gap. The variable vinification methods and winemaker’s imprint overshadowed any consistent Petaluma Gap signature. That said, the quality of many of the wines were superb, and I have included some brief comments about the wines here.

Chardonnay (all wines were barrel fermented and underwent 100% malolactic fermentation)

2013 Fogline Fogline Home Vineyard Zephyr’s Block Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 13.3% alc., pH 3.25, TA 0.66, 145 cases, \$38. *The most acid-driven wine in the tasting. Aromas of lemon curd, pear, vanilla and nutty oak. Bright citrus, apple and pear flavors with a subtle contribution from smoky oak. The mouthfeel was slightly creamy and the refreshing finish ended on a soprano note.*

2013 Pfendler Pfendler Vineyards Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.2% alc., 224 cases, \$38. *Moderately deep straw color. The nose is a bit austere, with demure aromas of lemon and marzipan. The citrus-driven core had good length, bracing acidity, complimentary toasty oak and a slightly viscous texture.*



2013 Keller Estate La Cruz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, 818 cases, \$38. *Lovely aromas of tropical fruits including pineapple, and lemon. Fresh, clean and sleek, with a good cut of acidity, this wine was more mineral-driven, finishing with a crisp squeeze of lemon.*

2012 Sojourn Cellars Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.60, 825 cases. *My least favorite Chardonnay of the tasting with austere aromas of oak and little fruit, and flavors of citrus, apple and almond. Reasonably good fruit richness with a shallow finish.*

2012 La Follette Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.62, 835 cases, \$38. *This wine offers a very pleasing merger of citrus fruit and oak. There is a nice touch of spice, a slightly creamy mouthfeel, perfect integration of acidity, and good intensity and length on the pleasing finish. This was the standout Chardonnay in this tasting.*

Pinot Noir

2012 Baliwick "Borderline" Marin County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.61, 300 cases, \$28. From Kendric and Chileno Valley vineyards. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of cherries and red berries are accented with hints of smoky oak and dried herbs. Relatively light in weight, yet flavorful, with a well-spiced core of fresh cherry and strawberry essence. Soft and silky in the mouth, with a good cut of acidity and respectable finishing presence.*



2012 Couloir Chileno Valley Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., TA 0.68, 193 cases, \$44. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A stunning wine with hi-tone aromas of cherry, spice and smoky oak and intense flavors of fresh black cherry, black raspberry and spice. The wine is modest in weight with bright acidity, well integrated oak, and a juicy finish.*

2012 Fogline Vineyards Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.65, 195 cases, \$42. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of darker red cherries and berries, marzipan and vanilla lead to mid weight flavors of black cherry and raspberry clothed in ruddy tannin, finishing with good intensity and aplomb.*

2012 Wind Gap Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.58, 161 cases, \$60. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A somewhat disjointed wine with too much oak overlay, tasting more of tobacco than dark berry fruits that form the core of the wine.*

2013 Keller Estate "El Coro" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.58, 396 cases, \$52. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Engaging aromas of black cherry, sous-bois and oak. Still young and somewhat closed, yet showing enough vanilla-enhanced black cherry flavor to promise future pleasure. The velvety mouthfeel is very seductive.*

2013 Pfendler Pfendler Vineyards Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 350 cases, \$45. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with fresh cherry pie glaze and baking spice. Charming on*

the palate, with inviting red cherry flavor. The tannins are supple and the texture is silky. Very forward and highly enjoyable now.

2012 Kosta Browne Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.48, TA 0.59, 2,186 cases, \$84. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A ripe, fruit-driven wine with aromas of black raspberry and black grape juice, with a moderately rich charge of black cherry and black raspberry fruits. Very friendly, with soft tannins and a generous finish.*

2013 Guarachi Family Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, 915 cases, \$65. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy fruit on the nose, with aromas of dark chocolate and toasty oak predominant. Rather linear, tight and dull, with a generous core of dark berry fruit and balancing tannins. This wine needs at least a year in bottle to blossom.*

2012 La Follette Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.60, 300 cases, \$40. *Moderate light reddish purple color in the glass. Nothing but oak on the nose. The pleasant dark berry fruit is clothed in oak. The tannins are moderate and there is superb backing acidity. Not to my taste.*

2013 Sojourn Cellars Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.58, 825 cases, \$54. *Moderate dark reddish purple color in the glass. A very seductive wine with bright aromas of dark cherries, spice and graham. The mid to full-bodied flavor of black cherry is delicious and expansive. A beautifully crafted, harmonious wine that is sexy for want of a better word.*

Syrah

Syrah struggles to ripen in this region, so the wines have considerable variability. The potential is evident though.

2012 Waxwing Flocchini Vineyard Sonoma Coast Syrah 13.4% alc., pH 4.0, TA 0.46, 60 cases, \$32. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas and flavors of purple and black berries in a mid weight style with balanced tannins and some length on the finish. There is a curious bubblegum note on the palate.*

2004 Clary Grower's Reserve Shazzam Sonoma Coast Syrah 13.4% alc.. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black fruits and underbrush lead to a tasty core of juicy black fruits accented with peppery spice. This wine has aged beautifully and is still fresh and giving.*

2011 Keller Estate "Rotie" Sonoma Coast Syrah 14.1% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.61, 429 cases, \$52. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. An impressive offering with scents of dark cherry reduction sauce, brown spice and graham. The middleweight flavors of black cherry and black plum are enhanced with spice and subtle oak. Nicely composed with balanced tannins and a sleek, long finish.*

2012 Bedrock Griffin's Lair Vineyard Sonoma Coast Syrah 14.6% alc., 200 cases, \$42. *Dark violet color in the glass. A brooding, tannic wine with a full-bodied load of black fruits accented with tobacco oak. This wine is hard to embrace by itself, and would benefit from some accompanying grilled protein.*

2011 Pax Griffin's Lair Vineyard Sonoma Coast Syrah 13.9% alc., 300 cases, \$62. *Dark violet color in the glass. Very pleasing aromas of well-ripened purple and black berries with a compliment of sweet oak. Full-bodied and luscious, with a charge of boysenberry and blackberry flavors that maintain intensity through a big finish. A note of peppery spice adds interest. The tannins are bold and muscular, but not out of balance with the generous fruit load.*

For more information on the proposed Petaluma Gap AVA and the Petaluma Gap Winegrowers Alliance, visit www.petalumagap.com. Petaluma Gap member wineries with tasting rooms (some require an appointment) include Azari Vineyards, Cline Cellars, Couloir Wines, Enriquez Estate, Fogline Vineyards, Karah Estate, Keller Estate, McEvoy Ranch, Ramey Wine Cellars, Saltonstall Estate, Sojourn Cellars, Sonoma Portworsk, Trombetta Family Wines, WALT Wines and Wind Gap Wines. There are many wineries that buy Petaluma Gap fruit and some of them are the most famous wineries in Sonoma County including Cobb Wines, Donum Estate,

Flowers Vineyard & Winery, Freeman Winery & Vineyards, Hartford Family Winery, Kendall Jackson Wine Estates, Schug Winery, Soliste and Twomey Cellars.

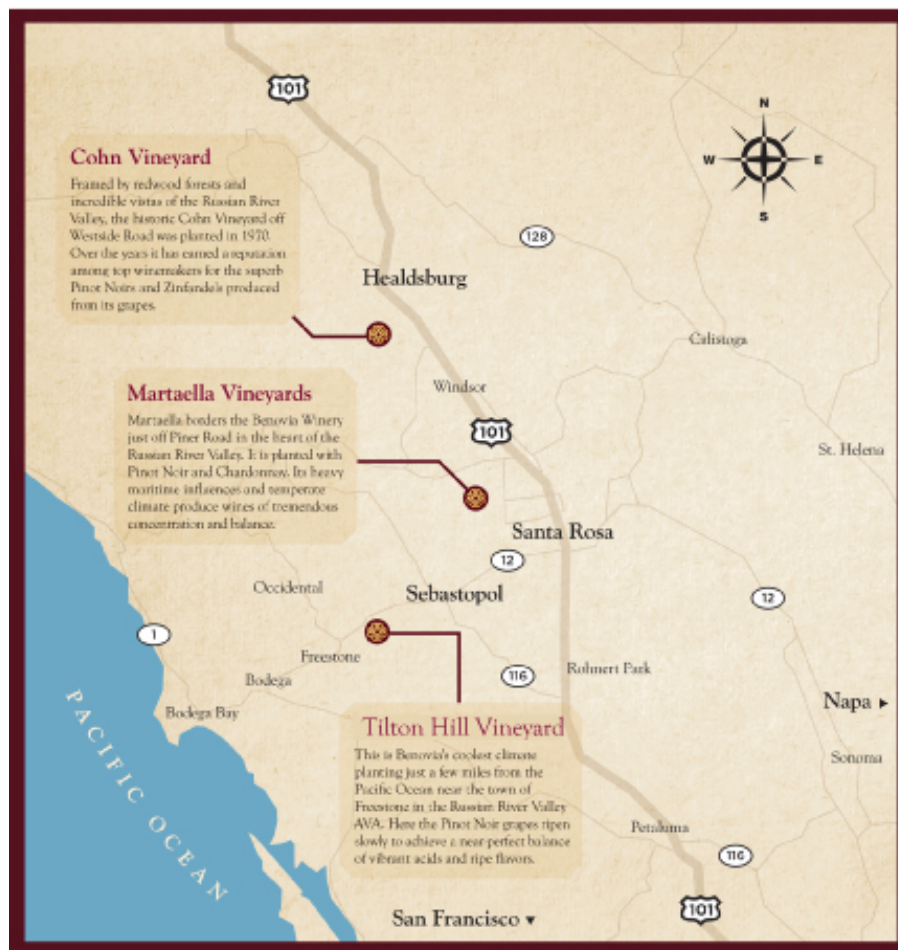


Sips of Recently Tasted California Pinot Noir (& Chardonnay)

There are some amazing wines in this issue from the 2012 vintage. In fact, there are more high scoring wines than I have ever sampled as a group in my twelve years of tasting for the *PinotFile*. Quantities are generous in this vintage so you should be able to stock your cellar with the most desirable wines.

Benovia

Winemaker Mike Sullivan has waited patiently 8 years to develop and properly farm Benovia's Martaella and Tilton Hill estate vineyards. The 2012 releases from these two vineyards joins the historic Cohn Vineyard to complete the vision of producing three vineyard-designated, estate-grown, Benovia Pinot Noirs. Ultimately, Benovia plans to produce nearly all wines from estate fruit. The 42-acre Martaella Vineyards surround the Benovia wineries (a new large winery is currently under construction which will be used for red wine production, increasing potential output to 10,000 cases) and visitor center. This vineyard is planted to ten heritage clones of Pinot Noir. The 12-acre Tilton Hill Vineyard is perched on a ridge top near the town of Freestone and is Benovia's coldest vineyard site. This vineyard is a high-density planting in Goldridge soil. Benovia wines are sold primarily through a mailing list. Sullivan now has the vineyard material to realize his ultimate winemaking goals that have evolved over several years, and the 2012 lineup of wines rewarded him with the most refined and enticing lineup ever offered at Benovia. Tasting is available by appointment. Visit www.benoviawinery.com.



2012 Benovia Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 1,500 cases, \$38. Produced with almost 95% estate fruit. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. An array of scents including Bing cherry, spice and pipe smoke lead to a mid weight core of fresh cherry fruit with a hint of herbs, cranberry sauce, and smoky oak. A solid, elegant wine with a soft, cherry-fueled finish.* **88-89.**



2012 Benovia Cohn Vineyard Sonoma County Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 350 cases, \$70. Sourced from Benovia's historic Cohn Vineyard planted in 1970. This dry-farmed, 18-acre vineyard is planted to a massale selection of Pinot Noir (likely Martini and Pommard). Organically farmed for 6 years. Low yields of 1.25 tons per acre. 100% de-stemmed. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Vibrant, even exhilarating aromas of fresh cherries, spice and bark that hold up remarkably over time in the glass. Delicious layers of flavor featuring black cherry, black raspberry, brown spice, cherry licorice and toasty oak. Seamless, seductive and classy, with a finish of uncommon persistence. Lighter and more refined in this vintage, with more suavity and Pinot character. Still great two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 95.*



2012 Benovia Martaella Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 425 cases, \$56. The first single vineyard Pinot Noir from this estate vineyard named in honor of the mothers of owners Joe Anderson and Mary Dewane. A blend of Calera, Pommard, Mt. Eden and Swan selections. 30% whole cluster fermentation. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly to reveal appealing aromas of black cherry, dark raspberry preserves, exotic spices, sous-bois, and floral goodness. The flavors of purple berries and black cherry are bright and juicy, accented with spice and cola. Softly textured and balanced with modest tannins and a bright, cherry-driven finish. Perfect interplay of tannin and acidity. The long finish is particularly impressive. Still superb two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 93.*

2012 Benovia Tilton Hill Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 325 cases, \$56. Vineyard is located at the Russian River Valley-Sonoma Coast border. Shallow and well-drained Goldridge soils. High-density planting. Clones are "828," Calera, 777 and 943. Aged in 30%-40% new French oak barrels. *Dark violet color in the glass. Lovely aromas of blackberry, black currant, loamy earth and complimentary oak. Full-flavored with a sappy core of black fruits offering a boatload of pleasure. The concentrated fruit veers to the very ripe side and a little raisin peeks out the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. An underlying forest floor and conifer note adds interest. There is both more tannin and acidity evident in this wine compared to the other two vineyard-designates. 91.*

2012 Benovia La Pommerai Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 375 cases, \$56. Sourced from George Martinelli Vineyard (Zio Tony). This dry-farmed vineyard is planted to Dijon 777 and "828." *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, blackberry, forest floor and a touch of rose petal. Full-bodied charge of boysenberry, black raspberry and black cherry fruit awakens the palate and expands through a decadent finish where the fruit hangs on tenaciously. Despite its richness, the wine is sleek and polished, with excellent integration of oak. Well-done in this "New World style." 92.*

2012 Benovia Russian River Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., 1,200 cases, \$36. Primarily Wente clone from the estate Martaella Vineyard. 70% malolactic fermentation. Aged 16 months sur lie in <30% new French oak barrels. *Light golden straw color in the glass. Aromas of citrus and almond lead to a full-flavored wine featuring flavors of pear, lemon, and apricot with complimentary oak seasoning. Refreshing, with bright acidity and lift. 89.*

2012 Benovia Fort Ross-Seaview Chardonnay 14.2% alc., \$48. If you are a fan of Marcassin Chardonnay, note that this wine is sourced from the same 15 to 20 year-old Dijon vines on the Three Sisters Vineyard owned by the Martinelli family, and formerly used by Marcassin for years for their Three Sisters Chardonnay. The vineyard is adjacent Marcassin Vineyard on the West Sonoma Coast. 100% malolactic fermentation, aged in 40% new French oak, unfiltered. *Light golden straw color in the glass. A classy wine with aromas of lemongrass, citrus, spice, poached pear and floral goodness. A delicious wine with flavors echoing the aromas, and offering noticeable attack and finish. Oak adds a subtle note of caramel and brioche. There is good tension provided by citrus-fueled acidity, and some textural interest. A connoisseur's Chardonnay. 93.*

2012 Benovia La Pommerai Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.5% alc., 350 cases, \$48. Sourced from George Martinelli Vineyard (Zio Tony) located at the edge of the Green Valley AVA. The vineyard is planted at a very high density of 2420 vines per acre to Dijon clones 548 and 95. The site was once an apple orchard, so Benovia pays homage to the Martinelli family and the history of the site by naming the wine 'La Poommerai' - French for apple orchard. Indigenous yeast fermentation, 100% malolactic fermentation, and aged sur lie for 16 months in 40% new French oak barrel. *Light golden straw color in the glass. The perfume of pear, caramel*

and toffee leads to a rich, full, smooth palate of lemon curd, pear and spice flavors. A luscious Russian River Valley style Chardonnay that offers plenty of pleasure. 91.

Foursight Wines

Anderson Valley-based Foursight Wines is the first winery in the country to label all its wines with ingredients alongside a vegan/vegetarian statement. Starting with the 2012 vintage, all the Foursight wines are labeled with “grapes, sulfur dioxide,” or “grapes, tartaric acid, sulfur dioxide,” and “this wine is suitable for vegans and vegetarians.” This last statement is permitted by the TTB because the wines are unfiltered without the use of animal-derived products. The winery produced its first ingredients-labeled wine in 2010 - an estate Semillon - and decided to expand the effort to its entire portfolio due to positive responses from consumers. Copies of the labels can be found on the winery’s website at www.foursightwines.com.

Foursight wines are made with estate grown grapes, fermented with wild yeast and malolactic cultures, and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Pinot Noirs are always produced with a percentage of whole cluster fermentation (10 to 50 percent depending on the vintage).

2012 Foursight Charles Vineyard Zero Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.58, 173 cases, \$38. Release November 2014. Clones are Pommard 05, 777, 115 and 114. 30% whole cluster fermentation. Aged in second-year and older barrels with no new oak. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Bright cherry fruit is the focus of this juicy wine which is very soft and seamless on the palate. Added accents of raspberry, brown spice and sandalwood add interest. Inviting balance and harmony and highly approachable now.* 91.

2012 Foursight Charles Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.58, 224 cases, \$46. Release May 2015. Crafted from all four clones grown in the estate vineyard (777, 114, 115, and Pommard 05). 30% whole cluster fermentation. Wooden basket-pressed. Aged in 40% new, 10% second-year and 50% three-plus-year-old French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is infused with the lovely scent of Bing cherry glaze and complimentary oak in the background. Very soft and sexy, with mid weight flavors of cherry, raspberry and plum caressed by suede tannins. Oak seasoning plays a favorable role. This wine, which has a little more body and generosity than the Zero, finishes silky and full of cherry goodness.* 92.



2012 Foursight Charles Vineyard Clone 05 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.74, TA 0.70, 130 cases, \$49. Release January 1, 2015. Four favorite barrels of 100% Pommard 05. 30% whole cluster fermentation. Aged in 40% new and 40% second-year French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The hi-tone aromas of black cherry and dark raspberry fill the glass. Soft and velvety on the palate, even ephemeral, like angels dancing on a cloud. Discreetly concentrated and highly flavorful, featuring dark cherry and dark red berry fruits with oak seasoning in the background. Nicely composed with balanced tannins and a finish that sports refined acidity. This wine will get noticed.* 93.



george wine company

george levkoff prefers lower case, but his wines are upper case in quality. His winery is a one-man operation, with george hand crafting Pinot Noir that is cherished by sommeliers countrywide (see the website for the impressive list of restaurants carrying george Pinot on their wine lists). This vintage is sold out, but you may be able to beg a few bottles if you call george.

2013 george Sonoma Coma Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$50. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of cherry tart and beef brisket. Although a blend of vineyard sources, the wine seems to have a large percentage of Hansen Vineyard with its telltale fecal note. Smoky oak envelopes the modest black cherry core which is supported by substantial tannins.* 87.

2013 george Leras Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 148 cases, \$60. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is generously endowed with lovely aromas of black cherry, dark rose petal, conifer forest and a hint of oak. The mid weight essence of Bing cherry really impresses on the mid palate, carrying over with lushness and length on the finish which lasts at least 30 seconds. Very juicy, with hints of black raspberry and oak vanillin. Substantial youthful, dry tannins guarantee age ability.* 92.

2013 george Ceremonial Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 257 cases, \$60. *Moderate ruby red and slightly cloudy in the glass. Dancing aromas of red berries, red plums, pomegranate and seagrass. Light to medium in weight with flavors of strawberry, cherry, red plum and brown spice. Oak plays a significant role and needs time to integrate. More flavor intensity the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* 88.

2013 george Buena Terra Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 148 cases, \$60. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing aromas of Bing cherry, rose petal, and baking spices including nutmeg. Soft and smooth on the palate, with a giving essence of cherry flavor. Nicely balanced with supple tannins, seamless oak integration, and a cherry-laden finish. Definitely more appealing the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* 91.



2013 George Hansen Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 148 cases, \$60. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Distinctive aromas of black cherry, sweet manure, dark chocolate and smoky oak. A terroir-driven wine with its signature fecal character in the background. Silky on the palate and very well crafted, with balanced tannins and a delicious black cherry essence. This is a wine with personality and one unlike any you have ever tasted. The best Hansen Vineyard Pinot Noir from George to date. 93.*



LaRue Wines

I am a fan of these very stylistic wines crafted by Katy Wilson (photo below) whose wines are very similar in character to those crafted by her winemaking partner, Ross Cobb. Grapes are picked earlier than many, whole cluster fermentation plays a big role, and the wines have a juiciness and acidity that is bright and uplifting. Oak is never an issue and tannins are refined. Those looking for big, extracted fruit bombs, should look elsewhere.



2012 LaRue Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 220 cases, \$60. A blend of Rice-Spivak and Emmaline Ann vineyards. Dijon clones and Swan selection. Goldridge sandy loam soils at both sites. Aged 17 months in 35% new French oak. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Plenty of whole cluster goodness in this wine with aromas of cherry, raspberry, cola, rose and spice. An elegant wine. but packs plenty of flavorful spiced cherry and raspberry fruits with a note of pomegranate, cranberry and rose water in the background. High grade tension, nicely accented with oak, finishing with crisp, tart cherry goodness. 91.*



2012 LaRue Emmaline Anne Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.4% alc., 50 cases, \$70 (two bottles per person). From a 3-acre vineyard near the town of Freestone. Dijon clones are planted in Goldridge sandy loam soils. Aged 17 months in 50% new French oak. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Similar to the Sonoma Coast bottling, but a step up in nuance and sophistication. Wondrous aromas of wilted rose, red cherry and spice led to a delicious palate of crisp, juicy red plum, cherry and red raspberry fruits. A faint note of oak and floral bouquet lurks in the background. Refined and classy, with a mouthwatering finish. 94.*



Littorai

Ted Lemon is one of California's most respected winegrowers and vintners. The quality of the wines is based on low yields and careful site and vine selection. Ted's focus is not on technology, but rather on farming and nature, particularly biodynamic and agro-ecological farming techniques. Cultured yeasts, cultured bacteria, yeast additives, yeast or malolactic nutrients, enzymes, acidification and de-acidification are avoided if possible. Ted does not make wine for competitions, ratings or trends. His wines are typically elegant and complex, and often need cellaring for full expression. Visit the Littorai model farm and innovative winery located between Sebastopol and Freestone (by appointment) to properly understand the effort expended to produce wines of terroir. The website is www.littorai.com.



2012 Littorai One Acre Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., \$75. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A very young wine that will need patience for full enjoyment. Aromas of black raspberry, pipe smoke and sous-bois lead to a mid weight palate of dark red cherry, red raspberry and red plum flavors with a leafy, dried herb note playing in the background. The fruit is embedded in young tannins and oak at this point. The wine is much more expressive over time in the glass, and significantly more appealing the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with more overt fruit expression and decreased savory input. Cellar this special wine for a few years. 91-92.*



2012 Littorai B.A. Thieriot Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$75. *Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. Engaging aromas of fresh berries, black cherries, mushroom, conifer and subtle oak. A very refined and classy wine that offers an intense attack and length. Mid weight dark red cherry and berry, and blueberry flavors are featured with a touch of savory dried herbs in the background. The dark red raspberry finish is delightful. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating a promising future. This is always my favorite Littorai bottling. 93-94.*



Patz & Hall

2012 Patz & Hall Jenkins Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 15.4% alc., 957 cases, \$55. Released March 2014. This 18-acre vineyard is located two miles west of Sebastopol on Pleasant Hill Road (Sebastopol Hills). Goldridge sandy loam soil planted to Dijon 667 and 777. Vineyard planted by Charlie Chenoweth in 2001. Wild and cultured yeast fermentations. 15% whole cluster. Aged in 66% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A very appealing nose filled with savory*

goodness including mushroom and sous-bois complimented by aromas of dark raspberry, blackberry and spice. Mid to full-bodied with a tenacious palate of purple and black berries complimented by oak. There is plenty of balancing structure to match the sappy fruit, and the finish is powerful and lasting. Clearly a special wine somewhat defined by the richness and depth bestowed on the wine by the alcohol which is well integrated. **92.**

2013 Patz & Hall Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.2% alc., \$38. Inaugural wine replacing the Napa Valley Chardonnay after 20 vintages. Released July 2014. Predominant sources include Zio Tony Ranch, Durell, Dutton Ranch, Parmalee Hill, Sun Chase, and Gap's Crown vineyards. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast fermentations, aged sur lie with weekly stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel. Aged in 35% new French oak barrels. *Moderate straw color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon, yellow applesauce, lemongrass and nutty oak. Lemon flavors drive the pleasure with hints of apple and melon. Slightly creamy on the palate with nicely integrated oak and a tart lemony finish. Easy to like.* **89.**

2012 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard Carneros Napa Chardonnay 14.2% alc., 1,303 cases, \$60. Released October 2014. Hyde-Wente selection. 24th growing season working with this fruit. Whole cluster pressed. Indigenous fermentations, aged sur lie with weekly stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel. Aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Unfiltered. *Moderate straw color and clear in the glass. Lovely perfume of fresh lemon, white rose, and brioche. Hi-tone flavors of lemon, nectarine, apple, lemongrass and nutty oak working in harmony. Bright, with excellent grip and follow through on the crisp finish. A stylish wine with excellent breeding.* **93.**



Sandhi Wines

Sommelier Rajat Parr, the wine and spirits director for the Michael Mina Group, joined with Charles Banks, the former owner of Screaming Eagle, and winemaker Sashi Moorman, to produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from select vineyards in Santa Barbara County. The name, Sandhi, is an ancient Sanskrit word meaning "alliance" or "collaboration," and reflects the partnership of the winery. Parr spearheaded the "Pursuit of Balance" movement, and the stylistic goal of the wines reflects this: avoidance of extreme ripeness, oak and alcohol while emphasizing finesse, minerality, acidity, structure and balance. The Pinot Noirs are most whole cluster fermented and are unfinned and unfiltered. A tasting room is in Lompoc. Visit www.sandhiwines.com. For 2012, a Mt. Carmel (\$50) and La Cote Pinot Noir (\$90) are also offered.



2012 Sanford & Benedict Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., \$65. Sourced from the original 1971 plantings at Sanford & Benedict Vineyard. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Very engaging nose that is whole cluster inspired with aromas of rose petal, spicy cola, cherry and spiced pear. Soft and silky on the palate with succulent flavors of red cherry and red berries with a hint of dried leaf and rose water in the background. More brightness and more savory than the Rinconada bottling. Plenty of bones for aging, with a nice interplay of juicy acidity and suede tannins on the finish. A sommelier's wine built for food. Considerable better and more expressive the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with plenty of spice, cola and fruit flavors dancing on the palate.* **94.**



2012 Sandhi Rinconada Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$55. 100% whole cluster fermentation. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Exhilarating nose offering aromas of dark cherry, rose petal, exotic spices and a little sous-bois at play. Seductive elegance upon entry with layers of dark red and purple berry fruits backed by youthful, muscular tannins. A wine to contemplate with nuances arriving over time including a floral riff. Silky in the mouth with a good spark of acidity to buffer the tannins. Still very enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine needs cellaring for the tannins to meld.* **93.**

Sea Smoke

Sea Smoke Estate Vineyard was planted in 1999 on a hillside site. Each evening, the unique geography of the region funnels a marine fog layer (“sea smoke”) up the Santa Ynez River canyon, cooling the vines and extending the ripening period. Winemaker Don Schroeder has been at Sea Smoke since 2003, and he has continued to fine tune his winemaking approach. For the Southing Pinot Noir, some untoasted oak barrels were used and 10% of the wine was aged in 600-liter demi-muid barrels which slow oxygen ingress and preserve freshness. The 2012 Southing is the twelfth vintage and is featuring the vineyard in its prime.



2012 Sea Smoke Southing Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.58% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.65, \$60 (1.5 ml \$125). The name refers to the south-facing hillside block of the estate vineyard. Grapes spent an evening in the cold room after picking and sorting and then 100% de-stemmed. Musts were cold soaked for 1 to 4 days, then inoculated with cultured yeasts. Manual punchdowns were carried out three times a day, with a total maceration time of 14 to 18 days.

Free-run juice was transferred to tank for settling. Pressing was carried out at very low pressure. After settling, both free-run and press wines were racked to 55% new French oak barrels for 16 months aging. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Gorgeous nose featuring spiced berries, violets, sous-bois and a hint of vanilla. The flamboyantly flavored core of black raspberry and plum is accented with spice and an undertone of earthy flora. Amazing fruit flavor, yet angelic, with a very soft and seamless demeanor, with oak adding complimentary seasoning. The fine-grain tannins are beautifully integrated and the typically bright Sta. Rita Hills acidity adds vibrancy. The finish is long and pleasing, filled with spicy plum goodness. This wine demands your attention from the get-go. Still stunning the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, when I drained the bottle. 97.*



2012 Sea Smoke Sea Spray Blanc De Noirs Sta. Rita Hills Sparkling Wine 11.9% alc., pH 3.15, TA 0.90, \$80. A *methode champenoise* wine with limited production. A long, cool fermentation began in stainless tanks, and was completed in once-used and neutral French oak barrels. After 6 months of sur lie aging in barrel, the was bottle aged an additional 16 months en tirage before disgorging, and finished with no dosage to preserve its finesse. *Delicate light salmon color in the glass with an effusive bead. Aromas of brioche, lily bouquet and sandy beach lead to discreetly intense flavors of cherry, strawberry, blood orange, apricot and rose water. A*

bone dry sparkler that is expansive in the mouth, finishing with mouthwatering, steely, orange-infused acidity. **92.**

Siduri Wines

Tasting through Siduri's wines gives a window into the 2013 vintage in the Russian River Valley, Santa Lucia Highlands and Sta. Rita Hills. The wines are magnificently balanced with bright, up front fruit flavors and modest tannins. The appellation blends are skillfully assembled by winemaker Adam Lee as always and represent exceedingly good values.



2013 Siduri Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 4,489 cases, \$22, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas really pop upon opening with notes of black cherry, deep raspberry and spice, but fade a bit in the glass over time. The tasty core of black cherry fruit is tasty, silky and forward, with plenty of richness to satisfy. The tannins are well-proportioned and the finish is juicy and pleasing. A solid wine that will perk up any mid week dinner. **88.***



2013 Siduri Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 2,922 cases, \$32, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of Bing cherry and raspberry are slow to arrive in the glass but satisfy over time. A bit of an atypical flavor profile for Russian River Valley with black raspberry, blueberry and pomegranate dominating the mid weight palate. Nevertheless, this sleek wine has admirable balance with complimentary oak and a finish of some persistence. **89.***



2013 Siduri Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 2,764 cases, \$32, screwcap. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very ripe scented nose with aromas of blackberry, spice and conifer. Silky and juicy on the palate with alluring flavors of boysenberry, blackberry and black currant with a substantial, but not imposing tannic backbone. The lengthy finish is especially noteworthy for an appellation blend wine. **90.***



2013 Siduri Bucher Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 388 cases, \$49. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Well-endowed with generous aromas of ripe Bing cherries, cola and loamy earth. Discreetly concentrated, cherry-driven flavor on the palate with an undertone of savory spices, smoky oak, and what the French call merde, a fecal or decaying vegetative note that some drinkers (not me) prize. **91.***

have experienced this in only one other California wine - the Russian River Valley Hansen Vineyard Pinot Noir produced by Brogan Cellars and George Wine Company. 89.

2013 Siduri Elsbree Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 103 cases, \$45, screwcap. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. This wine shows the most oak imprint of the lineup but it is not imposing. Aromas of dark cherry, cola, rose petal and espresso. Very smooth and creamy on the palate with very taste dark cherry and berry flavors accented with cola and dark chocolate notes. Very inviting with soft tannins.* 90.

2013 Siduri Parson's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 389 cases, \$49, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very charming aromas of black cherry pie glaze, brioche and rose petal. Juicy and silky on the palate, with a generous essence of well-ripened cherries with a riff of purple berries mixed in. Beautifully balanced with a healthy tannic backbone, finishing with teasing, pleasing charm.* 91.

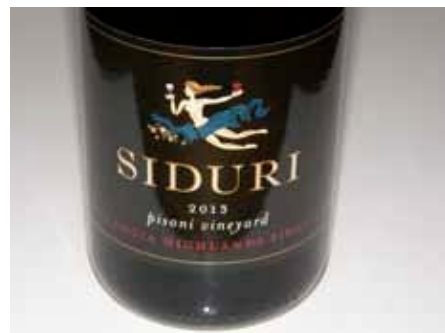
2013 Siduri Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 378 cases, \$54, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. A little riper profile in this vintage, offering an array of red and purple berry and stone fruits. Inviting attack with impressive fullness on the palate, with immersed tannins, finishing with a charge of fruit excellence. This wine also has textural interest to compliment its refined character. Always the most feminine wine of the Rosella's-Garys'-Pisoni trilogy.* 92.



2013 Siduri Garys' Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 350 cases, \$54, screwcap. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy initially, picking up aromatic and flavor interest over time in the glass. Aromas of dark cherry, dark berry, spice and floral bouquet lead to a mid to full-bodied rainbow of black cherry, boysenberry, purple grape and plum flavors. The fruit is flat-out gorgeous. Well-proportioned tannins and a caressing, creamy mouthfeel complete the picture.* 94.



2013 Siduri Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 450 cases, \$60, screwcap. *High yields but many berries in each cluster created an ideal situation. Grapes were picked over a month. A good percentage of whole clusters were used in the fermentation as the clusters had very ripe stems. 18 barrels (34% of the lot) were selected for this wine which includes barrels from the Big Block, Hermanos, and Tina's sections of the vineyard. Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Typical Pisoni with a rich load of purple and black berry fruits that balance the wine's broad shoulders of tannins. The boldest wine in the Siduri lineup with a remarkable palate-staining, grand cru finish. The penetrating energy of the wine is striking. When I left a re-corked bottle for 3 days and re-tasted it, I was astonished by its brilliance. The tannins had thoroughly melded and the wine was all velvet, highly flavorful, and I experienced stars. This vineyard is truly the source of one of California's greatest Pinot Noirs.* 96.



2013 Siduri Clos Pepe Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 420 cases, \$54, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The explosive perfume of cherry, raspberry, brown spice and brioche is captivating. Very soft and pleasing on the palate with light to mid weight flavors of fresh cherry pie glaze, baking spice and raspberry coulis. Impeccable balance and glorious Pinot character. You can thoroughly enjoy it now, but the balance predicts a long cellar life.* 93.

2013 Siduri Cargasacchi Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.32, TA 0.78, 201 cases, \$54. *I found this to be a curious wine with a noticeable departure from Cargasacchi wines I have sampled over the years. Adam Lee told me he used 15% whole cluster, but for some reason the stems really stood out in this wine. It is the highest acid Pinot Noir for Siduri in 2013 and the reason for using stems to bring down the strength of the acid. Many wine writers and consumers have liked it, while others have not. Although I am generally a fan of whole cluster wines, I am in the not group. You can decide for yourself. Moderate light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of raspberry, strawberry, smoke and woody stem lead to a light to mid weight core of red and black raspberry and blueberry fruits with a floral, spicy undertone. The fruit lacks vibrancy, but does show persistence on the sour cherry finish.* 87.



2013 Siduri Van der Kamp Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Meunier 14.1% alc., 123 cases, \$27, screwcap. *Moderately light ruby color in the glass. A lovely, nicely balanced wine, with aromas of cherry and baking spices, and flavors of black cherry, boysenberry and grape. Modest tannins and easy drink ability with the added bonus of lush finishing goodness.* **89.**

Small Vines Wines

All Small Vines Pinot Noirs are estate grown with high-density plantings of 2,722-3,630 vines per acre (1 to 2.5 lbs. per vine). Farming adheres to Grand Cru standards, hand selecting each cluster and berry in the vineyard by starting with a framework of no more than 10 buds per vine followed by 28 hand-worked passes touching each vine. This meticulous organic farming and attention to detail makes for special wines of unusual high quality. All small lot wines are bottled unfined and unfiltered. The Sloans advise decanting the wines if enjoyed young. The wines, including magnums, are available only to release wine club members. Visit www.smallvines.com, or email Kathryn Sloan at Kathryn@smallvines.com.



2012 Small Vines Wines Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 169 cases, \$50. Released August 5, 2014. The newest single-vineyard Pinot Noir from the estate Barlow Homestead Vineyard. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Very appealing aromatic goodness with scents of black cherry, black raspberry and sous-bois. Juicy, mid weight flavors of cherry, raspberry and cranberry with a touch of spice and a note of citrus in the background. Good tension and modest tannins make for easy drinking.* **90.**

2012 Small Vines Wines MK Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.52, 143 cases, \$65. Released August 5, 2014. Vineyard planted in 1999 by Small Vines on an eastern-facing ridge above Occidental. Farmed organically using biodynamic practices. Clones 114, 115, 667 and 777. Native yeast fermentation and native MLF. 25% whole cluster. Aged 15 months on fine lees in 45% new French oak. 100% free run. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A well-endowed wine offering bright scents of cherry, black raspberry, earthy flora and a hint of bark, and very tasty flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, cola and spice. Very polished and beautifully balanced with a healthy structure for aging. The wine finishes with a charge of deep black raspberry goodness.* **92.**

**2012 Small Vines Wines Baranoff Vineyard Russian River****Valley Pinot Noir** 13.4% alc., pH 3.69, TA 0.57, 93 cases, \$65.

Released August 5, 2014. Vineyard planted in 2001 at top of ridge above the Laguna de Santa Rosa, Sebastopol. Sustainably farmed by Small Vines Viticulture, Inc.. Mostly Calera clone with some 115 and 777. Native yeast fermentation and native MLF. 35% whole cluster. Aged 15 months on fine lees in 25% new French oak. 100% free run. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Glorious nose over time, sporting aromas of black cherry, balsam, baking spice and Christmas kitchen. Amazing presence on the palate with numbing fruit intensity rarely seen in Pinot Noir. The dark berry and cherry fruit sap grabs on tenaciously through a very long finish. The firm, youthful tannic backbone holds the fruit in check and there is enough acidity to brighten the wine. This is a powerhouse wine that will need a few years for the tannins to soften. Don't even think about drinking this wine now unless you decant for several hours.*

94.

2012 Small Vines Wines Estate Cuvée Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.54, 383 cases, \$N/A. About 56% Baranoff Vineyard, 25% Old Mill Vineyard, 12.5% MK Vineyard, and 6% Barlow Homestead Vineyard. Organically farmed by Small Vines Viticulture, Inc.. Clones are Dijon 113, 114, 115, 459, 667, 777, Swan, Calera and Pommard. Native yeast fermentation and native ML. 27% whole cluster. Aged 15 months on fine lees in 31% new French oak. 100% free run. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass.*

Aromas of dark berry pie and sweet oak lead to a mid weight core of flavorful cherry, raspberry, ollaliberry and spice. Admirable integration of oak and complimentary tannins make for easy drinking. A forward-drinking wine that aims to please with a soft mouthfeel and a finishing spurt of rich fruit goodness. **92.**

2013 Small Vines Wines Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.55, 353 cases, \$sold out. Sourced from the estate Barlow Homestead Vineyard planted in Sebastopol in 2009. Vineyard is farmed organically by Small Vines Viticulture, Inc.. 2,722-3,630 vines per acre in Goldridge sandy loam. Clones are Hyde, Wente and Kistler Mt. Eden Wente selections. Barrel fermented with native yeast and native MLF. Aged 10 months on fine lees in 10% new French oak, 10% stainless steel and 80% neutral French oak. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately light golden straw color and clear in the glass. Pleasing aromas of lemon, apple, apricot and salty minerality. Bright, with excellent grip and tension, featuring juicy flavors of lemon and green apple with subtle oak adding interest in the background. A superb food wine.* **92.**

Tessier Winery

This is the fifth vintage from this winery and the 2013 lineup of Pinot Noirs are new to Tessier. The name, Tessier, is the original French version of proprietor and winemaker Kristie Tacey's last name. Her initial career path was biotechnology and in 2000 worked on the Human Genome Project. Switching to winemaking, she designed a label that depicts a photograph through a microscope of yeasts budding, a clever depiction since yeasts are the work horses of winemaking. Kristie considers 2013 her favorite vintage. Visit

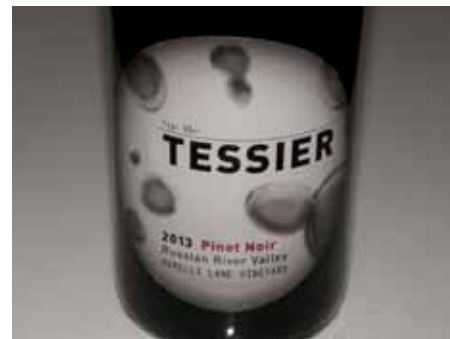
www.tessierwinery.com.

2013 Tessier Winery After Hours California Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 50 cases, \$30. A tribute to the Velvet Underground and the last track on their self-titled album, one of Kristie's favorites: "If you close the door, the night could last forever. Leave the wineglass out and drink a toast to never." 50% Saveria Vineyard and 50% Morelli Lane Vineyard. Aged in neutral French oak. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Uplifting aromas of cherry, cranberry and strawberry with a complimentary touch of dried herbs. Elegant and lighter in weight, but not wimpy flavor wise, with a juicy core of red fruits accented with notes of spice and a hint of red hots. A forward drinking wine,*

slightly chilled, perfect for the back porch after a long work day. **89.**

2013 Tessier Winery Saveria Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 100 cases, \$38. Aged in 25% new French oak. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry, and dried rose petal really draw you into the glass. Very suave and pleasurable on the palate with a juicy attack of fresh cherry and cranberry fruits wrapped in fine-grain tannins. Nicely balanced with good oak integration, finishing strong with plenty of red berry delight.* **92.**

2013 Tessier Winery Morelli Lane Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 170 cases, \$38. Aged in 30% new French oak. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Nice contrast to the Santa Cruz Mountains bottling, showing the typical luscious fruit the Russian River Valley is known for. Hi-tone aromas of Bing cherry, raspberry, cola and baking spice set the stage. In the mouth, there is a striking attack of intensely flavored fruit, primarily black cherry, with a hint of sarsaparilla, mocha and vanilla. Nicely balanced tannins make for easy drinking now and the finish has impressive generosity. 93.*



WesMar Winery

Misfortune struck this year at WesMar's young estate vineyard in Sebastopol. The vines were infected with Young Vine Decline, a fungal disease that prevents the young vines from taking up water and nutrients. Apparently the vines were infected when they were delivered for planting. Removal of infected vines is the only cure and so in March 2014, all 3264 vines were removed and in May 2014 the vineyard was replanted with new rootstock. Next May (2015), the vines will be grafted to chosen clonal selections and hopefully some estate fruit will be harvested in 2017. Bummer.

2012 WesMar Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$39. A blend of Hellenthal and Balletto vineyards. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Elevating aromas of fresh dark berries, brewed tea and (? whole cluster) spice lead to a very satisfying mid weight mix of nicely ripened cherry and berry fruits that are snug with youthful tannins. Not terribly complex, but highly enjoyable, with impeccable balance. 90.*

2012 WesMar Hellenthal Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$45. *Moderately light reddishpurple color in the glass. Shy initially, but teases over time with vibrant aromas of wild berries, potpourri, spice and conifer. Delicious mid weight flavors of mixed berries, dark cherries and black plum with an appealing conifer note in the background. Highly nuanced, with plenty to discover over time including hints of sarsaparilla, cola, earth and smoke. Softly textured with a very long and engaging finish that demands contemplation. The pick of the litter. 93.*



2012 WesMar Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$39. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Deep cherry aromas with hints of sous-bois, oak spice and floral bouquet. Soft and sleek in the mouth with a pleasing mix of cherry and cranberry flavors accented with spice and cola. A top notch Russian River Valley appellation blend that begs to be enjoyed now. 90.*

2012 WesMar Oehlman Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$42. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of ripe cherry and raspberry with a hint of floral bouquet. Cherry-driven on the palate with inviting attack and finish. A touch of spice and savory herbs add interest. Considerably more enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with brighter fruit expression and more finishing power. Decant if you must drink now, but I would wait a year or two. 90-91.*

2012 WesMar Salzgerber Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$45. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A multitude of fruits are layered in this beauty, including cherries, blueberries, red grapes and strawberries. This wine has noticeably more mid palate intensity and appeal. Very juicy, with balanced tannins, bright acidity, complimentary oak management, and admirable harmony. More approachable now than other single vineyard wines in this lineup. 91.*

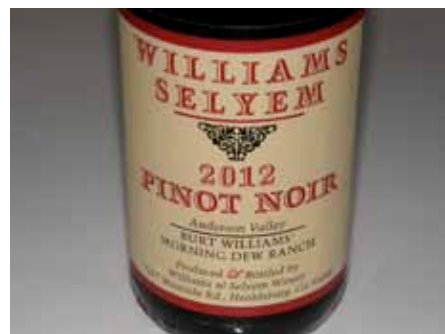
Williams Selyem

Williams Selyem has gradually acquired estate vineyards since the winery was bought by John and Kathe Dyson in 1997. Drake Estate Vineyard was added in 1998, the Estate property in 2001, and the property on the east side of the Russian River known as Eastside Estate almost opposite the winery on Westside Road. In 2014, a Luella's Garden Pinot Noir will be released honoring the original owner of the Williams Selyem Westside Road Williams Selyem Estate Vineyard, Luella Litton. It will join the Block 10 Mass Selection Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir and the Vista Verde Chenin blanc as special wines that can be tasted and purchased only at the winery. Tasting is by appointment at www.williamsselyem.com. Wines are sold exclusively through a mailing list. The 2012 wines reviewed here made me wish I had ordered more Williams Selyem Pinot. The wines are stunning.

2012 Williams Selyem Williams Selyem Estate Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$105. Primarily Swan, Mt. Eden selections and Pommard clone. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Intriguing aromas of black cherry liqueur, raspberry, spice, humus, herbs and toast. Impressive fruit intensity and finishing generosity. Mid weight flavors of Bing cherries, red raspberries, baking spices and cola are wrapped in well proportioned young tannins. Seamless, with inviting composure and potential.* **93.**



2012 Williams Selyem Allen Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$82. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The knockout nose is orgasmic, featuring spicy black cherry, berry wonderland and dark chocolate aromas. Soft, smooth and polished on the palate, the dark red cherries and berries attack with intent, and the epic flavor circus finishes with a grand cru level of bombastic cherry goodness. The texture is very seductive and the fruit is vibrant and pure. Superlatives don't do this spectacular wine justice.* **96.**



2012 Williams Selyem Burt Williams Morning Dew Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$78. This vineyard is located in the northern end or "deep end" of the Anderson Valley. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Effusive aromas of black cherry cola, blackberry jam, underbrush and oak-driven vanilla and anise. Mouth numbing flavors of black cherry, baking spice, dark chocolate, tea and anise with sequestered tannins and a huge, long, and I mean long, finish. Very soft and suave on the palate making for easy drinking now, but this wine can go the distance. A glorious wine that has many nuances to offer.* **95.**



2012 Williams Selyem Weir Vineyard Yorkville Highlands Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$58. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, spice, bark, expensive dark chocolate and smoky oak. Velvety on the palate, offering a burst of blackberry, black currant and boysenberry fruits backed by supple tannins. Tremendous polish with a crazy long finish featuring spicy and very juicy plum fruit.* **94.**

More



2013 Byron Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.56, 50,000 cases, \$19, screwcap. Aged 8 months in 3% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Fragrant with aromas of cherry, rose and oak. A solid, easy drinking wine, with juicy mid weight black cherry flavor and a pretty good tug of oak. There is an earthy undertone and a hint of iron-driven minerality adding interest. The tannins are supple and the velvety mouthfeel is appealing. Amazing quality given the very large production.* **88.**

2012 Carpe Diem Cellars Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$32. Crafted by Roederer Estate's winemaker, Arnaud Weyrich. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is dominated by toasty, smoky oak with little fruit evident. Better on the palate with a flavorful core of berry and plum fruit with oak-driven notes of tobacco leaf and smoke in the background. Creamy on the palate with balanced tannins and a short finish. Unchanged the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The heavy oak overlay is too much for my taste.* **86.**

2012 Failla Occidental Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 575 cases, \$55. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of mixed berries, sous-bois, and subtle oak and vanilla. A nuanced wine with considerable charm, offering flavors of boysenberry, black raspberry, black cherry, plum, spice and a woody conifer edge. Impeccable harmony with an impressive finish lifted by refreshing acidity. Quintessential west Sonoma Coast gem. 92.*

2012 Gehricke Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., RS 2.5 g/L, 1,050 cases, \$50. The first entry into the premium wine market by The Other Guys known for laid back labels like Hey Mambo, Pennywise and Plungerhead. This wine resulted from a collaboration between August Sebastiani and his brother-in-law and winemaker, Kendrick Coakley. Aged 9 months in French oak. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Oak aromas and flavors dominate the lovely fruit in this otherwise appealing wine. The nose offers scents of dark chocolate coated black cherries, smoke and coffee. Silky smooth on the palate, with a mid weight core of sweet, fresh black cherry and black raspberry fruits with anise, spice and dark chocolate notes in the background. Modest tannins and some length on the fruit-laden finish. Your pleasure will depend on how big a role you want oak to play in your Pinot. 89.*

Supporting the community has always been part of the mission at **Gloria Ferrer Caves & Vineyards**. The Ferrer family proudly served as honorary co-chairs of this year's Sonoma Wine Country Weekend, whose auction raised more than \$4 million dollars for local charities. The 2012 Gloria Ferrer Willmar Artist Series Pinot Noir marked the second vintage of supporting the Willmar Grief and Healing Center in Sonoma. All proceeds from the sale of this limited-release Pinot Noir, which features an original artwork label created by a young WillMar artist, benefit the center. In October, Gloria Ferrer hosted "Yoga for Hope" in support of the Northern California chapter of the City of Hope. Gloria Ferrer also poured at two of amFAR's Inspiration Galas in support of AIDS research. This year for the first time, Gloria Ferrer was the exclusive wine for GLAMOUR magazine's 24th Annual Women of the Year Awards in November.



2012 Gloria Ferrer Estate Grown Carneros Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.55, \$27. Aged 9 months in 94% French oak and 6% Hungarian oak with 25% of barrels new. A variety of Pinot Noir clones and selections planted in this 365-acre estate vineyard. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Lovely aromas of spice, black cherry and pomegranate. Forward-drinking and juicy with a luscious core of dark cherry, purple berry, cola and spice flavors. The mid palate attack is tenacious, the tannins are fine grain and supportive, there is enviable integration of oak, and a satisfying finish.*

A terrific wine at this reasonable price. 91.

Robert Pellegrini took over sole proprietorship in 2013 of the **Pellegrini Wine Company** that includes Olivet Lane Estate and Pellegrini labels. The last vintage of Pellegrini Pinot Noir bottled was in 2009 and Chardonnay in 2010, as all fruit was sold to Merry Edwards and Williams Selyem until the 2013 vintage (a 2011 Pellegrini Pinot Noir was reviewed by me in July 2014, and it had 5 tons of Olivet Lane fruit in it but it was blended with other Russian River Valley fruit and crafted off the property). Going forward beginning with the 2013 vintage there will be two labels: Olivet Lane Vineyard that will include a single vineyard estate grown Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and Pellegrini, to include regional appellation wines and some single vineyard wines such as Hurst and Toboni Oakwild Ranch Pinot Noirs. The current Pellegrini Pinot Noir has only a small fraction of estate fruit and is a blend of several Russian River Valley vineyards. I recently stopped by the winery and tasted the 2013 Olivet Lane Estate, Hurst and Toboni Pinot Noirs from barrel with winemaker Lynn Krausmann, and was very impressed. Krausmann has impressive credentials including stints as a winemaker at Esterlina Vineyards and Williams Selyem. Look for exciting wines to come. A new outdoor tasting bar is now available Thursday through Monday from 11:00 to 4:30 by appointment.

2013 Pellegrini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$30. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, black tea and smoky oak lead to a tasty core of ripe strawberry, cherry and cola flavors accented with oak. Medium weighted with good balance and some finishing persistence. A solid everyday drinker. 88.*

2012 Windy Oaks Estate Special Release Les Deux Grands Cru Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., one barrel (24 cases), \$85 (futures). Offered to Wine Group members only. A co-fermentation of the estate vineyard special Burgundy clone and a little half-acre of the newly certified Chambertin clone. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very pleasing aromas of cherry and red berry with a compliment of toasty brioche. Light to medium weight flavors of red berry preserves with a seasoning of oak. Softly textured with admirable balance, and a long red cherry and red berry fueled finish. This wine grows on you over time in the glass, picking up intensity and nuances. A cellar-worthy wine of considerable promise. 92-93.*



Recent Sips of Oregon Wines: Pinot Amore'

If you relish fruit and are susceptible to seduction, put aside your inhibitions and dive into 2012 Oregon Pinot Noir. The wines, which combine marvelous fruit concentration with bright acidity, are so juicy some have even called them "slutty." Yields were down in 2012, so many of the best wines will have limited availability.

Angela Estate

Antony Beck is the proprietor of Angela Estate located in Dundee, Oregon. A resident of Lexington, Kentucky, where he has a thoroughbred farm, Beck is an emigrant from South Africa. His father founded the Graham Beck label in South Africa, and after his father's passing, Antony oversees the business operations of the 200,000-case winery. A chance meeting with Ken Wright in the late 1990s at a fundraiser led to a friendship. Wright has family in Louisville and spent two years at the University of Kentucky. Beck would eventually buy a undeveloped 34-acre property adjacent Abbott Claim Vineyard located between Anne Amie and Soter wineries and Wright's crew planted Pinot Noir there in 2006 and 2007. The planting was named Angela Estate Vineyard and Wright was retained as the winemaker for the new 4,000-case production Angela Estate label focused entirely on single vineyard Pinot Noir.

2012 Angela Estate Abbott Claim Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$60. The 16-acre Abbot Claim vineyard was planted in 2001 to Pommard, 777 and 115 clones. It is part of the original John F. Abbott Donation Land Claim. Soils are marine sedimentary. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherries, spice and wood lead to a discreetly concentrated core of red cherries and red berries with a touch of baking spices. Exquisite balance, a tad shallow on the attack but a good sweet cherry finish.* **90.**

Antica Terra

The winery reported ideal growing conditions in 2012 producing wines that are "powerful, energetic and incredibly vivacious." They are said to closely resemble the 2008 vintage wines but have a little more complexity and verve. The two wines reviewed here were released in October 1, 2014. Also available are the 2012 Antikythera Pinot Noir (\$100) and 2013 Aurata Chardonnay (\$75).

2012 Antica Terra Ceras Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 600 cases, \$75. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of dark raspberry and espresso lead to oak-kissed flavors of boysenberry and black raspberry. Very silky with soft tannins and a juicy finish. Still young and awkward with a hint of popcorn oak and a touch of heat on the finish, but has considerable potential.* **89-90.**

2012 Attica Terra Botanica Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 630 cases, \$75. *Moderate dark reddish purple color in the glass. A noticeable step up from the Ceras bottling. Very aromatic. When the cork was pulled, aromas emerged like caged monkeys. Lovely scents of black cherry, spice, brioche and vanilla. Tasty and expressive, with flavors of black cherry, ollaliberry and plum with complimentary oak seasoning. Exquisite balance and generosity at this young age.* **92-93.**



Bethel Heights Vineyard

2012 Bethel Heights Illahe Vineyards Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 125 cases, \$50. This vineyard is located in the foothills of Oregon's coast range of mountains. The name, Illahe, is a local Chinook word for soil or earth. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Plenty of savory blueberry and blackberry fruit with spice, underbrush and earthy accents on the nose. This unique terroir-driven wine features layers of flavors of boysenberry, blackberry, black currant, anise, iron and earth. The youthful tannins are well integrated*

and the finish is bold and lengthy. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with more composed and expressive fruit. **92**.

2012 Bethel Heights Estate Vineyard Flat Block Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 250 cases, \$58. From a block in the estate vineyard characterized by shallow, gravelly soil planted in 1979 on its own roots. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is remarkably fragrant with aromas of cherry pie, spice and rose petal. Very soft and elegant on the palate with a mid weight core of tasty cherry, raspberry and cranberry fruits backed by a hint of oak seasoning. Juicy and crisp, with a lengthy finish. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with more intense fruit expression.* **92**.

2012 Bethel Heights Estate Vineyard Southeast Block Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 150 cases, \$50. From a small section of the estate vineyard planted in 1979. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A complex nose offers nuances of cherry, raspberry, potpourri, rose petal and smoky oak. Impressive mouth filling richness, yet suave and refined with flavors of dark cherry and raspberry clothed in youthful tannins and complimentary oak. Amazingly intense grand cru finish that seems to build in intensity over a lengthy time. This wine has the structure and balance to age beautifully. Very special.* **93**.



2012 Bethel Heights Estate West Block Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., 100 cases, \$50. From a small section of the estate vineyard planted in 1977 to own rooted Wädenswil clone. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of sweet cherry, violets, and spicy oak. Soft, elegant and seamless, with a core of cherry, raspberry and cranberry fruits accented with spice. Very juicy with supple tannins and a silky finish. Lacks a bit of intensity on the attack, but a very pleasurable drinking wine.* **90**.

Coeur de Terre Vineyard

These organically farmed artisanal wines are always special. The 2012 vintage at Coeur de Terre produced very darkly colored, intensely fruity wines that are atypical for the Willamette Valley. The McMinnville AVA tends to produce intense Pinot Noir anyway, but the intensity from the Coeur de Terre Vineyard was ramped up in this vintage. The result was very luscious, hedonistically flavored wines that tended to obscure the terroir of the individual blocks. The one standout and distinctive wine was from Abby's Block. Scott Neal, proprietor and winemaker and Lisa Neal proprietor. Tasting room at the vineyard is open Thursday through Monday from 11:00 to 5:00 or other times by appointment. Visit www.cdtvineyard.com.

2012 Coeur de Terre Vineyard Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.61, 2,480 cases, \$26. Released May 15, 2014. Average harvest Brix 24.3°. 50% estate vineyard fruit with the rest from other vineyards in the McMinnville AVA and one vineyard that borders the AVA. Multiple clones including Pommard, Wädenswil, 113, 114, 115, 667, 777 and Coury selection. Indigenous and commercial yeast fermentation, aged 11 months sur lie in 20% new, 40% once-filled, 30% twice-filled and 10% neutral French oak barrels. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of black cherry, dried herbs and oak spice. Mid weight + flavors of dark plum and boysenberry. Highly flavorful with complimentary tannins and juicy acidity. Easy to like.* **88**.

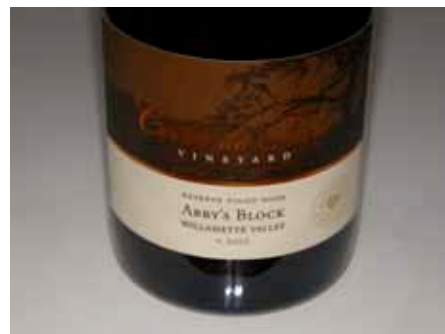
2012 Coeur de Terre Vineyard Estate The Heritage Reserve McMinnville Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.575, 466 cases, \$N/A. Harvest Brix 24.2°. Release November 2014. A selection from all four blocks of the estate vineyard. Both younger and mature vines. Aged sur lie for 12 months in 35% new, 30% once-filled, 25% twice-filled and 10% neutral French oak. *Inky dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very ripe fruited with aromas of blackberry, black currant, raisin and vanilla. Rich and full-bodied, with a charge of very ripe purple and black fruits and a touch of strawberry and spice mixed in. The charge of tannins on the finish overwhelms the fruit now and needs time to soften.* **89**.

2012 Coeur de Terre Vineyard Estate Renelle's Block Reserve McMinnville Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.56, 79 cases, \$N/A. Release November 2014. Sourced from the original

estate plantings (1999) which are a mixture of 9 clones (Pommard and two Wädenswil and several Dijon clones) and several rootstocks. This is the mother block for the rest of the estate vineyard plantings. 4-day cold soak, indigenous and commercial yeast fermentation. Aged 13 months in 45% new, 30% once-filled, and 25% twice-filled French oak. Unfined and unfiltered. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Restrained aromas of blackberry and black plum with a tug of charred oak. Very generous on the palate with a sappy, even sweet, charge of purple and black fruits. Substantial tannins match the fruit load. Oak plays a large role in the experience at present. Hard to find any terroir here, but the magnificent fruit is luscious. Needs time to integrate the oak and tannins. 90-91.*

2012 Coeur de Terre Vineyard Estate Sarah Jane's Block Reserve McMinnville Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.54, 87 cases, \$N/A. Release November 2014. Sarah Jane's Block was the second estate block planted. Traditional Willakenzie soils. Clones are Pommard, 667, 777, 113, 114, and 115. 4-day cold soak, indigenous and commercial yeast fermentation, aged 13 months in 40% new, 30% once-filled and 30% twice-filled French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Inky dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry jam, fennel, and conifer. A full-bodied, very savory, earthy wine featuring black fruit and black tea flavors. Juicy and trim with the savory component adding interest. The daunting tannins tend to swallow up the luscious fruit. More like Syrah than Pinot. 89-90.*

2012 Coeur de Terre Vineyard Estate Abby's Block Reserve McMinnville Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.54, 68 cases, \$N/A. Release November 2014. This block is mid slope in the vineyard. Clones are a selection of vines from the estate vineyard (Pommard, 667, 777, 113, 114 and 115) and grafted in the estate nursery. 4-day cold soak, indigenous and commercial yeast fermentation, aged 13 months in 30% new, 35% once-filled and 35% twice-filled French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is to die for, with bright aromas of fresh black cherries and spice. The most elegant and refined and most appealing of the block-designated wines. The fruit is dark red rather than black in profile and more juicy and uplifting. The balance is spot-on, the tannins are less daunting, and the dark red cherry finish is alluring. 92.*



2012 Coeur de Terre Vineyard Estate Tallulah's Run Reserve McMinnville Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.76, TA 0.55, 67 cases, \$N/A. Clones 115, 667 and 777. 4-day cold soak, indigenous and commercial yeast fermentation, aged 13 months in 40% new, 30% once-filled and 30% twice-filled French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Inky dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, black currant and ollaliberry syrup. Sappy purple fruits coat the tongue with layers of flavor. Bold tannins match the hedonistic fruit in a balanced recipe. The huge fruit-filled finish leaves a stunning impression. Closer to Syrah than Pinot, but a voluptuous wine that is hard to ignore. Nicely crafted in this style. 90.*

Cristom Vineyards

This highly lauded winery really hit the mark in 2012 with its unfiltered single vineyard Pinot Noirs.

2012 Cristom Marjorie Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$58. The only original vineyard kept intact after the property was bought in 1992. The "prettiest" vineyard wine in the Cristom lineup that is usually elegant and spicy. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of dark cherry pie filling, marzipan, brandied raisin and baker's yeast. Elegant flavors of black cherry, spice and floral nuance with a firm backing of tannin. Modest and seductive, very smooth on the palate, finishing with good persistence. Needs at least a year or two in bottle for full enjoyment. 90-91.*

2012 Cristom Louise Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$58. This vineyard was the first established by Cristom. It is densely planted at 2300 vines per acre on the lower slopes of the property. Typically the last single vineyard to be released. More concentrated and dark fruited than other estate Pinot Noirs. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy nose initially, offering more pleasure over time in the glass with aromas of cherry, rose petal, underbrush and vanilla. Gorgeous core of well-spiced black cherry fruit clothed in muscular tannins. There is amazing length on the generous finish*

which sports a refreshing spark of acidity. Still very young and tight, lacking Pinot delicacy, but suggesting a tremendous upside potential. 92-93.



2012 Cristom Jessie Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$58. One of the steepest vineyard sites in the Willamette Valley. This wine is typically deep, dark and displays a tension between the fruit and structure. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Vibrant aromas of black cherry and Marionberry elevate over time in the glass. A wine that astonishes with a charge of cherry fruit that is pure and deeply flavored. The amazing spiced cherry essence caresses the palate and expands in the mouth, finishing with impressive length and a pleasing snap of acidity. This wine's impeccable balance insures long term age ability. An exquisite wine that is fresh and vivid, and aims to please even at this young age. 94-95.*



2012 Cristom Eileen Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., \$58. Typically the most precocious of the four estate vineyard wines and often the first wine released to the market. This vineyard extends to the crest of the property exposing the vines to the last rays of sun and the first cooling breezes from the Pacific Ocean. Volcanic soils. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The seductive scents of dark berries, black cherries, rose petal and cardamon spice really get the juices flowing. It is challenging to adequately describe this nose since the aromas saturate the olfactory senses with so much whole cluster goodness. "Wow" might be the best descriptor. On entry, this wine delivers a charge of black raspberry fruit and exotic spices that really brings the palate to alert. This is a stunning wine with a silky texture, healthy young tannins, and a peacock finish that hangs on for at least a minute. There is some umami at work in this wine as well. Scary to think that this wine will be even better with more bottle age. 96-97.*



Evesham Wood

All Pinot Noirs are sourced from sustainably grown grapes and non-irrigated vineyards and are bottled unfiltered.

2012 Evehsam Wood Terra Mahonia Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., \$27. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Very savory aromas of dark cherry and raspberry, spice and underbrush with a hint of floral perfume. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry and raspberry in an elegant style with balanced tannins and good finishing fruit goodness. A bit shallow on the attack but bright and refreshing. 88.*



2012 Evehsam Wood Illahe Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., \$27. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy aromas of dark berry jam and wine cave. A ripe profile of blackberry, black currant and plum fruits backed by firm, structured tannins. Noticeable grab and hold finishing intensity. Very true to the character of this vineyard that features darker fruits, substantial tannins and more finishing power. Cellaring should mollify the tannins. A hint of alcohol heat shows up on the finish. 90.*

2012 Evesham Wood Temperance Hill Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., \$27. *Produced from organic grapes. Woodsy aromas of black cherry and cranberry lead to a light to mid weight, savory wine that is elegant and polished. Flavors of cherry and red berry predominant with a woody, sous-bois tone. Rather rustic, with balanced tannins and some gratifying finish. 87.*

2012 Evesham Wood Cuvée J Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., \$42. *Produced from organic grapes. Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A noticeable step up in quality with an expressive nose of dried rose petal, boysenberry, and Middle Eastern spices. The flavors echo the nose with a remarkable complex and intriguing spice component. A classy wine with complimentary oak seasoning, a good tannic backbone for aging, and a lengthy finish that soars with a purple berry scent. Has shoulders but is still refined. 93.*



IOTA Cellars

Johanna and Don Sandberg moved from Minnesota to Portland in 1999, after a visit to Oregon to discover the feasibility of growing wine grapes and making wine in the Willamette Valley. By 2000, they had moved to wine country and partnered with relatives (Sandbergs) to buy land where Pelos Sandberg Vineyard was planted. To date, there are 11 acres of Pinot Noir planted. The vines are not irrigated and farmed using sustainable and organic practices. The first IOTA Cellars wine was produced in 2006. Grapes have also been sold to Big Table Farm, Rex Hill, EIEO & Company, Bergstrom Winery and Beaux Freres.

2012 IOTA Pelos Sandberg Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 577 cases, \$42. *Pommard, Wädenswil, 777 and 667 clones. Aged 10 months in 3-year-air-dried French oak barrels and an additional 12 months in bottle. Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Amazingly fragrant with aromas of dark berry, cassis, plum, black cherry and espresso leaping from the glass upon opening. Mid weight + core of well ripened dark berry fruit with some smoky oak in the background. Soft tannins and a fruit-filled finish ramp up the pleasure. The wine has plenty of oak overlay, but an equal amount of luscious fruit. 91.*

Ken Wright Cellars

An Oregon stalwart, with two 2013 Pinot Noirs from very distinguished vineyards that really deliver. Other vineyard designates for 2013: Bonnie Jean Vineyard, Bryce Vineyard, Canary Hill Vineyard, Carter Vineyard, Freedom Hill Vineyard, Guadalupe Vineyard, McCrone Vineyard, Savoya Vineyard, Shea Vineyard, and Tanager Vineyard.



2013 Ken Wright Abbott Claim Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., \$50. Vineyard owners Antony and Angela Beck and vineyard manager Mark Gould. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy initially, but explodes with time in the glass, strutting hi-tone aromas of cherry, baking spice, rose petal and a hint of smoke. A cherry-driven wine with a hint of raspberry and spice, lively on the palate and really hanging on to the finish. This wine is crisp, juicy and has enough structure to age. 92.*



2012 Ken Wright Meredith Mitchell Vineyard McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., \$50. This vineyard is planted to own-rooted Pommard first established in 1988. Soil is Yamhill - shallow silty loam over basaltic bedrock. The vineyard is owned and managed by Susan Meredith and Franck Mitchell. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Scents of cherry, forest floor and oak char are somewhat shy, but the fruit explodes on the palate. Rich raspberry and cherry flavor that attacks the mid palate with a vengeance. Accents of baking spice, earth and conifer add interest. Uncommon fruit energy that fuels an intensely flavorful finish. Rare to find a wine with such palate saturating fruit. The nose has not arrived, so give this wine at least a year in bottle. 93-95.*



Kramer Vineyards

These are outstanding wines from a producing with a history of two generations and 30 years of Oregon winegrowing at very modest prices considering the quality. The 18-acre estate vineyard is in the northern part of the Yamhill-Carlton AVA. Soils are Willakenzie and Peavine. Average vine age is over 20 years and much of the vines are own-rooted. Pinot Noir clones consist of Pommard, Dijon 115, 667, 777, and Wädenswil. The bright acidity in the wines reviewed here really brings an appealing juiciness to the wines.



2012 Kramer Vineyards Estate Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.61, 300 cases, \$24. Harvest Brix 23.5°. 75% de-stemmed. 5-day cold soak, pump over and punch downs twice daily until dry. Aged 10 months in 25% new French oak barrels. Composed of various clones from several of the estate vineyard blocks. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Engaging perfume of black cherry, blackberry, spice and vanilla. A forward drinking wine with plenty of cherry, berry and spice flavor to satisfy. Admirable intensity on the attack with some power on the finish that ends with a rush of young tannins. This wine will benefit from more bottle age but hard to resist now. 90.*



2012 Kramer Vineyards Cardiac Hill Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.64, 100 cases, \$42. Crafted from LIVE-certified grapes. Sourced from the steepest hillside vines on the estate vineyard. Clones are Pommard and Dijon 11. Harvest Brix 23.3°. Willakenzie soil with a high clay content which stresses the vines and leads to small yields. 100% de-stemmed. 5-day cold soak, pumped over and punched down twice daily until dry, then pressed. Aged 17 months in 25% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. I am crazy about this nose which features aromas of black cherries, complex floral notes, complimentary spice and a hint of smoky oak. On the palate, the mid weight flavors of black cherry, ripe strawberry, raspberry and spice are enticing. The bright acidity gives the vibrant fruit flavor a lift. There are plenty of tannins to go the distance. A delightful wine with charm and sophistication. 94.*



2012 Kramer Vineyards Heritage Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.62, 100 cases, \$42. Sourced from the oldest block of Pinot Noir in the estate vineyard first planted in 1984. 100% own-rooted Pommard clone. Harvest Brix 23.2°. 75% de-stemmed, 8-day cold soak, pumped over and punched down twice daily until dry. Aged 18 months in 25% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy aromas of dark fruits and sous-bois. Charming flavors of boysenberry, blackberry and spice, building in intensity over time in the glass. Remarkable appeal and length, with substantial tannins. Still opulent the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*

2012 Kramer Vineyards Rebecca's Reserve Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.62, 75 cases, \$42. From an estate vineyard block planted in 1992 to 4' x 4' spacing. Pommard and Dijon 115 clones. Harvest Brix 23.0°. 100% de-stemmed. 6-day cold soak, pumped over and punched down twice daily until dry. Aged 18 months in 25% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry and underbrush lead to intense flavors of blackberry*

and black plum. Reasonably good attack and finish, with enough structure to satisfy. Only hints at its ultimate promise at this time and should elevate with more time in the bottle. **90.**



2013 Kramer Vineyards Reserve Dijon Clones Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.7% alc., pH 3.32, TA 0.59, 125 cases, \$28. Estate grown. Harvest Brix 19.7°. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented sur lie for 10 months in 60% neutral French oak barrels and 40% stainless steel barrels. Full malolactic fermentation with minimal lees stirring. *Light yellow gold color and clear in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of tropical fruits, pear, floral bouquet and a hint of Muscat. Relatively light in weight but pleasing with crisp flavors of apple, pear, nectarine and honeydew melon. Nicely balanced with a silky mouthfeel and the slightest hint of tannin on the dry finish.* **91.**

2013 Kramer Vineyards "Celebrate!" Müller-Thurgau Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley sparkling wine 12.5% alc., pH 2.99, TA 0.82, RS 0.6%, 99 cases, \$22. Sourced from vines planted in 1986-1988 in Peavine and Willakenzie silty clay loam soils. Harvest Brix 19.1°. Whole cluster pressed, fermentation in stainless tank, racked and aged on lees in stainless for 5 months. To sparkle, the wine was transferred to a high-pressure tank, chilled, and carbon dioxide bubbled in through a diffusion stone until the ideal level of pressure was achieved. *Faint golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemongrass, pear, melon and wilted rose. Dry and crisp on the palate, with flavors that echo the aromas. A refreshing drink with a good bead and a citrus-driven aftertaste.* **87.**

2013 Kramer Vineyards "Celebrate!" Pinot Gris Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley sparkling wine 11.0% alc., pH 3.18, TA 0.49, RS 1.5%, 325 cases, \$22. Harvest Brix 17.7°. Whole cluster pressed, racked to stainless tank for primary fermentation. When fermentation complete, racked and aged on lees in stainless for 5 months. To sparkle, the wine was transferred to a high-pressure tank, chilled, and carbon dioxide bubbled in through a diffusion stone, until the ideal level of pressure was achieved. *Steely white color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of tropical fruits, Muscat, apricot and peach. Fruity, off dry, with a good bead, offering flavors of banana, peach, pear and vanilla. Winemaker recommends toasting with this wine on its own, or using it for mimosas and as a part of creative mixtures with cranberry, pomegranate or guava juices. Have some fun with it!* **88.**

Stoller Family Estate

2011 Stoller Family Estate Reserve Dundee Hills Oregon Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 1,300 cases, \$45. A selection of best vineyard blocks and barrels in the cellar. Pommard, Wädenswil, Dijon 114, 115, 667 and 777 planted in Jory soil. Aged 10 months in 40% new and 60% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. A very appealing nose offering aromas of cherry, spice, rose hips tea, dried herbs and a hint of oak. Very tasty core of mid weight cherry, raspberry and tea berry flavor with judicious oak in the background. Juicy and bright, with impeccable balance, finishing with a blast of iced cherry fruit that you can almost chew on. A highly enjoyable offering from a challenging vintage.* **92.**

WildAire Cellars

Proprietor and winemaker Matt Driscoll sources grapes from several Oregon AVAs and crafts his wines at Illahe Vineyards. The name WildAire, is derived from the family estate in Roanoke, Virginia. The name, "WildAire," was carved into a fireplace mantel in the remains of an old hotel on the family estate. This is my first experience with this producer and was impressed by the high quality of the winemaking.

2012 WildAire Timothy Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.55, 260 cases, \$25, screwcap. This wine is dedicated to Matt Driscoll's father, who loved to hike in the Appalachian Mountains and return to the homestead to share a glass of wine with family and friends. Sourced from Shea, Kiff, Illahe and Zenith vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, proprietary yeast. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very fragrant initially with aromas of raspberry, cherry, rose petal and dried herbs, losing interest over time in the glass as the fruit aromas faded. Middleweight flavors of cherry and raspberry with a hint of spice and noticeable oak presence. A forward drinking, back porch wine.* **87.**



2012 WildAire Reserve Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 250 cases, \$35 (sold out). Crafted from select barrels from several legendary Oregon vineyards (Kiff clone 777, Shea Wädenswil clone, Zenith clone 115 and Wädenswil, and Illahe Pommard clone). 100% de-stemmed, Native and proprietary yeast fermentations. 23 days on the skins. Aged 10 months in 33% new French oak barrels. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Appealing aromas of black cherries, loganberries and loamy earth. Relatively approachable for a reserve wine, with tasteful notes of black cherry, boysenberry, plum and spice. The tannins are balanced and the wine finishes with a moderately intense charge of cherry fruit. The wine improves over time in the glass indicate age worthiness.* **91.**

2012 WildAire Zenith Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.55, 72 cases, \$45. Harvest Brix 24°. 66% Wädenswil, 34% Dijon clone 115. 100% de-stemmed, 7-day cold soak, inoculated with yeast. Aged 10 months in 33% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, sarsaparilla, and forest floor are inviting. Juicy and easy to like mid weight core of fresh cherry goodness with a hint of boysenberry. Nicely integrated oak, mild tannins and good finishing power.* **92.**



2012 WildAire Shea Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Oregon Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.72, TA 0.55, 72 cases, \$45. Harvest Brix 24.5°. 100% Wädenswil clone from Block 25. 100% de-stemmed, 7-day cold soak, inoculated fermentation. Aged 10 months in 33% new French Oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Very engaging aromas of dark cherry pie glaze, spice, violets and smoky oak. Delicious core of nicely ripened black cherry fruit with a hint of mocha and spice. The fruit really attracts attention as it is vivid and juicy. There is a good amount of fine-grain tannins for structural integrity and noticeably intense finishing presence. I am not usually a fan of single clone Wädenswil Pinot Noir, but this beauty bursts my bubble. A standout.* **94.**



Tasting Sonoma County Harvest Fair Best of Class & Double Gold Pinot Noirs

The 2014 Sonoma County Harvest Professional Wine Competition was held in October. Three of the highest levels of award are of special interest. The Double Gold award reflects an unanimous decision of the judging panel. The Best of Class award is selected from all the Gold Medal award winners in every class. I was curious to taste some of the top award-winning wines. It was revealing that quality correlated very closely with price. With Pinot Noir, you get what you pay for!

Best of Class (\$25-\$39.99)

2012 MacMurray Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$28 (\$20 at some retailers). *Moderately dark ruby hue in the glass. The rather shy and dull nose offers hints of cherry and oak. A gentle, shallow wine that is pleasant but not exciting, featuring a discreet weighted core of cherry fruit with a touch of floral and oak accents and well-endowed backing tannins.* **86.**

Double Gold

2012 D&L Carinalli Vineyards Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.0% alc., \$25. Family owned vineyard and winery. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry, oak spice and a hint of wintergreen. A very serviceable wine with mid weight flavors of black cherry and ripe strawberry with a compliment of toasty oak in the background. The fine grain tannins are modest in proportion and the finish has a little length.* **87.**

2013 Thirty-Seven Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 420 cases, \$26. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A little volatile acidity initially blows off over time. Hi flying aromas of boysenberry, black raspberry and spice. A forward drinking and expressive middleweight wine featuring a core of purple berries and spice with complimentary toasty oak in the background. Very soft on the palate with balanced tannins and some finishing verve. A flashy wine that would show well in competition.* **88.**

2012 DRNK Cavers Cuvée Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 196 cases, \$32. Saralee's, Hallberg Ranch and Sweetwater Ranch vineyards. Ryan R. Kunde is the winemaker. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Inviting aromas of cherry, raspberry and sandalwood. Easy to like with thirst-quenching flavors of cherry syrup and raspberry coulis with a hint of spice. Nicely balanced with good oak management.* **89.**

2012 Davis Bynum Winery Jane's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$35. 2011 vintage previously reviewed in November 2013. **(89)**

2013 Fogline Vineyards Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$42 2012 vintage previously reviewed in August 2014. **(92)**

2013 Balletto Sexton Hill Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., 625 cases, \$42. Sourced from an estate vineyard southwest of Sebastopol. Grower is John Balletto and winemaker is Anthony Beckman. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely, exuberant aromas of Bing cherries and baking spices. Juicy mid weight flavors of Bing cherries, raspberries and boysenberries. Ideal balance with plenty of finishing fruit goodness and length on the dry finish. A forward-drinking crowd pleaser.* **91.**





2012 Davis Family Winery Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$55
Previously reviewed in October 2014. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The glorious nose is deep and inspired, with vivid aromas of fresh cherries, spice, Prada leather coat and rose petal. A cherry bombast on the palate that really made me sit up and take notice. Discreetly concentrated with added accents of spice, raspberry and plum, with a complimentary note of smoky oak. An absolutely delicious and harmonious wine that floods the mouth with flavor. 94.*

Pinot Briefs

Grower John Bacigalupi Tests Disruptive Technology John Bacigalupi, owner of the historic Bacigalupi Vineyards is the first California grape grower experimenting with AgriOzein to reduce pesticide and fungicide use. This ozone generator, AgriOzein, recently approved by the FDA, EPA and the USDA, produces oxygenated water, that when applied, shatters the cell walls of pests and funguses in vineyards, reducing the need for standard chemical regimes. The ozone is introduced into water and then applied to the grapevine with a sprayer. The ozone sprayer is lethal to anaerobic organisms that have to live with oxygen. Ozone selects out these organisms and as they breathe in the ozone, it shatters the cell walls. Excess ozone decomposes rapidly to produce oxygen and leaves no residue on grapes and grapevines. Bacigalupi plans to spray every 7 to 10 days. The harvest of 2015 will reveal whether Bacigalupi's ozone treatments are successful.

Australia's Yabby Lake Pinot Noir Wins Top Honors at National Wine Show. The new release 2013 Yabby Lake Block 2 Pinot Noir took home four trophies at the Australian National Wine Show Trophy Presentation Dinner in Canberra, collecting the RSN Riedel Trophy for Best Pinot Noir, the trophy for Best Dry Red Table Wine, the trophy for Single Vineyard Dry Red Wine, and the Len Evans Memorial Trophy for Champion of the Show. The wine was also recognized with the Pinot Noir trophy at the Royal Brisbane Wine Show earlier this year. This followed the achievements of the 2012 Block 1 Pinot Noir in late 2013, which was the first Pinot Noir to win the Jimmy Watson Memorial Trophy at the 2013 Royal Melbourne Wine Awards, and was also awarded the trophy for Best Pinot Noir and Best Single Vineyard Dry Red at last year's National Wine show (reviewed previously in the PinotFile). The wine is one of three 2013 Single Block Wines under the Yabby Lake label that include a Block 6 chardonnay and a Block 1 Pinot Noir. The wines, crafted by winemaker Tom Carson, are made in tiny quantities. The U.S. importer is Southern Wine & Spirits.

Next Glass Knows Your Taste in Wine A new app using a database of wines, your preferred tastes, and a camera to scan a label, can tell you ahead of time whether there is a good chance you will like the wine. The app is free and available now for iOS and Android. Apparently tens of thousands of wine samples have led to a database that can match your personal preferences to a wine. Visit www.nextglass.co.

IPNC Early Bird Special The 29th Annual International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC) will be held July 24-26, 2015. 2014 marks an historic anniversary in Oregon since fifty years ago, David Lett planted the first Pinot Noir vine in the Willamette Valley. Early bird pricing for tickets to the 2015 IPNC are available now through December 31, 2014, and offer full weekend passes for a savings of \$100 per ticket. Make sure to book lodging accommodations as they fill up quickly. Tickets and a full list of local accommodations are available at www.ipnc.org.



Salud! Raises Record \$722,000 for Vineyard Workers' Healthcare. The sold-out Salud! Cuvée Tasting and Big Board Auction of 2013 vintage Oregon Pinot Noirs at Domaine Drouhin Oregon on November 14 drew 475 attendees and raised more than \$200,000, a record for that evening. The sold-out Saturday Dinner and Auction Gala on the following day staged at The Allison Inn & Spa in Newberg gathered 340 patrons and raised \$522,000 through live and silent auctions, ticket sales and sponsorships. Willamette vineyards founder Jim Bernau and St. Innocent winemaker Mark Vlossak were honored at the event with Bernau receiving the Los Heroes de Salud! Award and Vlossak the Legacy Winemaker Award.



WHOA Farm Pinot Noir WHOA (Work Horse Organic Agriculture) is a southeast Santa Rosa, California, farm that grows wheat, fruits, vegetables and wine grapes that are given away to local nonprofits that help feed the needy. In 2012, the first WHOA Farm Pinot Noir was produced from the 5-acre Crane Vineyard, nestled between two agricultural sites on Petaluma Hill Road. The vineyard was planted to vines beginning in 2005, and now includes Dijon clones 115, 667 and 777, and a rare clone of Italian origin known as VCR 18. The vines are dry farmed. The wine was crafted gratis by Guy Davis of Healdsburg's Davis Family Vineyards, and 100 percent of the profits go toward the costs of animal care, farm management and the demands of providing up to 500 meals a day for Sonoma County residents. The 2012 WHOA Farm Pinot Noir is available now at www.whoafarm.org.

Passes Now on Sale for 2015 World of Pinot Noir This annual Pinot Noir bacchanalia will be held March 6&7, 2015, at the Bacara Resort & Spa in Santa Barbara, California. The event includes in-depth tastings, seminars and lunches and dinners. Friday, Saturday and Weekend Passes are now available on a first-come, first-served basis at www.worldofpinotnoir.com. The program has been expanded to include more wine dinners. Jancis Robinson will be the honored moderator at Friday's seminar. The World of Pinot Noir Crystal Anniversary Dinner will be held Saturday, marking the fifteenth anniversary of the World of Pinot Noir. Visit the website for the list of over 200 participating wineries.



WORLD OF PINOT NOIR

Sta. Rita Hills Winegrowers on the Road Stars of Santa Barbara in Beverly Hills on January 21, 2015, San Francisco Chronicle Grand Tasting February 14, 2015, Road Trip to Marina Kitchen in San Diego April 11&12, 2015, Road Trip to The Wine House in Los Angeles April 20, 2015, and Road Trip to Ventura Wine Company May 3, 2015. Visit www.staritahills.com for details and tickets.

Recent Pinot Noir Awards of Note

Vineyard & Winery Management 24th Annual 2014 Grand Harvest Awards: Best of Class - 2011 Handley Cellars Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, 2011 Tondre Tondre Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir, 2012 Wild Horse Unbridled Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir, 2012 Graton Ridge Cellars Estate Paul Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, 2012 Nicholson Ranch Estate Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir.

Wine Enthusiast 2014 Top 100 Wines (The Enthusiast 100 of 2014): #1 - 2012 Ken Wright Abbey Claim Vineyard Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (97), #13 - 2012 Lynmar Freestone Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (96), #49 - 2012 Sextant Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (93), #61 2012 Byron Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir (93), and #63 - 2011 Brick House Evelyn's Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

Wine Spectator Top 100 Wines of 2014 (based on quality value, availability and excitement): #8 - 2012 Brewer-Clifton Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (94 - \$40), #17 - 2012 Soter Mineral Springs Ranch Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (93, \$60), #26 - 2011 Emeritus Hallberg Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (93 - \$42), #29 - 2012 Hamilton Russell South Africa Pinot Noir (93 - \$46), #36 - 2009 Marcassin Marcassin Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (97-\$125), #53 - 2012 Ponzi Tavola Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (91 - \$25), #71 - Roar Rosella's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir (93 - \$52), #86 - 2012 Pali Wine Co. Huntington Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir (90 - \$23), and #100 - 2012 Saint Clair Pioneer Block 16 Awatere Marlborough Pinot Noir (92 - \$31).

Stanford Wine Tasting Class When I attended Stanford almost 50 years ago, the curriculum did not surprisingly include a wine tasting class, because the campus was dry. Stanford students can now take FRENLANG 60D:French Viticulture, a one-unit course taught by a veteran of the wine business, AJ Ferrari, who works at Michael Mina Restaurant in San Francisco. Ferrari has been teaching the introductory wine class for nine years, and offers an advanced version of the class as well. Students have been known to camp out overnight to sign up for the courses. Even nerds love wine.



Scott Paul Wines Sold Now in its 15th anniversary year, Scott Paul Wines was sold to Scott Wright's long time friend and business partner, Cameron Healy. Wright will retain full ownership and concentrate solely on his Burgundy and Grower Champagne import company. The new name of the Burgundy and Champagne import company will be announced soon. Cameron will push forward with brand building with both Scott Paul and Wildstock Wines under the umbrella of Vintisanal Wine Company. He is a sixth generation Oregonian who founded both Kettle Foods (Kettle Chips) and Kona Brewing Company. For the next year, Wright will stay on as a consultant for Scott Paul Wines assisting Kelley Fox with winemaking decisions. The vineyard and winemaking philosophies of Scott Paul Wines will remain unchanged.

Millennials Now Prefer Wine Over Beer I commented recently that a high percentage of my readers are Millennials. A new study by Goldman Sachs was reported in thedrinksbusiness.com (December 5,

2014) showed that Americans aged over 50 remained faithful to beer, the Millennials prefer wine and spirits over beer. It is predicted that the craft beer rage will soon plateau.

Anaba Wines Appoints New Winemakers Anaba Wines produces Burgundian and Rhone varietals from grapes grown on its Carneros estate and other vineyards throughout the state. Anaba, named for the anabatic winds that flow through the region, was established in western Carneros in 2003. Owner John Sweazey has appointed Ross Cobb (COBB Wines and Hirsch Vineyards) and Katy Wilson (La Rue Wines). The pair met while working at Flowers Vineyard & Winery and in 2012 formed a winemaking partnership.

Video Expressing Argument Against Expanding Sta. Rita Hills AVA A video has been posted that expresses the opinion of the Sta. Rita Hills Wine Growers Alliance that the Sta. Rita Hills AVA should not be expanded to the East. A proposed expansion of the AVA is currently being reviewed by the government. Visit www.independent.com/news/2014/dec/03/video-argument-against-expanding-sta-rita-hills-ap/.

