



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir

Onward Wines: Pinot Noir & Pet-Nat Too

Many have a vision of wine writers tasting wines at glorious estates in the Napa Valley sitting at a table draped with a starched, white table cloth, in perfectly landscaped surroundings. The writer is almost certainly seduced by the experience and the glowing wine reviews that follow reflect it.

Now the reality. I am in the backyard at a winemaker's home in Napa on a sunny afternoon sitting at a well-used picnic table. In the background are a roaming, barking dog, a strutting chicken, and four young children laughing and energetically playing together. I am tasting wine while a soccer ball whizzes by and a 3-year old comes to the table to ask her winemaker mother to help her go to the bathroom, her face smeared with ice cream that also drips down her arm. All formality was thrown aside, and as I chatted with Faith Armstrong-Foster and sampled her creative wines, I realized that this was a welcome antidote to hi-collared wine tasting.

Faith's endearing story was told previously in the *PinotFile* after I first met her two years ago: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1337/. She attended the University of California at Davis on a full Regents scholarship and graduated in 2006 with highest honors. Her subsequent marriage to Sean Foster, the Senior Winemaker at Merryvale Vineyards, derailed her winemaking plans initially and she settled into family life in Napa. In 2009, she finally launched her own label, Onward Wines, when she had the opportunity to source Pinot Noir from Cerise Vineyard in the Anderson Valley. A second highly desirable source of Pinot Noir was found in 35-year-old Martini clone grapes from Hawkeye Ranch in Redwood Valley.

Faith has crafted several varietals including Carignan, Grenache, Grenache Blanc, Albarino, Verdelho and blends thereof under the Farmers Jane Wine Co. label that is a partnership with another winemaker. Her first love remains Pinot Noir and Onward Wines is her main focus and pride. Beginning in 2013, she began exploring pétillant naturelle wines made with Malvasia Bianca grapes from Capp Inn Ranch in Suisin Valley.

Pétillant Naturele

Pétillant naturel (nicknamed "pet-nat") is a type of sparkling wine made in the *méthode ancestrale* process traditionally used in France. It has caught on in California in recent years, and is a favorite of sommeliers for restaurant tasting menus. The name means "mildly naturally sparkling" in French.

Typically, grapes are whole cluster pressed, and undergo primary fermentation in cold vats with natural yeasts until alcohol reaches 1°-6° Brix. After settling, some of the lees are removed from the unfinished wine (avoiding the need for dosage) but much of the active yeast remains. The juice is then bottled and topped with a crown cap, and continues its primary fermentation in bottle, capturing the carbon dioxide that is naturally released. Usually there is no dosage or addition of yeast before a second bubble-producing fermentation in bottle that is done in *méthode champenoise* sparkling wine production. There are no strict rules for its production allowing winemakers to be creative, and no special wine making equipment is required for pet-nat, unlike traditional Champagne. The process is tricky, however, and has been called the "Russian roulette version" of sparkling wine since the process in the bottle is alive, a number of things can go wrong, and if warmed up, bottles can explode.

The resultant wines are easy to like, often with softer bubbles than Champagne. Part of the fun is that since they are unfiltered and unfiltered, the wines are unpredictable, offering subtle variations in flavor from bottle to bottle. The wines can be dry or have a slight amount of residual sugar, and the alcohol level is lower than in traditional sparkling wine. One producer fittingly notes, "Chill, serve, & chill."

In 2014, Faith bottled three different versions of her Malvasia Bianca Pet-Nat. In each case her winemaking goal was to keep the sediment low to avoid disgorgement, finish dry and have half the pressure of a normal sparkling wine. All grapes were picked on the same day (August 19), and vinified differently stylistically, creating three unique expressions. Malvasia Bianca was chosen because of its effusive aromatics and high natural acidity. All three 2014 wines have been released into the marketplace and are meant to be drunk side-by-side. Because of the winemaking process, the wines have a light lemon yellow color, are slightly cloudy and have a delicate, but pleasing fizz.

2013 Onward Capp Inn Ranch Suisun Valley Malvasia Bianca Petillant Naturale 12.1% alc., 255 cases, \$24 (sold out). *Aromas of lemon, pear, vanilla cream and yeast. Lovely flavors of peach, pear, lemon and grapefruit with vibrant effervescence, finishing with lemon-driven length and bone-dry lift.*

2014 Onward Capp Inn Ranch Suisun Valley Malvasia Bianca Petillant Naturale 12.1% alc., 350 cases, pH 3.10, \$24. *Intense lemon, pear, peach and agave aromas. Very flavorful with notes of lemon, pear, peach, blood orange and vanilla. Pleasing acidity and some finishing length. More color, flavor, aromatic brightness, and less astringency than the 2013 version.*

2014 Onward Capp Inn Ranch Stainless Steel Fermented Suisun Valley Malvasia Bianca Petillant Naturale 12.4% alc., 390 cases, pH 3.10, \$24. *Easy to like, with some richness of flavors including citrus and pear, finishing with palate-cleansing dryness.*

2014 Onward Capp Inn Ranch Skin Fermented Suisun Valley Malvasia Bianca Petillant Naturale 11.3% alc., 90 cases, pH 3.08%, \$24. *After grapes were de-stemmed, they were fermented on the skins with hand punch downs in a small tank. The wine was pulled off the skins at 1° Brix, sent to barrel, and bottled unfiltered. Softer and richer on the palate than the stainless steel fermented version with bright, crisp flavors of citrus, fresh apricots and walnuts.*



The Onward Pinot Noir program is focused on two distinctly different vineyards and the wines are vineyard-designated as are all Onward wines. Hawkeye Ranch is located in the Redwood Valley AVA of Mendocino County in the upper reaches of the Russian River. The Martini clone Pinot Noir vines were originally planted in the 1970s and are farmed by a fifth generation family of growers. Replanting is ongoing using a selection of the best old vines. Crop load and vine vigor are naturally balanced, allowing for organic farming. The resultant Pinot Noir wines tend to be red-fruited with finesse and inviting charm, described as “pretty” by Faith. Onward is the only winery to vineyard-designate Hawkeye Ranch Pinot Noir. Faith has obtained more rows of grapes beginning with the 2013 vintage, allowing her to vinify the Hawkeye Ranch Pinot Noir Rosé in a dedicated fashion with minimal saignée. Faith considers her rosé to be a “year-round style of California rosé,” and laments that the price of \$20 is crazy considering the elevated price of Pinot Noir grapes. A tiny amount of Cerise Vineyard Rosé of Pinot Noir was produced in the 2014 vintage.

Cerise Vineyard is located in the Anderson Valley at an elevation ranging from 650 to 1,000 feet. Farmed by Anthony Filiberti of Knez Winery using sustainably using organic and biodynamic principles. Cerise Vineyard has very rocky and nutrient-deficient soils that limit yield and vigor, resulting in small berries and clusters. The resultant wines have a firm tannic structure, and benefit from more time in barrel and bottle. Faith says, “Cerise Pinot Noir has more structure and layers than Hawkeye, but Hawkeye is prettier.”

I would suggest grilled salmon with the Hawkeye, and braised short ribs with the Cerise. Either way, I am checking into Hotel California and ordering the Onward.

2014 Onward Hawkeye Ranch Redwood Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 280 cases, \$20. Produced from a designated press lot (5 hours in the press before pressing), cold settled, fermented cool and long in stainless steel, underwent partial (70%) malolactic fermentation in neutral oak barrels with lees stirring. A small amount of saignée was added in to give additional Pinot Noir character. *Light apricot color in the glass. Lovely aromas and flavors of strawberry, cherry, blood orange, spice and savory herbs. This wine is eager to please and way too good for \$20. 89.*

2011 Onward Hawkeye Ranch Redwood Valley Pinot Noir 12.1% alc. sold out. *Light reddish orange color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, sous-bois, and sandalwood. Light and silky on the palate, but flavorful and expressive, sporting juicy notes of red raspberry and cherry with a hint of dried herbs in the background. A charming, demure wine that finishes with a generous wealth of cherry goodness. A window into the cool 2011 vintage that is drinking at its apogee now. 90.*

2012 Onward Hawkeye Ranch Redwood Valley Pinot Noir 12.6% alc., 275 cases, \$38. More color and concentration and slightly more tannin in this vintage compared to the 2011 vintage wine. 7-day cold soak, 100% de-stemmed, native yeast, cool fermentation, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 20% new. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of cherry, mushroom and forest floor. Mid weight flavors of fresh cherry and spice with complimentary oak seasoning. Similar to the 2011 vintage but more to like with modest tannins and noticeably long finishing length. This wine will give you a pinot high very quickly. 92.*



2011 Onward Cerise Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

13.4% alc., 150 cases, \$58. 2/3 Pommard and 1/3 115 clones.

Yields 1.5 tons per acre. Aged 2 years in bottle. 10-day cold

soak, 100% de-stemmed, slightly warm natural yeast

fermentation. *This big boy draws you in with hi-tone aromas of*

black cherry, dark red berry., pomegranate and rose petal. On

the palate, the wine is earthbound and deeply flavored with

notes of iron complimenting the mid weight, black raspberry, blackberry

and pomegranate flavors. There is plenty to discover in this wine, which

has firm, chalky tannins and a berry-fueled finish that leaves you begging

for more. 94.



Onward wines are available at a number of fine restaurants in San Francisco including Bar Tartine, Central Kitchen, Gary Danko and Michael Mina, and in New York City at Craft, db Bistro Modern and Momofuku Ko, as well as select retailers in these cities. Joining the mailing list is the best way to acquire the wines. The wines are not sold online but you can contact Faith at 707-812-1777 or salesinquiries@onwardwines.com. An “Up Close and Personal” winemaker profile for Faith is featured on the last page of this issue.

Pellegrini Wine Company & Olivet Lane Vineyard: New Incarnation of a Heritage Estate

The Pellegrini family has been growing grapes and producing wine in Sonoma County, California, for four generations. Current patriarch, Robert, was to establish Olivet Lane Vineyard and Pellegrini wines upon the urging of his grandfather, Vincent. In 1973, Vincent acquired a 65-acre apple, plum and olive orchard on West Olivet Road between River Road and Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa, an area known as the Santa Rosa plain. Robert was fresh out of school and had just returned from a tour of Burgundy and was intrigued by the idea of planting Pinot Noir on the newly acquired land.

Robert planted Pinot Noir and mainly Chardonnay in 1975, primarily out of economic considerations as Chardonnay was much more in demand than Pinot Noir at the time. The Olivet Lane Vineyard, named after the 120 olive trees which line the vineyard's east entrance was to be one of the first vineyards in the Russian River Valley devoted exclusively to these two varieties.

The Olivet Lane Vineyard is one-third a monoblock of Martini clone Pinot Noir and two-thirds Wente clone Chardonnay planted on AXR rootstock with wide vine spacing that was in favor in the 1970s. The grapes have a near-perfect balance of chemistry at harvest, developing desirable flavors at 24.0° to 24.5° Brix with spot-on acidity. The wines are never brawny, blockbuster wines, and need only the most judicious use of oak to compliment the grape's delicate red fruit and spice flavors.



An Olivet Lane Estate Chardonnay was first released in the late 1970s and an Olivet Lane Pinot Noir in the 1980s. Merry Edwards has made an Olivet Lane Vineyard designated Pinot Noir since 1997 and several other notable wineries have made distinguished wines from this vineyard including Williams Selyem, WesMar, Gary Farrell, Brogan Cellars, Kosta Browne and Paul Hobbs.

For a number of years multiple varietal wines from sourced grapes were produced under the Pellegrini label, with estate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay carrying the Olivet Lane label. A Tuscan-styled winery was built on the estate and a tasting room opened. A few years ago there was dissent among family members regarding management of the winery. While the dispute was settled, no wine was produced at the winery following a 2009

Pinot Noir and 2010 Chardonnay, with all grapes going to Williams Selyem and Mary Edwards. By 2013, Robert and his direct family had assumed sole proprietorship.

A new staff, including Winemaker Lynn Krausmann and Chief of Operations Alexia Pellegrini (Robert's daughter), was assembled and Robert is now proud to announce the May release of the 2013 Olivet Lane Vineyard Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and Pellegrini vineyard-designated Pinot Noirs. Lynn is an experienced winemaker, having graduated with a degree in enology from University of California at Davis, followed by winemaking stints at Robert Mondavi Winery, Cloudy Bay Wines in New Zealand, Clos du Bois, Williams Selyem and most recently, Esterlina Vineyards in Anderson Valley.

Robert recently invited me to preview the new 2013 releases at the winery. The wines had been bottled only three weeks prior, yet I was very impressed by the wines. It is clear the winery is back on track, a fitting new incarnation of a treasured Russian River Valley heritage estate.

2013 Olivet Lane Estate Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.59, \$45. Barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Light golden straw color in the glass. An appealing discreetly rich wine, with effusive aromas and flavors of citrus, apple, white peach and tropical fruits. Bright on the palate with mild viscosity, energetic acidity, admirable integration of oak, and inviting length on an apple-driven finish. 92-93.*



2013 Olivet Lane Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.54, 300 cases, \$65. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, inoculated with Assmannhausen yeast, aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas unfold nicely over time in the glass, revealing notes of Bing cherry, spice and sweet oak. The mid-weight cherry core is juicy and mouth filling accented with hints of cola, mocha and spice, framed by silky tannins. A load of cherry goodness really hangs on to the long and expansive finish. 92-93.*





2013 Pellegrini Hurst Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.53, 160 cases, \$45. Vineyard is located in the far western reaches of Sebastopol. 100% Pommard clone. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing scents of black cherry, kirsch, flower shop and the slightest oak. Impressive roundness and polish, with mid weight plus flavors of succulent dark fruits. The silky texture really stands out in this special wine that is thoroughly enchanting.* **93-94.**



2013 Pellegrini Toboni Oakwild Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.60, \$45. Vineyard is adjacent Olivet Lane Vineyard with same soils. Clones are Pommard and Dijon 115, 667 and 777. Aged 14 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy aromas of savory dark fruits and sous-bois. Intense, sappy blackberry and cassis flavors with a meaty underpinning and refined tannins. As it was somewhat brooding upon opening, we decanted this wine and the luscious fruit really emerged with a boisterous statement.* **91-92.**



Sips of Recently Tasted California Pinot Noir, Rosé & Chardonnay

Brooks Note

Garry Brooks left the lucrative world of technology to pursue his dream of making wine. He worked part time at Ravenswood while earning a degree in viticulture and enology from UC Davis. He made his first Pinot Noir at Acacia Winery in 2007 and subsequently worked at Kosta Browne with Shane Finley and Michael Browne, and Dutton-Goldfield with Dan Goldfield. It was Dan who introduced him to the unique vineyards of Marin County. The excellent 2012 Brooks Note Weir Vineyard Pinot Noir was previously reviewed. Visit the website to join the mailing list or to purchase wine: www.brooks-note-winery-myshopify.com.



2013 Brooks Note Marin County Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.69, 250 cases, \$36.

Sourced from Chileno Valley Vineyard (46%) and Azaya Ranch Vineyard (54%), both located on the Marin side of the Petaluma Gap. 10% whole cluster. 3-day cold soak, native yeast initiated fermentation, aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 27% new, 27% once-filled and 46% neutral. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly aromatic with effusive aromas of black cherry, savory herbs and cardamom spice. The mid weight flavors of cherry, black plum, black tea and star anise are inviting, and nicely accented with a touch of toasty oak. Good freshness with an*

underlying savory tone, very modest tannins, and a finish fueled by cherry and raspberry aromatic goodness. **90.**



2014 Brooks Note North Coast Rosé of Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.29, TA 0.81, 50 cases, \$20

(sold out in 3 days). Sourced from Chileno Valley Vineyard (30%), Azaya Ranch Vineyard (30%) and Weir Vineyard (40%). After the fruit was sorted and de-stemmed but not crushed, about 10% of the juice was drawn off to make the rosé. The juice was fermented cool and slow in neutral French oak barrels where it underwent partial malolactic fermentation. *Moderate salmon color in the glass. The aromas of strawberry, peach and floral shop pick up intensity over time in the glass. Very harmonious, with flavors of strawberry, cherry, and watermelon, offering some length to the lip-smacking finish. The soft texture is particularly appealing and sensual.* **89.**

Castalia

Year in and year out, one of my favorite Russian River Valley Pinot Noirs crafted by long time Rochioli Cellar Master, Terry Bering, who has been making Pinot Noir since 1985. He produces a single wine that is composed of 100% fruit from Rochioli vineyards including the River Block planted to the West Block selection, the Flad Vineyard planted also to the West Block selection in the late 1980s on Westside Road, and clones 777, 115 and 667 from three different Rochioli-farmed vineyards. Terry feels that his wines reach their prime at 4 to 7 years after release. Visit www.castaliawines.com to order.

2013 Castalia Rochioli Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

370 cases, \$55. Released February 1, 2015. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of Bing cherries, spice, vanilla and sandalwood. Deeply flavored with luscious dark cherry fruit that shows real brilliance. The attack is eye-opening and the cherry fruit really grabs on to the tenacious finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was noticeably better and the finish was flat-out amazing. If you aren't on the Rochioli mailing list (or even if you are), and you pine for Rochioli fruit, this is a superb wine to buy.* **93.**



Cobden Wini

Proprietor and winemaker Mark Davis crafts small amounts of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir from several vineyard sources. He graduated from UC Davis with honors and received an honorary department citation for outstanding achievement in viticulture and enology. Mark has worked several vintages across Northern California, Australia and South Africa, and is currently also the assistant winemaker at O'Brian Estate in the Napa Valley. The wine is sold on the website at www.cobdenwini.com.

2013 Cobden Wini Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.7% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.57, 90 cases, \$40. Sourced from Hogan's Run and Moore Family vineyards. Clones 667 and 777. Aged sur lie with monthly batonage for 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of fresh Bing cherries and forest floor. The oak-kissed, mid weight plus core of juicy black cherry and pomegranate fruit is full-flavored and pleasing. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was considerably more appealing with better oak integration and more polish. The wine packs a little heat on the finish. 89.*

Cosa Obra Wines

My second vintage fling with the wines of owner Gregory Hayes who has over two decades of experience in the wine industry. The consulting winemaker is Kent Humphrey (Eric Kent Wines). The wines are quite good for the price, and available on the website at www.cosaobra.com.



2014 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Rosé of Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.70, 101 cases, \$18. Sourced from Sangiacomo Vineyard in Sonoma Carneros. 100% Pommard. This is a saignée, fermented in neutral barrels. *Moderate salmon color in the glass. Generous aromas of fresh strawberry, cherry and garden bouquet. Soft and smooth on the palate, with a tasty array of fruit flavors including*

strawberry, watermelon and peach. Very satisfying, with perfect balance, and an uplifting, vibrant finish. 90.



2013 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.58, \$28. Sourced from vineyards in the Russian River Valley (44%) and Carneros (56%). Yields 2.5-4.0 tons per acre. Whole berry fermentation, 5 to 7-day cold soak, delestage and pumpovers, extended maceration of 3 to 4 weeks. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of crushed black cherries and spice. Good attack and finishing intensity that is cherry-driven. Very approachable, with modest tannins, some oak seasoning, and a slight sense of heat on the finish. 89.*

Gehricke

Brothers-in-laws August Sebastiani and winemaker Kendrick Coakley launched this premium Pinot Noir label in 2014 as part of The Other Guys portfolio of wines. They explore rural wine sub-regions throughout Sonoma County, selecting fruit from premium vineyards. Visit www.togwines.com.

2013 Gehricke Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 660 cases, \$45. Fermented in small lots and aged for 9 months in French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of Bing cherry, spice, underbrush and marzipan. Plush on the palate, with welcoming flavors of black cherry, pomegranate, spice and graceful oak, finishing with some persistence. 88.*

2013 Gehricke Los Carneros Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 1,600 cases, RS 2.5 g/L, \$40. Aged 9 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Toasty oak enhances the aromas of cherry,*

raspberry, spice and grilled beef. Bright and very sleek, with modest tannins and juicy acidity, featuring aromas of oak-kissed red stone fruits and berries. A polished, well-crafted wine with a pleasant, but modest finish. 89.

Kessler-Haak Vineyard & Winery

Dan and Ellen Haak Kessler offer limited production Pinot Noir, Rosé and Chardonnay from their 29-acre vineyard in the Santa Rita Hills. Dan, an escapee from the tech world, is both the winegrower and winemaker. The vineyard is located on Highway 246, 11 miles west of Buellton in a cool portion of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Planted in 2005, there are seven Pinot Noir clones on three different rootstocks among 27 acres and three clones of Chardonnay planted in 2.5-acres. Yields are extremely low: 1.2-1.5 tons per acre for Pinot Noir and 1.5-2.0 tons per acre for Chardonnay. Vineyard practices are strictly organic. The wines reviewed here are extremely good values. Visit www.kesslerhaakwine.com.



2013 Kessler-Haak Sta. Rita Hills Rosé of Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., dry, 80 cases, \$23. Harvest Brix 22.0°. Clones 113, 115, 667 and 777. Grapes were de-stemmed, direct to press for 24 hours before lightly pressing. The juice was transferred to old neutral French oak barrels and allowed to naturally ferment for 9 months before bottling. *Moderate pinkish red color in the glass. Complex nose with aromas of alpine strawberry, cherry, wood fern, and herbs. Crisp and refreshingly dry, with bright flavors of strawberry, peach and cherry, and a hint of pine. The cherry fruit really hangs on to the finish resulting in an unusually long finish for a rosé wine. 89.*



2013 Kessler-Haak Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 14.6% alc., pH 3.24, TA 0.67, 240 cases, \$29. Harvest Brix 24.0°. Clones 76 and 95. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Engaging aromas of lemon oil, fresh caramel apple, and brioche. Full-flavored and slightly viscous on the palate, with inviting tastes of lemon curd, honey, apple and subtle oak. There is a vibrant cut of underlying acidity and a pleasing lemon-lime finish. Impressive wine at this price point. 92.*



Landmark Vineyards

Winemaker Greg Stach sourced 21 vineyards from Sonoma County in the North to Santa Barbara County in the South for the 2013 vintage of Overlook Chardonnay, including Bald Mountain in Sonoma Valley, Lone Oak in the Russian River Valley, Flocchini in the Sonoma Coast, and Bien Nacido in the Santa Maria Valley. The 2013 Overlook Pinot Noir is the second vintage of a wine produced in the Overlook style. Both wines are widely distributed at wine and grocery stores nationwide. Landmarks vineyards is nestled at the base of the Mayacamas Mountains in the Sonoma Valley, and has been producing ultra-premium Chardonnay and Pinot Noir since 1974. Visit www.landmarkvineyards.com.



2013 Landmark Vineyards Overlook California Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., \$25. Released February 2015. A blend of vineyard sites in Sonoma (64%), Monterey (27%) and San Benito counties. Grapes are fermented in small, single vineyard lots and aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Strawberry aromas dominant the nose, with added notes of raspberry, dark red rose petal and toasty oak. Soft and velvety on the palate with easy-to-like flavors of strawberry, plum, and cherry framed by very modest tannins, and a modest tug of oak. 89.*



2013 Landmark Vineyards Overlook Sonoma County Chardonnay 14.2% alc., \$25, Released February 2015. Whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented in French oak using ambient yeasts with twice monthly lees stirring. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A solid, understated offering featuring aromas of lemon, banana and dried mango and bright flavors of lemon curd, apple and honey. Slightly creamy and polished with a suave, dry and uplifting finish. 89.*

Last Light Wine Company

Partners David Sartain and Jared Lee produce a Derbyshire Vineyard Pinot Noir from the San Luis Obispo appellation. The wine is available on the website at www.lastlightwine.com.

2012 Last Light Wine Company Derbyshire Vineyard San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0,78, 296 cases, \$34. The vineyard is located in San Simeon. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Clones 667, 115 and 777. 20% whole cluster. Aged 10.5 months in 100% French oak barrels, 17% new. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The brooding nose offers aromas of very ripe blackberries and cassis with a subtle, savory green note. On the palate, the wine is full-bodied, plush and velvety, featuring an array of earthy dark fruits and a green, even vegetal thread, in the background. A perplexing wine that offers very ripe tasting fruit, yet a low ABV and a greenness that presumably is due either to the whole cluster inclusion or some unripe fruit. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the vegetal overlay was even more prominent.* **85.**

Martinelli

2012 Martinelli "Bella Vigna" Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 738 cases, \$40. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, red plum and sweet oak lead to a mid weight core of red and black cherry fruit. Very polished, with an aggressive oak overlay that dominates the finish. The fruit is vibrant and well-ripened and the wine is blessed with soft tannins that make it very approachable.* **89.**

2011 Martinelli Bella Vigna Sonoma County Chardonnay 14.4% alc., 384 cases, \$40. One of the coolest growing years on record in the last 30 years resulting in a late harvest. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Pleasing aromas of fresh-squeezed lemon, honey, briar and petrol. Somewhat creamy on the palate, with catching flavors of lemon, poached pear, green apple, toast, burnt caramel and butterscotch.* **89.**

Patz & Hall

Donald Patz, James Hall, Anne Moses and Heather Patz founded this winery nearly 30 years ago and have turned it into one of California's most highly regarded sources for single-vineyard Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays from primarily Sonoma County. Many of their vineyard sources are legendary, such as Chenoweth Ranch, Dutton Ranch, Hyde Vineyard, Jenkins Ranch, and Pisoni Vineyard. They have opened a new tasting room in Sonoma called the Sonoma House with several tasting options by appointment. The 2012 releases represent the winery's 25th vintage. Visit www.patzhall.com.

2012 Patz & Hall Chenoweth Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., 925 cases, \$60. This vineyard is farmed exclusively for Patz & Hall who have produced a vineyard-designated Pinot Noir since 2004. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Heavenly aromas of dark stone and berry fruits with a hint of spice, mocha and vanillin. Intensely flavored with a sappy core of sweet boysenberry, blackberry and pomegranate fruits framed by muscular tannins. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the tannins had noticeably softened. Cellar this beauty for a celebration down the line.* **91.**

2012 Patz & Hall Hyde Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,100 cases, \$70. Patz & Hall has made wine from this vineyard since 1996. Several sections of the vineyard were planted exclusively for Patz & Hall. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. This is a top performer, with glorious aromas of black cherry, raspberry, cowhide and floral shop. A burly wine with a hedonistic load of earthy black cherry, boysenberry and cassis flavors that really sparkle. The velvety texture is seductive, oak seasoning is spot on, and the sweet cherry finish leaves a big impression. There are substantial ripe tannins that should mellow with some cellaring. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the fruit intensity bowled me over!* **93.**



2012 Patz & Hall Burnside Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 425 cases, \$75. This vineyard is farmed by the Martinelli's and Patz & Hall has produced Pinot Noir from this source since 2001. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with hi-tone scents of crushed dark red berries, black cherry and brioche. The mid weight flavors echo the nose with an added hint of smoke and herbs. The engaging fruit comes to the front over time in the glass. A bit rustic and rugged upon opening, with a rush of tannins, but showing much better harmony and refinement the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Decant now or cellar before enjoying. 90.*

2012 Patz & Hall Zio Tony Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., 350 cases, \$65. Patz & Hall has made Chardonnay from this vineyard since 2003. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of citrus, apple, marzipan and buttered toast. Soft and pleasing in the mouth, with moderately rich layers of apple and citrus flavors integrated nicely with oak. A beautifully crafted wine that finishes with a zippy cut of acidity and a charge of lemon and apple flavors that leave a good impression. 91.*

Sea Smoke

The Chardonnay program began rather “undercover” and the wine was given to supportive customers initially. It proved so popular, that it became available to all customers. The Chardonnay is made exclusively from Sea Smoke Estate Vineyard, including four clones: Wente and Dijon 76, 95 and 96. The vines are planted in 8 acres of sandy soiled, streamside land at one of the lowest elevations on the vineyard. 80% of the wine is made from Wente clone.

2012 Sea Smoke ‘Streamside’ Sea Smoke Estate Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 14.9% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.598, \$60. Release October 2015. Fermented in French oak barrels (55% new), stainless steel (10%) and demi-muids (10-15%), with periodic lees stirring. Aged 16 months before bottling. The stylistic sibling to the ‘Southing’ Pinot Noir. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Fragrant with scents of fresh peach, lemon, biscuit and nutty oak. Silky on the palate with resourceful flavors of lemon-lime, quince and toasty oak. Very refined with a subtle flinty minerality and some finishing presence. 90.*

Truchard Vineyards

Although there are many physicians who have become winery owners, winegrowers and winemakers in California, Dr. Tony Truchard was one of the first. He bought his first 20 acres on the Napa side of Carneros in 1973 while still practicing internal medicine in Reno, Nevada. He continued to acquire neighboring parcels until the winery now farms 270 acres of primarily Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. All Truchard wines are 100% estate grown and vinified by winemaker Sal De Ianni who has been at Truchard since 1998. Truchard is a magnificent and historical estate to visit and tours and tastings are available by appointment. Visit www.truchardvineyards.com.



2013 Truchard Carneros Napa Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, 7,159 cases, \$35. Released March 1, 2015. Seven clones grown on the Truchard Estate including two “Martini” clones, Pommard, Swan, and Dijon 114, 115, 667 and 777. The vines range in age from 17 to 39 years in age. 100% de-stemmed, crushed into open top fermenters with about 20% whole berries. Inoculated with Assmannhausen yeast after a cold soak of up to 5 days. Punch downs were carried out three times a day during 12 days of maceration. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting aromas of cherry pie glaze and sous-bois lead to a light to mid weight core of flavorful black cherry and black raspberry fruits, underscored with notes of earth and mushroom. Very charming, with well-proportioned soft tannins, and a very long, juicy, cherry-fueled finish that really satisfies. Forward and easy to like now. 89.*

Windy Oaks Estate Vineyards & Winery

As readers of the *PinotFile* know, I am a big fan of the wines from Windy Oaks Estate and an admirer of winemaker and proprietor Jim Schultze. Along with spouse Judy, the couple farm 26 acres of Pinot Noir and 1 acre of Chardonnay on a windy ridge in Corralitos, at 1,000 feet elevation, at the southern end of the Santa Cruz Mountains, overlooking Monterey Bay. Their first vintage was 1999 and the following year they built a winery which they continue to use today. Their son, Spencer, joined Windy Oaks as an assistant winemaker in

2011, and Lucas Orme joined the crew to assist in winemaking and vineyard management. The Schultze's other son, James, helps out in the tasting room on Saturdays. The winery has a large following and most of the wine is sold through a mailing list and the Wine Group wine club. Visit www.windyoaksestate.com. The 2013 wines are elegantly styled with very modest tannins.

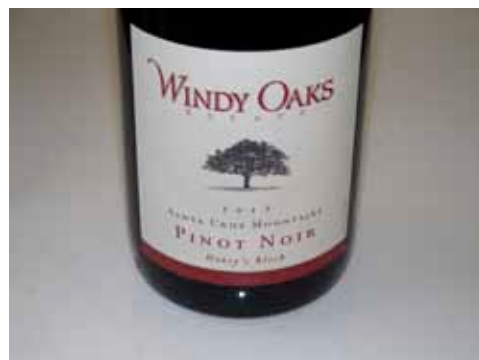


2012 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard 1-Acre Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay 13.9% alc., \$45. Barrel fermented, aged in French oak barrels for 15 months. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate golden straw color and clear in the glass. This is a pristine Chardonnay with aromas of citrus, nut oils, char and flint and flavors of lemon zest and yellow apple. Crisp and clean and slightly creamy on the palate with an appealing flinty minerality and good finishing intensity.* 90.

2013 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Terra Narro Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$29. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Scents of cherry, raspberry and oak spice hold up nicely over time in the glass. A light to mid weight red cherry-driven wine with complimentary oak seasoning and supple tannins. Very demure, with a modest attack and finish. An easy drinker that will compliment any summer picnic.* 88.

2012 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Proprietor's Reserve Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$60. Primarily from the 1.5-acre Bay Block of the original 3-acre vineyard. Unfined and unfiltered. Available only to Wine Group members and at the tasting room. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing aromas of blueberry, cherry, Damsel plum, and nutty oak, picking up more cherry goodness over time in the glass. On entry, the attack of mid weight black cherry, plum, raspberry and spice flavors are tantalizing and persistent. The wine's juicy acidity and modest tannins bring out the best of the fruit in this well-rounded and beautifully composed wine that finishes on a high note with plenty of well-spiced fruit.* 92.

2012 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Henry's Block Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., \$55. From a 1-acre block in the oldest part of the original 3-acre estate vineyard planted to Wädenswil 2A clone. Unfined and unfiltered. Available only through Wine Group or tasting room. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas of fresh mashed berries and cherries draw you into the glass. The core of oak-kissed dark red cherry fruit is mouthwatering and expansive, holding more concentration than the Proprietor's Reserve. A slick texture and balanced tannins enhance the experience. Quite forward and pleasing now.* 93.



2012 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Limited Release-100% Whole Cluster Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$55. Unfined and unfiltered. Available only to Wine Group members and at the tasting room. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Distinctive and interesting, this wine offers aromas and flavors of cherry, spice and floral accents with perfect oak integration, modest, smooth tannins, and a tenacious finish. There is a hard-to-describe textural feature that I find very appealing.* 93.

2012 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Limited Release-Wood Tank Fermented Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$55. Fermented up to 2 months in French, 1-ton, open fermentation tanks. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very giving on the nose, with bright aromas of black cherry, spice and dark red rose. A very charming wine with a full attack and finish, featuring a succulent core of dark cherry fruit accented with oak seasoning. Discreetly concentrated with balanced tannins and an elegant demeanor.* 92.

More Wines

2012 Atsina Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 190 cases, \$36. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of ripe Damsel plum, strawberry, cherry and sandalwood. Light to mid weight flavors of black cherry, cassis, anise and toasty oak. The fruit veers to the very ripe side, but the wine is elegant, silky on the palate with supple tannins, and vibrant.* 87.



2013 Carmel Road Monterey Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., TA 0.47, \$22. Sourced primarily from the estate Panorama Vineyard planted to high-density vines of Pinot Noir. The vineyard is SIP (Sustainability in Practice) certified. Clones 667, 777, 115, 2A and 23. Aged 8 months in 95% French oak barrels. Winemaker is Kris Kato. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Nicely scented, with aromas of cherry, spice, balsam and sandalwood. Soft in the mouth, with pleasing balance, offering a middleweight core of cherry fruit complimented by a touch of oak, finishing with a charge of maraschino cherry fruit. A solid, value-priced wine that is widely distributed.* 88.

2013 Cotillion California Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., \$10. A featured wine at Trader Joe's markets. 60% Monterey County, 24% Sonoma County and 16% Santa Barbara County. Vinted and bottled by Ashford Court in Napa. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, black raspberry, smoky oak and bacon are replicated on the palate. A umami-driven wine with a soft and smooth texture and some finishing intensity. Not a special wine by any stretch, but drinkable at a wallet sparing price.* 84.

2012 Foggy Bottom by Easkoot Cellars Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$21. Clones 115, 777, 667 and Swan. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose starts out with complimentary cherry and oak aromas, becoming more oak-dominated over time in the glass. Soft, supple and easy to drink, with flavors of black cherry, ollaliberry, root beer and oak. The wine snuggles in nicely on the mid palate, finishing slightly shallow, but with a good cut of acidity and a tug of aromatic candied cherry. There is more oak at play in this wine than I prefer.* 87.

2013 La Crema Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.74, TA 0.53, \$25. Fruit for this wine came from cool estate and grower vineyard sites within 30 miles of the Pacific Ocean. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak, basket pressed, fermentation in open-top tanks, punch downs three times a day during fermentation, minimal post-fermentation maceration. Aged 7.5 months in 100% French oak barrels, 21% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A rather savory nose with aromas of spiced plum, black cherry and forest floor. Light to mid weight flavors of cherry, and oak-driven black tea and anise, framed by suave tannins. Pleasant, but rather shallow in this vintage with a thin finish.* 86.



2012 the gardener Carneros Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.57, \$26. Produced from organic grapes. Clone 667. Harvest Brix 23.3°. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. An array of scents arise from the glass including black raspberry, spice, rose petal and herb garden. Modest in weight, but flavorful, with a charge of black cherry, purple grape, black raspberry and sassafras on the attack. Hints of earth, savory herbs and oak play in the background. The finish is bold, juicy and expansive.* 89.

2011 the HILT The Vanguard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 980 cases, \$45. Aged in 45% new and 55% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy nose which reveals little over extended time in the glass. When checked the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was much more aromatic with scents of cherry, spice, tobacco and savory herbs. The wine's enjoyable entry features black cherry, raspberry, boysenberry, spice, petrol and oak char flavors, all persisting through a finish that displays good intensity and acidic verve. Again, the flavors are more generous and appealing the following day. Decant or cellar at this time. 90.*



2012 Vin Ver'Ray Conzelman Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 250 cases, \$23. A Nicholson Jones Selection wine vinified by winemaker Julien Fayard. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, mocha and new oak lead to a full-bodied charge of sappy black cherry and black raspberry fruits that are nicely tempered by a velvety tannic structure. The alcohol load is in balance as well. This wine really delivers a mouthful of flavor, but avoids a jammy course, retains a suavity and really satisfies. 90.*

2012 Wild Ridge Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$37. Sourced from a Kendall-Jackson property in Annapolis on the West Sonoma Coast. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromatic profile is similar to an amarone with raisined fruit and oak-driven notes of bark, nuts and vanilla cream. Very ripe fruited flavor profile featuring purple and black berries and a burnt raisin and savory herb note. Balanced tannins make for easy drinking, but the finish throws a bit of alcoholic heat. Not nearly as good as the 2011 vintage I reviewed previously. 85.*

2013 Knudsen Vineyards Chardonnay: Part of the New Wave in Oregon

Over the last 50 years of Oregon's modern winegrowing history, Chardonnay has languished behind Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, Oregon's two signature varieties. Pinot Gris had not found notoriety in wine regions other than Alsace, France, seemed perfectly suitable to Oregon's climate, and was a heritage grape, having been brought to the Willamette Valley by David Lett and established in the Dundee Hills in 1966.

The early 1970s plantings of Chardonnay in California were primarily Wente clone (FPS 04 and FPS 05, also known as clone 108) and this became the most widely planted Chardonnay clone. Oregon's earliest Chardonnay plantings were established by David Lett using cuttings from the Napa Valley that had been planted by Jerry Draper at Draper Ranch. These plantings date to 1943 and were originally sourced from Louis Martini's Stanley Ranch in Carneros, planted with a diversity of European vines in the mid-1930s. Many of the other early Oregon winegrowing pioneers who came from California also established heritage clones of Chardonnay in early Oregon plantings. subsequently

The Dijon clones of Chardonnay were brought to North America by the Oregonians who had found that California's heritage clones, in particular the Wente clone, performed poorly in Oregon, often proving to be an unacceptable match to Oregon's climate. Although the heritage Chardonnay clones frequently failed to ripen and produced wines that were thin, acidic, and lacking in character, this wasn't universally true, as Wente clone Chardonnay performed well for example at Bethel Heights in the Eola-Amity Hills.

It wasn't just the clones that were at fault. The early Oregon vintners were inexperienced with the variety and many wines showed too much of the winemaker's imprint and far too much oak overlay. In addition, the Chardonnay vines were often planted in the wrong sites and the search for proper terroir for Chardonnay continues in Oregon to this day. Chardonnay should be successful in Oregon as the Willamette Valley has a similar climate to that of Burgundy.

In the mid-1980s, David Adelsheim of Adelsheim Vineyard and Ron Cameron at Oregon State University worked together to establish relations with Professor Raymond Bernard of ONIVINS in Dijon, France, and Alex Schaeffer of INRA in Colmar, France. On a prior visit to Burgundy, Adelsheim realized that the Chardonnay grapes there were harvested at the same time as the Pinot Noir, or even earlier, while Oregon's Chardonnay grapes were being harvested later than Pinot Noir. This was the impetus for Adelsheim to coax Bernard into sending Oregon some of the Burgundians' best Chardonnay clones.

The Oregon State University program imported eight French Chardonnay clones selected by Bernard from Burgundian vineyards. By 1987, some of the French Chardonnay clones (now known as Dijon clones because of the return address on the shipping package) were made available for the public collection at FPS and included (French clone numbers) 76, 77, 78, 96, 352, and 277 (352 was from l'Espiguette and others were from Dijon). The complicated history of Chardonnay and the selections at FPS is told in the FPS Grape Program Newsletter from 2007: www.iv.ucdavis/files/24489.pdf.

The French Dijon clones were widely introduced into Oregon in the early 1990s. They performed well, maturing before the bad weather set in at the end of Oregon's harvest, and producing Chardonnays with excellent structure and balanced acidity. Clone 96 became the most frequently propagated and clone 77 a popular clone of the musqué type.

According to statistics compiled by the Department of Agriculture & Research Economics, Oregon State University and the National Agriculture Statistics Service, Oregon had 272 acres of Chardonnay planted in 1981. By 1987, acreage had more than tripled (1,006 acres), but by 2005 the acreage had fallen to 842, the fewest since the 1986 level of 873 acres, due in part to the popularity of Pinot Gris. In 2012, the total had increased to 1,160 acres, about the same as 1989, but Pinot Gris plantings were still triple that of Chardonnay in 2012.

In the last 8 years, Oregon has experienced a dramatic shift in quality of Chardonnay. Blessed with vibrant natural acidity and fruit flavors of citrus, white stone fruits and apple with less of the tropical fruit flavors found in many California Chardonnays, Oregon Chardonnay is finding its niche. The popularity among vintners was

reflected recently in the attendance at the 2015 Oregon Chardonnay Symposium which attracted over 275 people to the technical session and discussion

Knudsen Vineyards was established in 1971 and is one of the oldest vineyards in the Dundee Hills, and for many years was the largest. 130 acres are planted to Pinot Noir (73%), Chardonnay (24%) and Pinot Meunier (3%). Knudsen Vineyards is releasing a 2013 Chardonnay, the first from Knudsen Vineyards in over 40 years and representative of the new wave of Oregon Chardonnay. Currently available only to mailing list members, the Chardonnay is produced from vines planted in 1993 to Dijon clone 76. The family is releasing this wine to honor Cal and Julia Lee Knudsen, the founders of Knudsen Vineyards. Knudsen Vineyards released its inaugural Pinot Noir last year and the 100 cases sold out in six weeks.

The 2013 Knudsen Vineyards Chardonnay was released March 18. Visit www.knudsenvineyards.com to acquire this or future releases. The exclusive mailing list member offering is closed, but wine will be available for purchase on the website starting Monday, April 20.



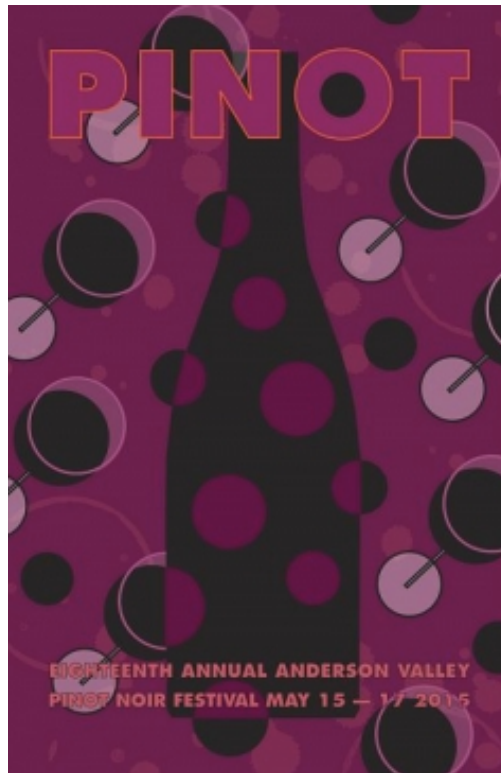
2013 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay 13.5% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.60, \$45. 100% malolactic fermentation. Barrel fermented 6 months in primarily older French oak barrels with 35% new and 6 months in bottle. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Elevating aromas of fresh citrus and apple tart. Delicious array of layered flavors, including lemon, pear, apple, baking spice, honey and caramel. Impressive depth of flavor in a clean and invigorating style, offering a lemon-drop-fueled finish alive with flinty acidity. An exceptional wine that will impress even diehard white Burgundy devotees. 94.*



Pinot Briefs

Santa Lucia Highlands Annual Gala Tickets are on sale for the 9th Annual Santa Lucia Highlands Gala on Saturday, May 16, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at Mer Soleil Winery. Mer Soleil, owned by the Wagner family of Caymus fame, is the northernmost vineyard estate in the Santa Lucia Highlands, and located in Salinas, California. The celebration will be a strolling wine tasting through the barrel cellar of Mer Soleil, a venue not normally open to the public. Guests will have the opportunity to taste rare vintages, in most cases poured by the vintner members of the Santa Lucia Highlands Wine Artisans. The food will include gourmet bites from several of the region's best chefs from Hahn, Tarp's, Carmel Valley Ranch, Bernardus Lodge, Monterey Plaza Hotel, La Balena and more. There will also be a big bottle silent auction benefiting Rancho Cielo Youth Campus. VIP ticket holders can attend two pre-Gala seminars titled "Artisan Cheese Summit" and "Beyond Pinot." For information and tickets, visit www.SantaLuciaHighlands.com. If you go, be sure to visit wineries with tasting rooms in the Salinas Valley including De Tierra, Talbott vineyards, Manzoni, Puma Road/Ray Francioni, Hahn SLH Estates, Paraiso Vineyards, Ventana, Sycamore Cellars and Scheid Vineyards. All tasting rooms are located between Highway 68 and 216 just west of Highway 101.

18th Annual Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival This is always a special, intimate event with a country carnival atmosphere. This year, the dates are Friday, May 15, 2015, for the Pinot Noir Technical Conference (\$95) in Boonville, and Saturday, May 16 for the Grand Tasting of more than 50 producers on the grounds of the Goldeneye Estate (\$105). Winemaker dinners will be held Saturday night at Domaine Anderson, Brewery Gulch Inn in Mendocino, Little River Inn on the Mendocino Coast, and the Apple Farm in Philo. Tickets for the Grand Tasting and some of the dinners are nearly sold out. Visit www.avwines.com for tickets.



West of West "WOW" Wine Festival Tickets are now available at this special event in Sebastopol, California, that celebrates the wines of the West Sonoma Coast. The weekend of winemaker dinners, unique seminars, a premier tasting, and a closing reception and dinner featuring San Francisco's hottest chefs, will be held August 1-3, 2015 at The Barlow. The Saturday morning seminar is "The Evolutions of California Cuisine & Wine," with participating James Beard award-winning chefs Stuart & Nicole Brioza from Statebird Provisions, James Beard finalists Sarah & Evan Rich from Rich Table, and Nick Batta & Cortney Burns from Bar Tartine. The chefs will create unique pairings with a selection of West Sonoma Coast Pinot Noirs. The afternoon seminar will focus on Charles Heintz Vineyard Chardonnay. The Saturday afternoon Grand Tasting will feature

more than 40 producers and growers from the West Sonoma Coast. The Grand Tasting will be repeated on Sunday afternoon. For a list of West Sonoma Coast Vintners (WSCV) and tickets to the events, visit www.westsonomacoast.com/west-of-west-festival/.



Winesong 2015 The annual WineSong event will be held September 11-12, 2015, on the Mendocino Coast. This charitable wine weekend getaway will include a Meet the Winemakers Pinot Noir Celebration at Little River Inn in partnership with the Anderson Valley Winegrowers Association. The following day, guests stroll through the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens enjoying an assortment of wine and food from 100 wineries and 50 Northern California restaurants. The celebration continues into the Auction Tents for the main attraction, the Live and Silent Auctions, that raise funds for the Mendocino Coast District Hospital. For information and tickets, visit www.winesong.org.



11th Annual Pinot Days San Francisco This trade, media and consumer tasting will be held Saturday, June 20, 2015, at City View at Metroen, Downtown San Francisco. Over 80 producers of Pinot Noir from California and Oregon (and a few abroad) will be pouring. Visit www.pinotdays.com for more information and tickets.

6th Annual Pinot, Pigs & Poets Event One of Omaha, Nebraska's premier wine and food events, Pinot, Pigs & Poets features Pinot Noir wines and pork dishes from renowned Omaha chefs. Held on June 4, 2015, at the Happy Hollow Club, the evening will also include slam poetry provided by Matt Mason and the Nebraska Writers Collective, as well as vintner and chef competitions. More than 30 wineries will be pouring. The event benefits the Completely KIDS weekend and after-school food programs. Reservations may be made by May 28 at www.pinotandpigs.org.

Yamhill-Carlton Down to Earth A gathering of wineries showcasing the Yamhill-Carlton AVA will be held Saturday, April 25, 2015, at Anne Amie Vineyards in Carlton, Oregon. Attendance is limited to 550 people and advance tickets are on sale at www.yamhillcarlton.org until April 24. More than 35 wineries and growers will be participating along with noted McMinnville restaurants.

Passport to Gorge Throughout April, the Columbia Gorge wine region will celebrate its wines with its annual passport event featuring special experiences and discounts at 24 wineries. Passports are \$25 each. For information and tickets, visit www.gorgewine.com.

Penner-Ash Wine Cellars Reunite Celebrity Chefs for Children's Cancer

Association Penner-Ash Wine Cellars will host Bravo's "Top Chef" Boston contestants Mei Lin, Gregory Gourdet and Doug Adams for a spectacular meal paired with Penner-Ash wines under the stars on July 23, set to a live musical performance by the rising Americana roots sound of Hook and Anchor. The event will raise money for the Children's Cancer Association and their My MusicRx program. Tickets are \$250 per person and can be purchased at www.pennerashstore.com. The dinner and concert will be held the night before the International Pinot Noir Celebration.

The Chardonnay Symposium The 2015 International Chardonnay Symposium will be held in Pismo Beach and Avila Beach, California, May 28-30, 2015. The event features a series of seminars, educational panels, tastings, winemaker luncheons, and winery tours. Visit www.thechardonnaysymposium.com.



Sommelier Larry Stone to Produce Oregon Wine Master Sommelier Larry Stone will be releasing his first Willamette Valley wines in 2015 from the 2013 vintage under the "Lingua Franca" label. The name means "honest tongue." Stone acquired a vineyard site in the Eola-Amity Hills AVA planted mainly to Pinot Noir with some Chardonnay. It is adjacent Domaine Serene's Jerusalem Hill Vineyard, Argyle Winery's Lone Star Vineyard and Domaine Drouhin's Roserock Vineyard. The first vintage of Lingua Franca wines will be produced at Coehlo Winery using purchased grapes, with estate grown bottlings following in 2016. Stone previously managed Evening Land Vineyards in Oregon after leaving the restaurant business in 2006. He told *the drinks business* that he sold his personal wine collection to help fund the purchase. Apparently, Stone is reuniting with Burgundy winemaker Dominique Lafon.

Brewer-Clifton Sells Majority Interest in Winery Partners Steve Clifton and Greg Brewer announced that they have sold a majority share in their winery to a group of investors led by Ken Fredrickson, a master sommelier and wholesaler (Tenzing Wine & Spirits). As reported in *Wine Spectator* online, the new investors have a 70 percent stake in the winery while founders Greg Brewer and Steve Clifton, as well as Crystal Clifton, now each own 10 percent of the winery. The sale will allow continued vineyard development and the use of the financial and business experience of the new partnership.

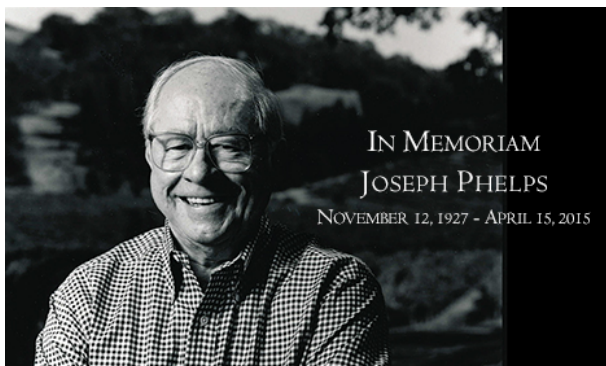
Argyle Winery Offers New Tasting Experience Argyle Winery has undergone renovation and new construction to create a new barrel room, and a contemporary indoor and outdoor hospitality center and tasting room in Dundee. The original winery building, a hazelnut drying house, was removed along with other structures. Meeting and event spaces will be located in the original tasting room. A focal point of the new tasting room will be Argyle's 30,000-bottle wine library which will be located in a climate-controlled area.

Dogs Trained to Detect Phylloxera in Australia Researchers at Melbourne University are training dogs to sniff out vineyard pests and diseases, including phylloxera. It is too soon to tell at what stage of phylloxera dogs will detect the pest infestation and whether they can pick it up when the pest is inside roots several feet below the surface.

26th Annual Wine & Spirits Restaurant Poll 50 sommeliers were polled about what wines Americans order most in restaurants in 2014. The average price of Pinot Noir continues to rise to \$78, second

only to Cabernet Sauvignon at \$95. The top wine by the glass was Meiomi California Pinot Noir at an average price of \$14. Other Pinot Noir producers in the top 45 wines by the glass were J. Christopher (6), Banshee (18), Chad (23), Copain (26), Coppola (29), LIOCO (29), Mark West (32), Robert Talbott (35), La Crema (39) and Angeline (42). Of the top 50 wine brands ordered in restaurants, the following Pinot Noir producers made the list: Kistler Vineyards (8), Emeritus (11), Meiomi (13), J. Lohr Winery (14), Patz & Hall (16), Merry Edwards (17), Failla (26), La Crema (27), Robert Sinskey Vineyards (35), Frank Family (38), Copain (40), MacMurray Ranch (44), Littorai (45) and Paul Hobbs Winery (46). Pinot Noir's share of the most popular wines in restaurants remains unchanged, lagging behind Cabernet Sauvignon and a few percentage points ahead of Chardonnay. The top 10 most popular restaurant Pinot Noirs were Emeritus, Meiomi, La Crema, Failla, MacMurray Ranch, Paul Hobbs Winery, Evesham Wood, Joseph Swan, Copain, and Brooks. Overall, Pinot Noirs from Oregon and Sonoma County were most popular.

Joseph Phelps In Memoriam Joseph Phelps passed away on April 15, 2015, at his home in St. Helena, California, at the age of 87. He founded Hansel Phelps Construction Company that became the largest construction firm in Colorado and expanded throughout the United States. He was fascinated with wine at an early age, and after establishing an office in the San Francisco Bay area in 1966, began to explore the wine country in Napa and Sonoma counties. He soon was involved in winery construction projects in Napa and Sonoma counties. In 1973, he founded Joseph Phelps Vineyards. His first winemaker was Walter Schug who vinified the first varietally-labeled Syrah in California in 1974. 1974 also marked the creation of a new category of California wine: the proprietary Bordeaux-styled blend known as Insignia. Insignia is annually considered a benchmark for the finest wine that Napa Valley can produce. His legacy also includes Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards, the origins of which stemmed from his love of Chardonnay.



The Science of Alcohol The March 2015 issue of *Scientific American Classics* is titled, "Intoxicating: The Science of Alcohol." This issue includes an in-depth collection of articles from the *Scientific American* archives that describes the long polarizing history of alcohol consumption. The issue can be downloaded online for \$9.99 at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/magazine/sa-classics/intoxicating-the-science-of-alcohol/>.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN *Classics*
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Winemaker Up Close & Personal: Faith Armstrong-Foster, Upward Wines

What Pinot Noir made by someone else I am drinking now: Kutch

My desert island wine would be: Chambolle-Musigny Les Amoureuses

My talent few know about: Camp cooking and canning

The thing I do religiously in winery: Listen to wine and taste frequently

In what wine region other than your own would you like to make Pinot Noir: British Columbia

The music I am listening to now: Black Crows, Chris Robinson Brotherhood

I like to relax by: Reading, socializing

If money were no object, I would: Own my own vineyard

If I wasn't a winemaker, I would be: A life coach

A winemaker who inspired me the most is: Steve Matthiason