



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir

Wayfarer Wines Grab My Attention - Again

In October 2014, I led off the *PinotFile* with an article on the inaugural wines released from Wayfarer Vineyard located in the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA. I raved about the 2012 Wayfarer Pinot Noirs and Chardonnay then, and recently tasted the 2013 Wayfarer releases and found them equally enamoring. It is unprecedented for me to put a winery on the front page of the *PinotFile* twice within a year, but these wines are that good. The wines are expensive, but not unreasonably so given the challenges of farming on the sea edge and the extraordinary high quality of the wines.



For the full story on Wayfarer Vineyard, visit www.princeofpinot.com/article/1583/.

The Pinot Noirs in this vintage show slightly less extraction than in 2012 with more acidity. The wines are definitely picked on the ripe side. Oak is very well integrated. The differences among each of the bottlings is quite subtle but definitely present, and it is a privilege to taste them side by side.

2013 Wayfarer “Wayfarer Vineyard” Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 14.5%, \$90. 30 acres, 2 coastal ridges from the Pacific Ocean, Goldridge soils. A blend of 12 clones. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very ripe berry and stone fruits on the nose with a hint of dark chocolate in the background. Satiny smooth on the palate, with a luxurious core of sweet black cherry and black raspberry fruits that are nicely spiced. Very expressive on the mid palate with a refreshing citrus-driven finish. 90-91.*

2013 Wayfarer “Paige’s Ridge” Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., \$115. Named for Jason Pahlmeyer’s spouse Paige. Clone 667 grown on an eastern ridge. *Highly aromatic, with bright scents of black cherry, black raspberry, black tea and sous-bois. Soft in the mouth with a pleasing attack and finish, featuring mid weight flavors of black cherry and purple berries framed by integrated tannins. A little dark chocolate, earthiness and spice adds interest. The finish is expansive and persistent with a lively cut of acidity. When tasted two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the aromas persisted, as did the pleasing flavor richness. On the negative side, the fruit is more ripe than I prefer and a bit of heat shows up in the background. 89-90.*

2013 Wayfarer “Golden Mean” Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$115. Pommard and Swan clones. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep cherry aromas with added notes of earthy flora and dark mocha. Full-bodied attack of haunting black cherry and blackberry fruits married to a compliment of oak and finishing incredibly long. This wine has the longest finish of any Wayfarer Pinot Noir in this vintage, lasting over two minutes!. There is a favorable acid spine which adds vibrancy to the decadent fruit. The superlatives continued when tasted 2 days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle: rich, plush, ripe, cushy tannins, and a spectacular finish. My only nit is a hint of warmth on the finish. 92-93.*



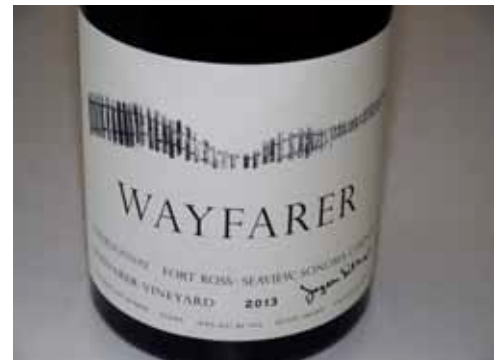
2013 Wayfarer “Mother Rock” Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$115. Named for the sandstone substrate in this part of the vineyard. Clones 37 (Mt. Eden) and 777. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Somewhat muted nose that opens slowly over time in the glass to reveal aromas of Bing cherry, boysenberry and blackberry. Gorgeous flavor and finish in this mid weight plus wine featuring tastes of blackberry, ollaliberry, spice and gentle oak. Exquisite balance, supple tannins and a huge, generous finish that is dope. When tasted 2 days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose was still slightly muted, but the voluptuous fruit flavors bowled me over. 93-94.*



2013 Wayfarer “The Traveler” Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$150. Made from a Burgundy suitcase clone. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting perfume of black cherry, blackberry and earthy flora, picking up interest and intensity over time in the glass and holding forth even 2 days after opening. Very saucy, yet intriguing, with an array of sappy darker fruits that are refined and classy. The wine is quite young, even slightly brooding, but is clearly a tuxedo wine that has tremendous upside potential. A bit of earthiness and mushroom flavors are among the nuances. The finish is particular notable for its refreshing lift. Clearly the best Wayfarer Pinot Noir in this vintage. 94-95.*



2013 Wayfarer “Wayfarer Vineyard” Fort Ross-Seaview Chardonnay 14.5% alc., \$80. 4 clones. Unfined and unfiltered. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Wonderful aromatic purity featuring scents of lemon curd, pineapple, marzipan and a hint of oak vanillin. This wine really makes a statement on the palate with a delicious array of citrus flavors augmented with notes of honey, caramel and vanilla. The flavors surprisingly build in intensity in the mouth, climaxing in an extended lemon drop party. Complimenting the gorgeous fruit core, there is a steely and saline-infused acidity in the background that gifts the wine crispness and vibrancy. A stunning wine that spectacularly fulfills the promise of the West Sonoma Coast. 98.*



Fathers & Daughters Cellars: Inaugural Releases from Ferrington Vineyard

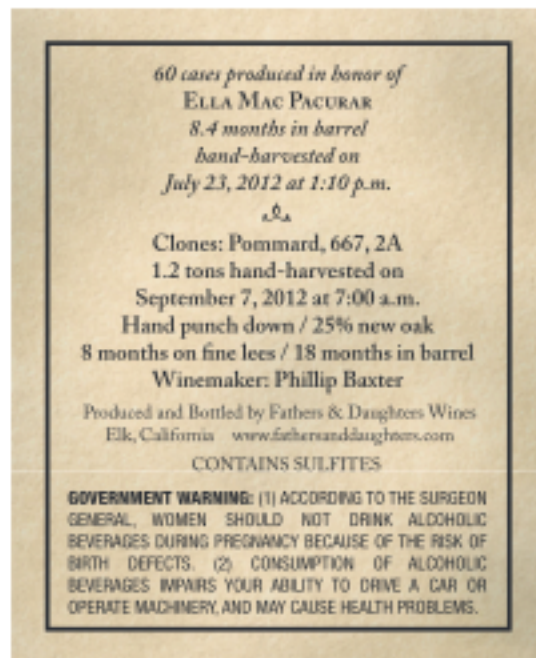
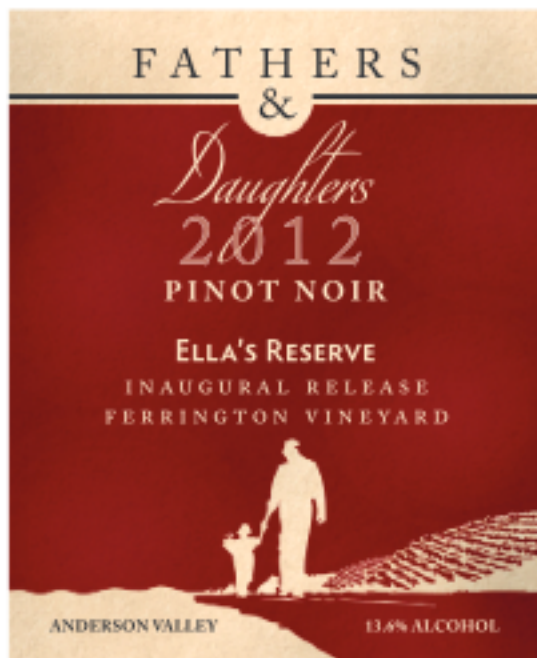
The inaugural 2012 Fathers & Daughters Cellars Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir and 2013 Fathers & Daughters Cellars Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Sauvignon Blanc were released on Father's Day, June 21, 2015.

Bay area builder Kurt Schoeneman and his daughter Sarah began a search in 1996 for appropriate land to grow wine grapes. The search ended in the discovery of Ferrington Vineyard, a parcel in the Anderson Valley just outside the town of Boonville that had been allowed to go fallow. The vineyard was first planted in 1969 by Balvern Vineyards who acquired the property when it was part of the much larger Rankin sheep ranch. Dr. Richard Ferrington bought the property in the 1980s and turned it over to the Schoenemans.

Since acquiring Ferrington Vineyard the Schoenemans brought the vineyard into prominence, gathering a reputation for producing premium quality grapes used by many highly lauded wineries including Arista, Breggo Cellars, FEL, Flowers, Harmonique, Londer Vineyards, MacPhail, Schramsberg, Twomey, and Williams-Selyem.

The Schoeneman family had never bottled a wine for sale under their own label until now. Fathers & Daughters Cellars is a multi-generational effort of the "fathers and daughters" in the family: patriarch Kurt Schoeneman, his daughter Sarah, Sarah's husband Guy Pacurar, their daughter Ella, and Guy's older daughter, Taylor. The family's goal is to produce small quantities of ultra premium wine and create a legacy business that can be passed down through generations.

The harvest of the first vintage in 2012 coincided with the birth of Guy and Sarah's daughter, Ella. At just 2 months of age and awake at 4:00 am, Ella joined her parents in the vineyard as they sorted the harvested Pinot Noir grapes. Reference to Ella Mac Pacurar is made on the back label.



To mark this event, the family approached noted winemaker Phil Baxter of Baxter Wines to oversee the production of the wines for the new label.

The wine was first poured at this year's Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival and then at the Los Angeles Winefest. Guy Pacurar found that fathers and daughters were drawn to the table because of the name and the memories of their relationships that it triggered.

The first two releases are available primarily through a mailing list that will be capped at 500 members, but may also be purchased by contacting the winery direct at 707-813-1137 or at pacurar.guy@gmail.com. Subsequent releases will include a 2014 Chardonnay and a 2015 Gewürztraminer, also sourced from the Ferrington Vineyard. The website is www.FandDCellars.com.

2012 Fathers & Daughters Ella's Reserve Ferrington Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.19, TA 0.82, 62 cases, \$42. Harvest Brix 22.9°. Clones 667, Pommard and Wädenswil 2A. 25% whole cluster inclusion. Native yeast fermentation, twice daily punch downs for 21 days. Gently pressed in a small basket press and transferred to barrel where it was aged 16 months in 25% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Enticing aromas of cherry pie glaze, red raspberry and earthy flora. Crisp and lively on the palate, with a bright array of deliciously fresh red and blueberry fruits in a light to mid weight style characterized by supple tannins. A thread of citrus-imbued acidity runs in the background and lifts the finish. A very stylistic wine that shows winemaker Phil Baxter's fingerprint. 91.*

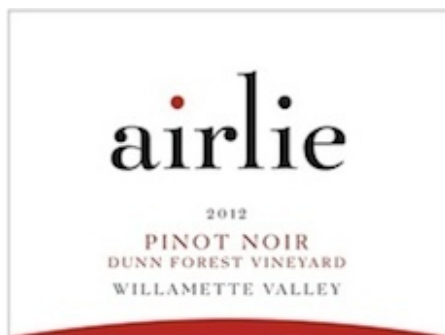
Airlie Winery: Sweet Spot Pinot Noir

I am frequently asked to recommend a really good Pinot Noir under \$30, the so-called sweet spot. Most consumers are not willing to pay over \$30 for a wine they want to drink on a daily basis. I was pleasantly surprised with my first tasting of Airlie Winery Pinot Noirs and I can highly recommend them for their high quality at surprisingly reasonable prices.

The name of this winery is derived from the town name of Airlie that has a rich background dating back to the early 1800s. Once a Christmas tree farm, the original owners established and began planting Dunn Forest Vineyard in 1983 and founded Airlie Winery in 1986. Mary Olson bought Airlie Winery and the estate vineyard in 1997. Winemaker Elizabeth Clark joined the Airlie family in 2005.

The winery is nestled in the coastal mountain range on the western edge of the Willamette Valley, just a short distance from Corvallis and Monmouth. Thirty acres of estate vineyards are planted to 8 varieties: Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Gewürztraminer, Maréchal Foch and Muscat Ottonel and varietal wines are made from each. Estate grapes make up 65 percent of the grapes used in Airlie wines. The remaining grapes are sourced from BeckenRidge Vineyard, located 20 miles away west of Dallas, Oregon. The vineyards are certified sustainable by LIVE and Salmon Safe.

The Airlie wines are sold online through the website at www.arliewinery.com. A new label will appear on the release of the 2012 Airlie Pinot Noir in the fall of 2015. All the wines reviewed below are still available from the winery.



2011 Airlie Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.6% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.68, 571 cases, \$25. 87% BeckenRidge Vineyard and 13% Lavender Hill Vineyard. Pommard and 115 clones. Harvest Brix 22.1°. Gently de-stemmed into 1.5-ton fermenters. 3 to 6-day cold soak, inoculated primary and secondary fermentations. Aged 10 months in 13% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A little more richness and finish compared to the 2010 vintage. The nose leads with aromas of black cherry, underbrush and new oak. Intense attack of blueberry, black cherry and pomegranate fruits with pleasant oak seasoning. Nicely balanced with soft tannins, bright acidity and an assertive citrus-cranberry fueled finish.* **92.**



2010 Airlie Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.75, 371 cases, \$25. Pommard clone from BeckenRidge Vineyard planted in 1978. Harvest Brix 21.9°. 100% de-stemmed into 1.5-ton fermenters with a high whole berry count. 2-day cold soak, inoculated yeasts fermentation and malolactic fermentation. Aged 11 months in 12% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Complex nose featuring aromas of black cherry, dark rose petal, bark, baking spice and white pepper. Bright and crisp, with mid weight flavors of fresh blueberry, black cherry and blackberry and a hint of dried herbs. Lovely balance, with peach skin tannins, a perfect touch of oak, and a persistent finish.* **91.**



2009 Airlie Vintner's Blend Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.75, 186 cases, \$32. A barrel selection. Sourced from estate Dunn Forest Vineyard (70%) planted in 1983 and 1991, and BeckenRidge Vineyard (30%) planted in 1978. Pommard clone. Harvest Brix 23.2°.

Gently destemmed into 1.5-ton fermenters, 3-day cold soak, inoculated primary and secondary fermentations, aged 23 months in French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromatic mix of darker red cherries and berries. Very suave on the palate with a mid weight charge of black cherry fruit accented by a savory herb note. Wonderful balance with felt-like tannins folded in, juicy acidity, and a noticeably long finish. This wine has benefited from additional bottle age, but will drink well for many years. 93-94.*



Gypsy Canyon

Gypsy Canyon founder and winemaker Deborah Hall honors the history of early California winemaking by her unique hand blown glass bottles and embossed glass seals that hark back to time of the Spanish Padres from Mexico who established a chain of California missions from 1767 to 1833 and planted Mission grapes along the way. Her ancient Mission grape vineyard of 3 acres was planted in 1887, and is part of only 10 acres still growing in California, and is the oldest producing vineyard in Santa Barbara County.

The original Gypsy Canyon property was acquired by Deborah and her spouse as a getaway from the rigors of practicing medicine (he was a physician and she was a nurse). Shortly thereafter, Deborah's husband passed away and she sold 160 acres of the property, retaining 130 acres. She planted 12 acres of vineyard in 1999 to Pinot Noir (Dijon clones 777 and 115) and Pinot Gris. The estate vineyard, which is located in an exceptionally cool microclimate in the Sta. Rita Hills, was named Gypsy Canyon Santa Rita Creek Vineyard. The first harvest was 2003.



Gypsy Canyon is a tiny, boutique winery, producing about 500 cases of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and the Estate Ancient Vine Angelica. The 2013 releases include “The Collector’s” Pinot Noir made from estate vineyard fruit, and “The Moment” Pinot Noir that is a barrel selection from the vineyard. The 2012 “Ground Boots” Pinot Noir is made from sourced fruit with all profits going to Soi Dog, a charity which rescues and cares for thousands of dogs each year.

The Ancient Vine Angelica is my favorite all-time dessert wine. The Ancient Vine Angelica is a fortified dessert wine made from Mission grapes planted in the Gypsy Canyon Dona Marcelina’s Vineyard, named after the first women winegrower in California, Dona Marcelina Felix Dominquez. Deborah crafts this unique wine using a recipe written in 1891 by Emile Vache that reflects the manner in which the Spanish padres produced Angelica for their own enjoyment. The Mission vines are extremely low yielding and a challenge to ripen, usually only allowing production of about one barrel each vintage. This is a highly unique, artisan wine that is offered in a historically correct, hand-blown 375 ml glass bottle with a seal on the neck, a handmade paper label printed on a manual letterpress and sealed with estate-harvested bees wax. It has no rival in California. Photo of Mission vine, planted in 1880, by Dominquez at Gypsy Canyon below.

Wines are allocated to members of the mailing list. Sign up at www.gypsycanyon.com.



2013 Gypsy Canyon “The Collector” Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir

14% alc., 100 cases, \$110. A blend of select top barrels from estate vineyard. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Upon opening, the nose was very shy and primary. Much better on the palate, with a mid weight plus blanket of delicious cherry fruit with a slight earthy bent. Plenty of sap to satisfy, framed by fine-grain tannins and balancing acidity. Considerably better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle when the nose developed exciting scents of cherry and spice and the fruit core came alive with plenty of Pinot singing. This wine is a crouching tiger that should be decanted if opened now or preferably allowed to develop over a few years in the cellar. 92-94.*



2013 Gypsy Canyon “The Moment” Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14% alc., 120 cases, \$95. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Demure aromas of Bing cherry and cake spice. Fresh and vivid cherry and strawberry fruits lavished with appealing spice, filled out with a hint of root beer and mocha in the background. Nicely balanced, with modest tannins and a generous finish. Even more expressive the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 91.*

2012 Ground Boots Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$70. 100% of profits donated to non-profits: “Funding global good, sip by sip.” Label features artwork by Donald Roller Wilson. By Gypsy Canyon. *Light crimson color in the glass. Better initially, with aromas of cherry, sandalwood, and white pepper, becoming less appealing over time in the glass with smoky oak surfacing. The middleweight core of cherry fruit is overlaid with lavish oak. The fruit is somewhat pleasant and framed by soft tannins making for easy drink ability, but a hint of alcoholic heat shows up on the modest finish. No special message. 86.*



2013 Gypsy Canyon Old Vine Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Barbara County Chardonnay 14%, 100 cases, \$70. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon oil, apple and warm brioche lead off with lovely flavors of lemon, peach and pear fanning out on a rich mid palate. Clean and crisp, with a polished mouthfeel, impeccable balance, and a finish that never wants to let go. A high class offering that is very seductive. 94.*

NV Gypsy Canyon Marcelina’s Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Ancient Vine Angelica 18% alc., \$150 (375 ml). A fortified wine made from ancient Mission grapes. *Golden orange color in the glass. The aromas of honeyed apple, marzipan, roasted almonds and woodshed draw you into the glass. Well-endowed with intense flavors of grilled peach, crème brûlée, and fig. Hinting of port in character, this virile and slightly viscous wine is neither sweet or cloying. Paired with aged gouda, this wine will bring you to your knees. 95.*

Kingston Family Vineyards

Carl John Kingston left Michigan in the early 1900s for Chile in search of gold and copper. He never struck gold, but did find a large cattle ranch 12 miles from the Pacific Ocean in the hills of Chile's Casablanca Valley. A number of years later, Courtney Kingston, while attending graduate school at Stanford University, decided to plant a vineyard on the property and started in 1998. The Kingstons betted on Pinot Noir and Syrah in a valley that was known exclusively for white wines. In 2003, they produced 300 cases of Pinot Noir and Syrah under the Kingston Family label implicitly to show the potential of coastal Chile for these varietals.

Today, Kingston Family Vineyards is recognized as one the best wineries in Chile and known for making some of Chile's best Pinot Noirs. The winery has been one of the chosen participating wineries at the world-renown International Pinot Noir Celebration in McMinnville, Oregon, where I first met up with the wines.

The Kingston Family Pinot Noirs are crafted by consulting American winemaker Byron Kosuge (Miura, McIntyre and B. Kosuge Wines in California) and Chilean winemaker Amael Orrego. The Pinot Noirs at Kingston Family receive a 5-day + cold soak, native fermentation in small open top fermenters and undergo malolactic fermentation in barrel using indigenous bacteria. The wines are aged in French oak barrels with new oak varying from 15% (Tobiano) to 30% (Alazan).

Kingston Family produced three Pinot Noirs in 2012 from 80 acres of different blocks and different lots that are barrel selected in the winery. Alazan is a product of the finest lots, while Tobiano is the next, more affordable tier. The planted clones are Dijon 777 and Kingston "Grande" and "Chico," which are the winery's own selections, as well as Valdivieso and Conco y Toro. 95% of the vines are own-rooted, planted in red clay loam with decomposed granite.

The wines are exported to the United States and worth seeking out. Visit the website at www.kingstonvineyards.com where the wines are also sold online.

2013 Kingston Family Vineyards Tobiano Casablanca Valley Chile Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 550 cases, \$20. Released October 2014. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose, even two days after opening, offers only a hint of purple fruits and displays primarily scents of briar, stem and oak. Much better on the palate, with mid weight flavors of black cherry, pomegranate and plum with an overlay of toasty oak. Very soft and suave in the mouth with a welcome finish of some length. 88.*

2013 Kingston Family Vineyards "CJ's" Barrel Casablanca Valley Chile Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 45 cases, \$38 (wine club and direct from winery). Named after CJ Kingston who came to Casablanca in the early 1900s. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Darker fruits are featured on the nose, with plenty of savory stem and oak embellishment. Very polished and soft on the palate with a juicy core of black raspberry, boysenberry and blackberry fruits that really pop. An herbal oak thread runs through the background. The finish is noticeable intense and long-lasting. 89.*



2013 Kingston Family Vineyards Alazan Casablanca Valley Chile Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 115 cases, \$32. The flagship Pinot Noir named after Peter Kingston's horse in the 1950s. A limited, reserve bottling. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Clearly the most classy wine in the lineup with a highly appealing nose of penetrating fragrances including dark red stone and berry fruits and spice. Impeccably balanced and velvety in the mouth with well-managed oak seasoning and a memorable, lip smacking finish. This wine was still pumping out the goodness two days later from a previously opening and re-corked bottle. 92.*



Many Very Good to Extraordinary California Pinot Noirs Tasted Recently

I received an unusually large number of wines to review recently, a number of which were extraordinary. I am going to get straight to the reviews, with little or no background verbiage.

Balletto Vineyards This winery makes all of its wines from sustainably-farmed estate vineyards located in the southern third of the Russian River Valley. It is one of the few Russian River Valley wineries to be 100% estate grown and estate bottled.




2013 Balletto Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.56, 9,550 cases. \$29. Estate grown from 7 different vineyards. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. This is a wine that aims to please with inviting scents of Bing cherry, spice, sandalwood and vanilla. Lighter in weight and offering welcoming elegance, the core of cherry fruit is juicy and flavorful, and balanced with supple tannins. Simple and straightforward, but a very good daily drinker.* **89.**

CARR An urban winery established by Ryan Carr in 1999 producing 4,500 cases annually in downtown Santa Barbara. The wines are consistently excellent and available for tasting at The Barrel Room in downtown Santa Barbara and The Warehouse in Santa Ynez.

2013 CARR Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 404 cases, \$35. Released March 2015. A blend of 3 vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills. Clones 113, 114, 115, 667, 777, and Pommard. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 15% new. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas and flavors of plum sauce, black grapes, black currants in a soft, creamy, light to mid weight, riper fruit style that is a bit shallow on the palate. The modest tannins make for easy approachability, but oak plays too big a role.* **87.**

2013 CARR Turner Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 198 cases, \$50. Released March 2015. 21-acre (15 acres of Pinot Noir), organically farmed vineyard planted in 2000 by Ryan Carr. Clones 113, 777 and Pommard. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 15% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose is not very expressive, even over time in the glass with vigorous swirling, only revealing demure scents of earthy darker fruits. The boysenberry and blackberry fruit flavors are nicely spiced but lack a bit of intensity on the attack and finish. The overall harmony is good with balanced tannins. A solid, but not exceptional wine.* **89.**

2013 CARR The Yard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 195 cases, \$50. Released March 2015. An 18-acre vineyard planted by Ryan Carr in 1998. Clones 113, 114, 115 and 667. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 15% new. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is very appealing for its hi-tone black cherry, black raspberry and vanilla aromas. Very soft and smooth on the palate, with an amalgam of dark cherry, black raspberry and marionberry fruits that is inviting. The tannins are folded in and the juicy acidity brings the wine to life, especially on the vibrant and fruity finish.* **92.**

 **2013 CARR The Yard 114 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir** 14.0% alc., 56 cases, \$60. Released March 2015. 18-acre vineyard planted by Ryan Carr in 1998. The site is unique in that it has heavy limestone content in the soils. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 15% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This is a highly unique and delicious wine that offers aromas of dried fruit leather and spice and flavors of dark red and black pie berries. Layered and seamless, with a seductive softness in the mouth, and a huge finish, this luscious wine is delightful. A rarely seen clone 114 bottling that is heaven sent.* **94.**





2014 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Sonoma Coast Rosé of Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., \$18, screwcap. *Moderate pink color in the glass. Lovely perfume of fresh crush strawberries and cranberries. Very satisfying with great fruit clarity and definition, offering flavors of blood orange, yellow peach and cranberry with a welcome riff of herbs and citrus in the background. Impressive richness of flavor and length. A terrific rosé at a pleasing price. Stock up for summer. 91.*



2013 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$35, screwcap. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Bright aromas of black cherry, sous-bois and cedary oak that pick up intensity over time in the glass. Mid weight flavors of black cherry and blueberry offering a flowing mid palate attack and some finishing drive. A solid wine, with integrated tannins and complimentary oak seasoning. 89.*

2013 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$35, screwcap. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy fruit aromas dominated by nutty oak. Middleweight core of cherry, raspberry and strawberry fruits with a noticeable oak overlay. Juicy, with soft tannins, and a dry red-fruited finish. A pleasantly forward wine. 87.*

2013 DELLA Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 300 cases, \$60. Released March 2015. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of black cherry and cola. Luscious, mid weight plus core of black cherry and blackberry fruits framed by spice and cola. The fruits veers to the very ripe side, but doesn't cross over. Refined, with moderate but not harsh tannins, finishing with some juicy expansiveness, and a little heat. Succulent but not nuanced. 88.*

2013 DELLA Keefer Ranch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 150 cases, \$70. Release August 2015. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Thoroughly enjoyable, with hi-pitched aromas of crushed cherries and cake spice. Impressive polish and balance, this sophisticated offering features flavors of dark cherries and berries, nicely integrated gentle tannins, and a silky smooth mouthfeel. 92.*

2013 DELLA Terra de Promissio Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 50 cases, \$70. Release August 2015. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry, seasoned oak and BBQ spice. Soft and elegant, with flavors of black cherry and black raspberry framed by suave tannins. Highly approachable, with a riff of citrus and a little heat on the finish. 89.*

2013 Dutton Estate Thomas Road Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.29, TA 0.59, 124 cases, \$54. Vineyard located in northeastern part of Green Valley and planted to Dijon clone 115 in 1997. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Love the nose which offers penetrating aromas of black cherry and exotic spices including clove. Very flavorful, with a mid weight core of cherry fruit accented with cola and complimented by oak. Wonderful balance with suave tannins and an uplifting, cherry-driven finish. 92.*



2013 Dutton Estate Manzana Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.61, 133 cases, \$54. Vineyard located in Green Valley. Dijon clones 115 and "828." 100% de-stemmed. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. A selection of best barrels from the Manzana lot. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Shy, but pleasing scents of black cherry, boysenberry and oak spice. Packed with ripe and vigorous purple fruits with an aggressive attack and a juicy boysenberry-rich finish that has impressive length. The oak is nicely integrated, the tannins are supple, and the peach skin texture is inviting. 90.*

Fulcrum I found the vineyard designated wines hard to judge as the nose on all the wines was quite primary, even with extended air time and sampling a day after opening. I believe the wines in this vintage need more time in bottle, and I gave a range of scores as a result.

2013 Fulcrum Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 144 cases, \$55. Pommard clone from Donnelly Creek Vineyard. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 31% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas and flavors of cherry and spice are complimented by a touch of oak. The tannins are folded in, and the wine finishes with a good cut of acidity and plenty of spice. The nose was still shy the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **89-90.**

2013 Fulcrum Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 216 cases, \$60. Clones 667 and "828." Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 45% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is very primary with only hints of olive and green tea. Much more expressive on the palate, with a tasty core of cherry fruit, a hint of oak, and a silky mouthfeel. The tannins are well matched to the mid weight plus fruit load, and the wine finishes with a charge of bright red cherry fruit. The nose was more expressive the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle offering the aroma of dark red cherry compote. The fruit flavor was more intense and the silky smooth texture continued to satisfy.* **91-92.**



2013 Fulcrum Landy Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 81 cases, \$52. Clones 777, 115 and Pommard. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. *Light cherry red color in the glass. The nose is very shy initially, offering mainly oak-driven scents of wood and tobacco. Similarly shy on the palate, with modest flavors of black cherry, cranberry and cola with an oak overlay. Soft in the mouth and easy to drink, but the fruit lacked expression. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose was still primary with no fruit but the flavors had begun to arrive.* **87-89.**

2013 Fulcrum Brousseau Vineyard Chalone AVA Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 135 cases, \$56. Clones 113, 114 and 115. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is not open for business with very demure scents of briar, oak, earth and faint cherry. The satiny texture really stands out in this mid weight wine featuring red cherry fruit framed by firm, but integrated, fine-grain tannins. The most elegant of the four 2013 Fulcrum vineyard-designates, but also the most tannic which is typical of this vineyard. The nose still had not blossomed the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, but the palate was more pleasing with softer tannins.* **89-90.**

2013 On Point (by Fulcrum) Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 282 cases, \$36. Sourced from Sangiacomo Vineyard (54%) and Gap's Crown Vineyard (46%). Clones 667 and "828." Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 18% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Quite fragrant with scents of cherry, red berry and spice. Lighter weighted flavors of red cherry and berry with a slight confected bent, complimented by a note of baking spice and toasty oak. The wine is forward, juicy and likable, with modest tannins, and a cherry-driven finish.* **88.**

2013 On Point (by Fulcrum) Christina's Cuvée Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 198 cases, \$36. Named in honor of winemaker's spouse. Sourced from Donnelly Creek Vineyard in Anderson Valley. Aged 15 months in 100% French oak barrels, 24% new. *Moderately light reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, sous-bois and oak. Very tasty flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, dark cola and anise with a hint of cardamom spice. Nicely seasoned with oak, with modest tannins and some finishing presence. A little more body and finish than the On Point Sonoma Coast bottling.* **89.**



2014 Gary Farrell Russian River Valley Selection Russian River Valley Rosé of Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.75, 268 cases, \$28. Released June 2015. Sourced from Wat Vineyard-Dutton Ranch located in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Mt. Eden clone. Harvest Brix 21.8°. Whole cluster pressed, 70% stainless steel fermented, 30% fermented in neutral French oak barrels. Entire blend aged 2 months in stainless steel. *Moderate pinkish red color in the glass. Captivating aromas of strawberry, cherry and peach bin. A full-flavored style offering notes of yellow stone and red berry fruits. The wine has polish and some length on the persistent finish that brightens the palate with a good cut of acidity.* **90.**



2013 Gary Farrell Russian River Valley Selection Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.47, TA 0.63, 11,267 cases, \$45. Released May 2015. A blend from ten vineyards. Small percentage of whole cluster inclusion. 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15 day extended maceration post fermentation, aged 9 months in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new. *Quintessential Russian River Valley in character with aromas and flavors of Bing cherry and cola in a luscious style that has enough acidity to keep the fruit vibrant. Oak plays a comforting seasoning role in the background. The finish is notable for its intensity.* **89.**

2013 Gary Farrell Hallberg Vineyard Dijon Clones Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.66, 955 cases, \$60. Released February 2015. Clones 667 and 777. Small percentage of whole cluster inclusion. 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15 day extended maceration post fermentation, aged 9 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. The perfume of fresh, dark red cherries and berries is complimented by the scent of sous-bois. Impressive attack and finish of mid weight dark red fruits framed by suave tannins. Very silky and polished in the mouth with perfect integration of oak, and uplifting, juicy acidity on the finish that hangs around for quite a spell.* **92.**

2013 Gary Farrell Martaella Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.61, 388 cases, \$60. Inaugural release June 2015. Clones 37, "828," 96 and Martini. Small percentage of whole cluster inclusion. 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15 days extended maceration after fermentation, aged 14 months on primary lees in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Perfume of oak-kissed black cherry, violets and smoke. Mid weight flavors of black cherry, cola and tar. Very soft in the mouth and elegant, but a bit shallow on the attack and on the acid-driven finish. A good food wine, but not particularly notable on its own.* **89.**

Goldeneye Wines Goldeneye farms 200 acres over four estate vineyards with 96 unique blocks and 49 combinations of clone and rootstock. The estate vineyards span only 8 miles in the Anderson Valley, but all the wines are distinctly different. Goldeneye has a distinctive style. The wines are bold, even voluptuous expressions of Pinot Noir embellished by significant oak, but extremely well crafted in that style. Despite the fruit-driven character, the terroir of the individual vineyards does shine through in the wines. All the wines reviewed below are current releases.

2012 Goldeneye Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.89, TA 0.51, 14,500 cases, \$55. A blend of grapes from the four estate vineyards (19 clones) and independent growers. Harvest Brix 25.0°. Aged 16 months in 70% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Rich aromas of black raspberry, black current and blackberry fruits with a hint of oak in the background. Mid weight flavors echo the nose with added notes of brown spice, mocha and molasses. The oak adjunct is nicely fashioned but more prominent than in the other 2012 Pinot Noirs. The wine has good harmony, and finishes with an inviting combination of fruit and cut.* **90.**

2012 Goldeneye Estate Grown Confluence Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.93, TA 0.47, 700 cases, \$82. This vineyard is located in the heart of the Anderson Valley with varying soils and exposures. Harvest Brix 25.0° *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine has the least developed nose among the 2012 Goldeneye Pinot Noirs, offering shy aromas of black cherry, plum and balsam. Much more giving on the silky palate, with plenty of black cherry, purple grape, plum, and blackberry fruits to satisfy. Nicely composed, with more finish than the Anderson Valley bottling and easy to cozy up to.* **91.**

2012 Goldeneye Estate Grown The Narrows Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 4.00, TA 0.52, 490 cases, \$82. This vineyard is located at the northernmost tip of the Anderson Valley. An historic mountain ranch, it is planted with mature Pinot Noir vines. Harvest Brix 24.5°. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of dark red berries, wine cave and sawdust. Delicious attack of dark red cherries, strawberries and raspberries in a mid weight style, with a hint of spice and woodlands. A charming wine with modest tannins and a luscious, fruit-filled finish of uncommon generosity.* **92.**

2012 Goldeneye Estate Grown Gowan Creek Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.85, TA 0.50, 930 cases, \$82. Vineyard is two miles north of Confluence Vineyard and exposed to more coastal fog. Planted to 8 different clones tailored to a specific site and soil type. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep, dark fruit aromas lead the way. A bolder wine, filled with gorgeous blackberry and black raspberry sap, yet light on its feet with soft tannins. There is an appealing earthiness to this wine which also offers an unusual accent of BBQ spices. The smooth texture is especially noteworthy. A full throttle wine that still retains plenty of Pinot charm and is beautifully balanced.* **93.**



2012 Goldeneye Estate Grown Split Rail Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.86, TA 0.50, 360 cases, \$82. This vineyard is made up of 16 distinctive blocks and 9 clones. Harvest Brix 25.0°. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Very ripe fruited on the nose and palate, with a plethora of black raspberry, black currant and blackberry fruits. Intense on the attack and the bold finish, with modest tannins. A bit ripe for my taste, but well composed, easy to drink, and quite enjoyable.* **91.**



2012 Goldeneye Estate Grown Ten Degrees Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.52, 750 cases, \$115. The name Ten Degrees pays homage to the 10 degree difference between The Narrows Vineyard in the cool “deep end” to the Confluence Vineyard in the South, a span of only 8 miles. Harvest Brix 25.5°. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Brooding, but highly pleasurable aromas of black fruits, hung game and underbrush. A glamorous wine with a mid weight plus attack of pretty dark red and black fruits infused with spice. Impeccable balance, with integrated oak and firm, but not imposing tannins. The structure and balance predict long term age ability. The very long and juicy raspberry-infused finish emotes. This is a bold, yet refined Pinot that has a sophisticated demeanor.* **94.**

2013 Gracianna Estate Mercedes Riverblock Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 279 cases, \$64. Estate vineyard planted to clone 115. Barrel aged for 11 months. *Dark violet color in the glass. Very ripe, brooding nose, offering scents of black currant, blackberry jam and oak. Almost syrupy, with copious purple and black fruit sap, including flavors of blackberry, marionberry and pomegranate, with muscular and slightly rugged tannins which tend to dominant the lavishly fruited finish. A dead-ringer for Grenache. Tasted twice (one bottle had some volatile acidity which blew off over time).* **87.**

2013 Gracianna Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.9% alc., 486 cases, \$52. Barrel aged for 11 months. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry reduction sauce, kirsch and baking spices. Very ripe, even roasted fruit flavors with an overlay of oak-driven coffee flavor. Full-bodied and very lush. The tannins are well integrated and the wine is in balance despite the high ABV, but the wine is tiring to drink. Tasted twice.* **85.**

2013 Guarachi Family Wines Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$75. Inaugural single vineyard release from this vineyard which is now an estate property. Clones 777 and “828.” Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 55% new. Bottled in the heaviest bottle I have ever met with! *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of blackberry, marionberry and toasty oak. Full-bodied charge of purple and black berry fruits that are sweet and plush on the palate. The wine is bold and luscious, but lacks balance, with weighty tannins exerting their muscle and alcoholic warmth showing up on the finish. A big wine in every way, with a big bottle, big fruit, big tannins, and big alcohol.* **87.**

2013 J. Lohr Falcon's Perch Monterey County Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.55, \$17. Grapes are sourced from Santa Lucia Highlands (57%) and Arroyo Seco (43%). Harvest Brix 26.9°. 3-day cold soak, fermented in 12-ton lots in open-top punchdown tanks. Matured in stainless steel with 17% aged in third-fill French oak barrels. *Very dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy aromas of blackberry jam, anise and oak. A decadent wine that reminds of Syrah with a voluptuous core of blackberry, crème de cassis and white pepper flavors. Very plush and velvety on the palate with soft tannins. Loads of fruit but little complexity or verve.* 87.

2013 La Crema Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.55, \$40. A blend of grapes from 14 different properties including several estate-owned vineyards. Aged for 9 months in 100% French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas and flavors veer to the very ripe side featuring black cherry, blackberry and Damsel plum fruits with a hint of cola. Quite sappy, with some tannin showing up on the slightly warm finish.* 88.

2013 Patz & Hall Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., \$46. Released April 2015. Sourced from an array of vineyards in Green Valley, Sonoma Valley and the Russian River Valley. Gap's Crown Vineyard is a key part of this wine. Wild and cultured yeast fermentations, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new, bottled without fining or filtration. *Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. Bold and outspoken, this wine features aromas and flavors of dark berries, purple grapes, grilled beef and smoked jerky. Toasty oak chimes in in the background, the tannins are folded in nicely, and there is some finishing zest in this fruit-forward wine.* 90.



2013 Patz & Hall Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,028 cases, \$70. Released March 2015. This vineyard was first planted in 2002 in the foothills of Sonoma Mountain in the Petaluma Gap region and is now owned by Bill Price. Wild and cultured yeast fermentations, 15% whole clusters, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 65% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of purple berries and spice gain intensity over time in the glass. Fleshy and flavorful, with an abundance of fruit, yet soft on the palate with exemplary elegance. Fine-grain tannins add textural interest, there is commendable integration of oak, and the tasty finish seems to last forever. This virile beauty was kissed by an angel.* 94.



2013 Patz & Hall Jenkins Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,566 cases, \$60. This 18-acre vineyard is located two miles west of Sebastopol on Pleasant Hill Rd. in an area known as Sebastopol Hills. Goldridge series gravelly loam soils planted to Dijon 667 and 777 in 2001 by renowned vineyard manager Charlie Chenoweth. 10% whole clusters. Wild and cultured fermentations. Aged in 100% French oak barrels, 60% new. Bottled without fining or filtration. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of ripe strawberries and cherries fill the glass. Inviting elegance and balance, with gossamer tannins, discreetly concentrated dark red fruits, and complimentary oak in the background. Fruit-driven and still young.* 91.

2012 Patz & Hall Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., 550 cases, \$90. Released March 2015. An iconic vineyard site that is the benchmark for the Santa Lucia Highlands. Grapes are sourced from Pisoni's coveted "old field," planted in the early 1980s. Wild and cultured fermentations, 10% whole clusters, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 75% new. Aged an additional year in bottle. Unfined and unfiltered. *Dark violet color in the glass. Deeply perfumed with aromas of black raspberry and cassis. Always the biggest and "baddest" wine in the Patz & Hall lineup, this full-bodied, gorgeous wine is fully structured and packs a wallop of purple and black berry fruits. The finish is ridiculously generous. Not a timid wine, but it still reflects the Pisoni Vineyard terroir.* 93.

Red Car This winery focuses on growing Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah in the cold-climate regions on the edge of the Pacific Ocean in the West Sonoma Coast. A large amount of fruit is grown by the winery. For several years, organic and biodynamic farming has been integrated into the vineyards. All wines are made in small lots with native yeast fermentation, gravity flow, and natural acid. Winemaker Carroll Kemp takes the tenants of the In Pursuit of Balance movement seriously.

2013 Red Car Manchester Ridge Vineyard Mendocino Ridge Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.51, 300 cases, \$68. Vineyard is in a mountain range that is an extension of the Sonoma Coast range just north of the Sonoma County line in Mendocino County. Elevation is 2,000 feet, 3.5 miles from Pacific Ocean. Harvest Brix 22.1°. Clones 114 and 115. Aged 12 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Racy aromas of grape must, spice, rose petal and oak. Light weight flavors of red fruits and spice with a floral note and oak in the background. The acidity sticks out, and the oak supersedes the thin fruit on the finish.* **88.**

2013 Red Car Estate Vineyard Fort Ross-Seaview Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.52, 610 cases, \$68. Vineyard first planted in 2005 at 1,000 feet elevation, 3.7 miles from Pacific Ocean. Harvest Brix 22.3°. Clones are Calera, Jackson 16 and "828" planted in well-drained Ohlson sandstone. 15% whole cluster. Aged 12 months in 24% new and 76% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is pleasant but not highly expressive, offering aromas of dark berry compote and cherry pie. Redder fruits dominate the palate that is uplifted with bright acidity in a mid weight style that has admirable balance. A bit austere, with modest tannins and a finish flush with citrus-infused cranberry fruit.* **89.**

2012 Red Car Platt Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.49, 463 cases, \$68. Vineyard overlooks the town of Bodega. Vines struggle to set fruit each year and vineyard is exposed to chilling marine winds from coast 5 miles away. Harvest Brix 22.6°. Clones are Calera, 777 and "828" densely planted in Goldridge soil. 10% whole cluster. Aged 14 months in 20% new and 80% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The whole cluster peeks out on the nose in the guise of rose petal and spice aromas framing the cherry fruit. Delicious black raspberry and boysenberry fruit framed by dry, balanced tannins. The silky mouthfeel is engaging and there is notable fruit intensity on the finish. Good harmony in this thoroughly enjoyable wine.* **92.**

2012 Red Car Zephyr Farms Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.52, 325 cases, \$68. 7-acre vineyard in the hills above Freestone at 525 feet elevation, 6.7 miles from the Pacific Ocean, where it is exposed to dense coastal fog and intense afternoon winds. Harvest Brix 22.4°. Clones 777, 115 and "828." 10% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in 22% new and 78% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of dark cherry, rose hips tea, wilted rose and sous-bois. The mid weight core of darker cherry and raspberry are presented in a velvety smooth textural style. There is a slight herbal, but not herbaceous tone in the background. The dry tannins make a modest encore on the generously fruity finish.* **90.**

2012 Red Car Hagan Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.80, TA 0.52, 400 cases, \$68. A 12-acre vineyard is located on Taylor Lane near Summa, Theirot and Occidental vineyards, west of the town of Occidental. Perched at 850 feet elevation, 4.6 miles from Pacific Ocean. Clones are Calera, Schoolhouse, 777 and 115 planted in Goldridge soil. Harvest Brix 22.9°. 10% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in 24% new and 76% neutral French oak barrels. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Comforting aromas of dark berry jam, rose petal and spice. The most expressive and pleasing nose among the 2012 Red Car Pinot Noirs tasted. Impressive entry and finish with a mid weight plus array of blackberry, boysenberry and crème de cassis flavors with some oak and earthiness in the background. Very silky mouthfeel, with wind-blown tannins and pleasing roundness and fullness on the finish. This wine has plenty of character and a killer texture.* **93.**



Rexford Winery Joe Miller, a long time Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics at University of California at Santa Cruz, is the winemaker at this winery located on the west side of Santa Cruz. He has taught university courses on enology and wine appreciation for more than 30 years and began making wine in the 1970s. He has traveled extensively in the wine-producing regions of France, Italy and Australia. Joe works with his son Sam, the associate winemaker at Rexford. Visit the website for tasting room hours and to acquire the wines: www.rexfordwinery.com.

2011 Rexford Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 210 cases, \$25, screwcap. Joe and Sam Miller are father and son winemakers with winery located in Santa Cruz. Sourced from three vineyards: Trout Gulch,

Severia and Muns. Average harvest Brix 23.75°. 100% de-stemmed, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 0% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. This wine is very ripe fruited with aromas of black cherry, blackberry, cola and oak spice. Velvety on the palate with a luscious core of black plum, crème de cassis, and blackberry flavors overlain with a charred oak imprint. Inviting intensity, with balanced tannins, and a juicy finish that leaves a sense of warmth behind.* 87.

2010 Rexford Brousseau Vineyard Chalone Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 161 cases, \$N/A, screwcap. Organically farmed vines in limestone soil east of Soledad. Clones are 538, Pommard and Mt. Eden. Harvest Brix 24.5°. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 18 months in 1-to-3-year-old French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of macerated black plum, briar and plentiful oak. Weighty tannins are paired with a full-bodied core of darker berry fruits. Oak is better integrated on the palate which is very smooth and seductive. The tannins arrive with a rush on the astringent finish that can be typical of this vineyard.* 88.

2012 Rexford Fambrini Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 123 cases, \$42, screwcap. A monopole for Rexford. Limestone-laden soil. Clones 667 and 777. Harvest Brix 22.5°. 100% de-stemmed, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of red cherry, red berry, sandalwood and spice remind of some whole cluster. Mid weight flavors of red fruits with plentiful oak in the background. Rather simple, but crisp and lively on the finish, with a burst of tart plum flavor.* 88.

Sojourn Cellars Based in the town of Sonoma, Sojourn Cellars specializes in Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon wines. Farming operations are directed at notable vineyards in Sonoma and Napa counties. Craig Haserot proprietor and Erich Bradley winemaker. This is a top producer with consistently fine offerings, although oak seems a bit heavy handed on some wines in this vintage.

2013 Sojourn Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.56, 500 cases, \$42. Sourced from Wohler Vineyard (clone 2A) and Riddle Vineyard (Mt. Eden and Pommard). Clones 115 and 667. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. Highly aromatic, even two days after opening, with scents of Bing cherry, spice sous-bois and a hint of oak. Smooth on the palate, with light to mid weight flavors of black cherry, cola and tobacco. A bit shallow on the attack and finish with a little too much oak overlay for my taste.* 88.

2013 Sojourn Wohler Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.57, 525 cases, \$48. Young vines in Goldridge soil. Clones are Wädenswil 2A, "828," 115 and 667. This vineyard was replanted in 2006 and is located in the heart of the Russian River Valley within sight of the historic Wohler Bridge. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is shy initially, but opens slightly over time to reveal inviting aromas of Bing cherry and cola. Bright dark cherry and dark raspberry flavor in a mid weight style with deep oak seasoning in the background. The tannins are balanced, and the wine finishes with some enjoyable cherry cola goodness.* 89.

2013 Sojourn Ridgetop Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.56, 425 cases, \$59. This vineyard is owned and managed by Thomas Rivers Brown and Fred Schrader, with Ulises Valdez caring for the vineyard. It is located near Annapolis in the northern Sonoma Coast region at 1100 feet elevation. Clones 115, 667 and 777 blended after being fermented in separate lots. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely perfume of black cherry, red berry, baking spice and sous-bois. Very tasty attack of black cherry, black raspberry and marionberry fruits framed by soft tannins with a deep toasty oak overlay. The finish is quite generous, but leaves a bit of heat in its wake.* 89.

2013 Sojourn Campbell Ranch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.58, 300 cases, \$59. This vineyard is surrounded by redwoods at about 750 feet elevation, located in the northern coastal mountains near Annapolis. Clones 115 and 777. 10% whole cluster. Native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of crushed dark red berries and spice draw you into the glass. Smooth and refined, with delicious flavors of spiced red cherries and berries underlain with an earthy flora tone. Nicely balanced with well integrated oak, fine-grain texturally interesting tannins, and a charge of fresh fruit on the finish. Still pumping out the goodness two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 93.*



2013 Sojourn Silver Eagle Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.60, 325 cases, \$59. This vineyard is owned and managed by Ulises Valdez, and is located in the rolling hills north of Occidental. Clones are Pommard, Calera and a unique Vosne-Romanee selection. 100% de-stemmed, native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Reticent, but pleasing aromas of blackberry jam, black grapes and sweet oak. Silky in the mouth with layers of black raspberry, blackberry and black cherry fruits that are saucy and lush. The fine tannins are well integrated and the right touch of oak adds interest. The finish is clean and fruity with notable persistence. Still highly enjoyable two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*

2013 Sonoma Collection Sonoma County District 3 Growers Reserve Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.53, \$19.99. From Matt Stornetta and Ned Hill, multigenerational Sonoma grape growers. California Cellars, LLC, Isleton, CA. 100% de-stemmed, fermented in small batches, and aged for 14 months in French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very ripe fruit profile on the nose and palate, featuring oak-kissed black cherry, blackberry and black currant fruits. The rich middle palate is slightly overshadowed by oak-driven tobacco flavor, and the cherry goodness on the finish is accompanied by a sense of heat. 87.*

2013 Talbott Kali Hart Monterey Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.79, TA 0.69, \$21, screwcap. 100% estate fruit from Sleepy Hollow Vineyard. It is sourced from vines ranging from 10 to 40-years-old. Released September 15, 2014. Aged 9 months in 100% French oak barrels, 10% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The inviting aromas of cherry and raspberry are replicated in the flavors on the palate with an added note of black tea and toasty oak. Well-structured and pretty intense on the mid palate, showing a significant oak overlay over time in the glass. 87.*



2013 Talbott Logan Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., pH 3.74, TA 0.66, \$25, screwcap. Released September 15, 2014. 100% estate grown fruit from Sleepy Hollow Vineyard. Vines range in age from 10 to 40-years-old. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 20% new. *Moderately reddish purple hue in the glass. Dark cherries and purple and black berries are the theme in this wine accented with anise-laced oak. Easy going drinking with immersed tannins, juicy acidity, and a dry, somewhat generous finish. Straightforward but appealing. 89.*

2013 Talbott Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.71, TA 0.63, \$42, screwcap. Released November 15, 2014. Composed of 50% Martini clone planted in 1972 and 50% Dijon clones ranging in age from 15 to 20 years, all from the finest blocks of Sleepy Hollow Vineyard. Aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is zippered up, reluctantly offering pleasant scents of black cherry and toasty oak. Strikingly soft and smooth on the palate with intensely flavored black cherry and black raspberry fruits framed by balanced tannins and a lively spark of acidity. Needs time in bottle for the aromas to arrive. 90-91.*

The Winery San Francisco This is a unique urban winery housed in a 20,000-square-foot World War II airplane hanger on San Francisco's Treasure Island. The winery is dedicated to bringing the winery experience to wine enthusiasts in the Bay Area and has hosted nearly 100,000 people a year. The winemaker is Bryan Kane, also the winemaker for Sol Rouge, Howell Mountain Vineyards and Vie Winery.

2013 The Winery SF North Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 1,700 cases, \$29.99. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers scents of blueberry, blackberry, plum and leaf. The discreetly concentrated black raspberry and blackberry fruits are overlaid with noticeable oak and backed by weighty tannins which surface on the finish. A little better integrated and enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 87.*

2013 The Winery SF Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 200 cases, \$40. Sourced from a vineyard near the border of Los Carneros. clones 115, 667 and 777. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Very shy berry mix on the nose which fails to open much even when tasted the following day. Tasty mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and cedary oak with a riff of savory herbs in the background. Nicely composed with balanced tannins and some finishing intensity. 88.*

Thomas Fogarty Wine Estate Winemaker Nathan Kandler produces Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from 25 acres of Estate vineyards including 8 unique sites planted at high elevation in thin rocky soils. Yields in 2012 were at 2-tons-per-acre, the highest since 2009. All wines were fermented with indigenous yeast and naturally occurring malolactic fermentations. Total time in barrel was about 18 months. All wines were bottled unfined and unfiltered. These are somewhat earthy wines that have plenty of terroir-driven character, that are still young and chunky, and although the wines will likely benefit from a few more years in the cellar, it is hard to predict the future.

2012 Thomas Fogarty Rapley Trail Vineyard Estate Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 429 cases, \$75. Estate grown. Martini clone planted in 1983 at 1650 feet elevation in fractured shale. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, cranberry, strawberry and sous-bois. Earthy, mid weight flavors of black cherry and black raspberry backed by modest tannins, finishing dry, with a good cut of citrus-driven acidity and some length. 89-90.*

2012 Thomas Fogarty Rapley Trail Vineyard M Block Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 75 cases, \$85. 1.5 acres of Martini clone planted in 1983 in shale and sandstone. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose opens over time in the glass to reveal aromas of oak-kissed black cherry and black raspberry with some savory herb and earthy flora adjuncts. Over time, this wine offers the most appealing nose of the vineyard designates tasted. Impressive attack and finish with nicely ripened dark stone and berry fruits. The intensity is ramped up especially on the finish. The wine is a bit rugged and herbal at present, with notable oak presence, but should improve with another two to four years in the cellar. When re-tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was about the same. 90-92.*



2012 Thomas Fogarty Rapley Trail Vineyard Henry Ayrtons' Block Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 75 cases, \$85. 0.5 acres of Martini clone planted in 1983 at 1500 feet elevation in shale and sandstone. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is quite reserved, even when check a day after opening, with scents of dark red cherry and berry and dried herbs. There is some spectacular fruit here buried in aggressive tannins at present. The finish is replete with dark red berry fruit that hands on for at least a minute. The status was about the same the following day when re-tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Hopefully, the tannins will ameliorate over time. 89-91.*

2012 Thomas Fogarty Razorback Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 239 cases, \$70. 2 acres of Swan selection and clones 115, 667 and 777 planted in 1986 at 1400 feet elevation in sandstone and shale. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Reserved aromas of cherry, spice and sawdust. Light to mid weight flavors of red cherries with a mantle of savory dried herbs and oak. Juicy, with soft tannins. The most agreeable wine to drink now among the vineyard designates tasted in this vintage, but seems a bit shallow on the attack and finish. 88-89.*

2012 Thomas Fogarty Will's Cabin Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 200 cases, \$65. 3 acres of Mt. Eden and Swan clones planted in 2001 at 2300 feet elevation in fractured sandstone, a little further from the Pacific Ocean. Part of Santa Cruz Mountains AVA blend for many years: first vineyard designation. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Aromas of cherry, anise and oak are married nicely on*

the nose. A little reserved, but very enjoyable, with mid weight flavors of juicy cherries and cranberries. The fruit has character and resolve, the tannins are ripe and balanced, and there is some finishing intensity propelled by good acidity. 90-91.

Three Sticks Wines Winemaker Bob Cabral joined the team as Pinot Noir and Chardonnay winemaker while the 2013 vintage was in barrel. He was involved in creating the final blends. The new home to Three Sticks Wines is The Adobe, a historical renovation that opened in 2014 in downtown Sonoma. These are the best Pinot Noirs ever from Three Sticks Wines. The Chardonnays, on the other hand, are less appealing to me. They are ripe, richly fruited and lack acidic vibrancy. The wines have received a number of accolades, but I prefer the style of Chardonnay crafted by the previous winemaking team at Three Sticks headed by Don Van Staaveren. (see reviews in section on white wines in this issue)

2013 Three Sticks Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.65, 573 cases, \$60. Sourced from a vineyard just north of Sebastopol planted in Goldridge soils. 8 to 26-day fermentation after a 5-day cold soak. 25% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of Bing cherry and cola intensify with swirling. Generous attack of black cherry and strawberry fruit flavors complimented with cola, black tea and spice accents. Nicely integrated oak barrel treatment, balanced tannins, bright acidity and a good finishing kick of lush cherry fruit. 92.*

2013 Three Sticks Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.70, 177 cases, \$60. 14 to 20-day fermentation after a 1-day cold soak. Aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. A savory nose offers scents of blackberry on the vine, plum, and dried herbs. Complex and layered, with mid weight flavors of a bowl of crushed cherries, as well as black raspberries and Damsel plums. Welcome harmony with just the right touch of oak, and an amazingly long finish that lasts over a minute. The voluptuous fruit is vibrant, not jammy, and really clings to the finish. 93.*



2013 Three Sticks The James Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.64, 615 cases, \$60. Sourced from Burning Creek, La Rinconada and Sanford & Benedict vineyards. 5-day cold soak, fermentation in open top fermenters, aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine needed two days after opening to really show its stuff. Wonderfully fragrant with scents of red cherry, baking spices and sandalwood. The core of red and purple berry fruits is uplifted with a quenching cut of acidity that brings a vibrancy to the wine. The tannins are soft, the mouthfeel is silky smooth, and the finish is refreshing. A wine lover's wine that will show best with decanting or another year or two in the cellar. 92.*

2013 Truchard Carneros Napa Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.60, 7,159 cases, \$35. Released March 1, 2015. 7 clonal selections grown on the Truchard Estate Vineyard (two Martini clones, Pommard, Swan, and Dijon 114, 115, 667 and 777). Vines range in age from 17 to 39 years. Harvest Brix 24.5°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 35% new. *Medium reddish purple hue in the glass. Complex nose offering scents of cherry, strawberry, herbs, oak and beef. A bit rustic and savory, but with a good mid palate attack of spiced red fruits embellished with tastes of mushroom and dried herbs. Well-structured with healthy, but not imposing tannins, finishing with a generous burst of cherry fruit 33that picks up intensity over time in the glass. 90.*

Wedell Cellars This winery was started in 1994 on the Central Coast of California, sourcing grapes from northern Santa Barbara and southern San Luis Obispo vineyards. The production facility is located in Santa Maria. Maurice and Susie Wedell are intimately involved in the production of the wines, assisted by consulting winemaker Kirby Anderson. The wines are typically aged an additional time in both barrel and bottle before release.

2012 Wedell Cellars Wavertree Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.73, 1,200 cases, \$40. 95% of fruit from Fiddlestix Vineyard and 5% from La Encantada Vineyard. Harvest Brix 24.6°. Clones 113, 115, 667, 777 and Pommard. 3-day cold soak, aged on the primary lees for 22 months in 10% new and 60% once-used French oak barrels. Gently filtered. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of red cherry and raspberry lead to a light to mid weight styled wine that offers delicious cherry and red raspberry fruits accented with spice and cola. Forward, with an aggressive mid palate attack, finishing with vibrancy and clarity.* **90.**

2011 Wedell Cellars Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.68, 318 cases, \$75. Clones 113, 114, 667, 777 and Pommard from Fiddlestix Vineyard. Harvest Brix 24.7°. More than 95% free-run juice. 100% de-stemmed, aged on the lees for almost 30 months in 35% new French oak barrels. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of black cherry, blueberry and wine cave. A rich core of ripe black cherry and boysenberry that offers a riper profile than the 2012 appellation bottling. Easy to drink, with mild tannins, and a hint of oak, finishing with good intensity and the slightest sense of warmth.* **89.**



2011 Wedell Cellars Fiddlestix Vineyard The Barn Find Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., pH 3.23, TA 0.665, 95 cases, \$100. Sourced from one very small section of the Fiddlestix Vineyard that is within sight of the barn. Harvest Brix 24.4°. 100% de-stemmed, 6-day cold soak. All free-run juice. Aged on the primary lees in 30% new French oak barrels for almost 30 months. Unfined and unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Well-endowed with bright aromas of black raspberry and spice. Luscious and classy, with a charge of dark red and purple fruits that envelope the palate and find every nook and cranny in the mouth. Very suave with refined tannins, juicy acidity, and a peacock finish of uncommon length. A striking, irresistible wine.* **94.**



2013 Willowbrook Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 388 cases \$28. Released November 2014. Sourced from two vineyards in the Sebastopol Hills. Calera and Dijon 115 clones. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Perfumed with hi-tone aromas of cherry, ripe strawberry and sandalwood. Tasty core of cherry fruit accented with spice, toasty oak and red licorice notes. A solid wine with balanced tannins, a good grab of cherry on the finish, but plenty of toasty oak.* **89.**

2013 Willowbrook J.C.O. Limited by Joseph C. Otes Kastania Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4%alc., \$42. Sourced from a small well-known, established and family owned vineyard. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, spice, earth and terra cotta are enchanting. Earthy on the palate as well, with mid weight flavors of red cherry and red berry. Soft, smooth, comforting and forward, with impeccable balance.* **91.**



Windy Oaks Estate Winemaker Jim Schultze produces very limited amounts of a Pinot Noir from a half-acre section of the Schultze Family Vineyard that he hand tends himself. The clone is a rarely propagated French Burgundy Pinot Noir clone not available in the United States. The wines are typically aged over 2 years in 100% new French oak barrels.

2008 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Special Burgundy Clone Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$75. Unfined and unfiltered. This wine was very favorably reviewed in December 2012, but this bottle either aged prematurely due to oxidation (doubtful since the long cork took a superhuman effort to extract) or has taken a rather rapid aging trajectory since 2012. *Light crimson in color in the glass. Aged nose profile with scents of cherry compote, cranberry, and hung game. Middleweight flavors of black cherry,*

dark raspberry and spice cake with some cherry-driven finishing intensity. Very soft in the mouth with heat showing up at the end. Completely shot the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Not scored.

2010 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Special Burgundy Clone Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 12 cases, \$87.50. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Rewarding aromas of Bing cherry, spice and toasty oak. Satiny and seductive on the palate, with flavorful spiced black cherry fruit with a noticeable overlay of oak. Still sporting tannins that are not intrusive, and overall elegant and appealing. 90.*

2011 Windy Oaks Estate Schultze Family Vineyard Special Burgundy Clone Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 24 cases, \$87.50. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, rose petal, spice, and sandalwood leap from the glass. Very refined on the palate, with mid weight flavors of black cherry and spice. The tannins are structured but soft, there is a pleasant hint of oak seasoning, and the finish is generously endowed with cherry fruit. Still highly aromatic and full of flavor the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*



2013 Wonderwall Edna Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., \$18.99. Wonderwall is one of Field Recordings Winery labels crafted by winemaker Andrew Jones. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry jam, roasted plum, dark chocolate and oak. A succulent, very ripe, fruit-driven wine featuring mid weight flavors of blackberry and crème de cassis. Nicely balanced with modest tannins and very drinkable, but the ripeness of fruit obscures all origin or nuance. 86.*

Several Very Good to Extraordinary Oregon Pinot Noirs Tasted Recently

2013 Formaglini Vineyards La Quercia Block Oregon Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., 230 cases, \$45. Second release. From a 4-acre estate vineyard planted in sedimentary soil. Released June 7, 2015. Clones 777, "828," 115 and Pommard. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very savory on the nose with scents of forest floor, pine needle, and oak. More fruity on the palate with discreetly concentrated flavors of red and purple berries along with dried herbs. The tannins are balanced and the quenching acidity adds pleasure, but the fruit is playing hide-and-seek. Over considerable time in the glass, the red fruits do pick up intensity on the finish. Give this wine some time in the cellar to unravel.* **89-91.**

2013 Harper Voit Strandline Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., 450 cases, \$40. Sourced from Antiquum, Bieze and Huntington Hill vineyards. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, musk, pipe smoke and sous-bois. Mid weight cherry and raspberry flavors with food mid palate intensity and some finish. A touch of spice and dark chocolate chime in. Well-structured with oak in the background, finishing with some cranberry-driven acidity.* **88.**

2013 Harper Voit Bieze Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 125 cases, \$65. Calera and Pommard clones. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is quite primary initially and doesn't open until the following day, showing more appealing black cherry fruit and less smoky oak. This wine has an enjoyable mid weight core of black cherry and raspberry fruit framed by balanced, dry tannins. There is noticeable mid palate intensity and some length on the slightly astringent finish. A smoky aura pervades this wine, even when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. The wine hasn't come together, so try again in a year or two.* **88-89.**

2013 Harper Voit Perrydale Hills Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 150 cases, \$52. Marine sedimentary soils. *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is still primary, but offers demure aromas of dark berry jam, cinnamon toast and violets. Rich, sappy and intensely fruity on the mid palate with waves of blackberry, black grape and black raspberry fruits accented with spice. Immature tannins need time to integrate over time. The finish is packed with fruit but uplifted with a cut of citrus.* **89-90.**

2013 Harper Voit Antiquum Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 100 cases, \$65. Pommard, 777 and Wädenswil planted in Bellpine soil at high elevation. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Upon opening, the nose showed scents of berries, thatch, wax and medicinal but the following day was much more fruit-driven. Delicious mid weight cherry and dark red berry core with a hint of spice, red hots and gingerbread. This wine stands out as unique and possesses an especially appealing round mouthfeel and a long finish of immense interest. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with layers of luscious plum, black cherry and dark berry fruits that woke up the palate.* **91-92.**



2013 Hyland Estates Wädenswil Hyland Vineyards McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., pH 3.67, 50 cases, \$60. Harvest Brix 24.3°. Aged 8 to 10 months in 18% new French oak barrels. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Complex nose featuring aromas of cherry, strawberry, spice, earth and vanilla malt. This wine picks up interest and intensity over time in the glass, offering a mid weight chewy core of sweet cherry fruit framed by soft tannins and a touch of oak.* **90.**

2013 Hyland Estates Pommard Hyland Vineyards McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., pH 3.76, 50 cases, \$60. Harvest Brix 24°. Aged 9 months in neutral French oak barrels. A 2 barrel selection of vines planted in 1987. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. The perfume of fresh cherries, red raspberries, rose petal and sandalwood is enchanting. Eye-opening attack of Bing cherry fruit with a touch of cola that carries over on a long, juicy finish. Very suave tannins make for easy drinking. I am not usually a fan of single clone Pinot Noir, but Pommard is the best clone at pulling it off. Pommard is my paramour.* **92.**

2013 Hyland Estates Dijon 115 Hyland Vineyards McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.67, 45 cases, \$60. Harvest Brix 22°-23°. Aged 9 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Enjoyable fragrance of cherry, sous-bois and seasoned oak. Very elegant, with lovely red cherry and berry fruits accented with spice, and backed by firm tannins. My only nit is that a touch of heat shows up on the finish.* **90.**

2012 Hyland Estates Estate McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., 740 cases, \$38. Released November 2014. 260-acre vineyard planted in 1971 in Jory soils. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Vibrant aromas of red cherry and cranberry. Elegant and charming on the palate, with a light to mid weight core of cherry fruit, nicely spiced. Easy to drink, with suave tannins and finishing with juicy red cherry and strawberry fruits with a hint of dried herbs in the background.* **90.**



2012 Hyland Estates Coury McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 375 cases, \$60. Released September 2014. A limited barrel selection from self-rooted vines in the oldest blocks of the vineyard planted to the "Coury clone." *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. The nose is both fruity (cherries) and earthy (mushrooms). Delicious layers of black cherry, black raspberry, plum and spice flavors that expand in the mouth and deliver a very long, pleasing finish. Beautifully crafted, with a sleek mouthfeel and endless charm.* **94.**



2012 Hyland Estates Founders' Selection McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 75 cases, \$100. Released November 2014. A one barrel selection with special label and wax closure. *Moderately light crimson color in the glass. Exotic aromas of spice, potpourri and black cherry draw the taster into the glass. Delicious mid weight flavors of perfectly ripened black cherry and black raspberry fruits with added notes of Hoison sauce and spice. Impeccably balanced with suave tannins, a peach fuzz texture, and an hi-tone and vibrant finish of uncommon length. This wine really delivers the essence of fresh fruit and finishes with a serious purpose. A keeper.* **94-95.**



Lenné Estate Steve and Karen Lutz bought a 21-acre site near the town of Yamhill, Oregon, in 2001 and planted 15 acres of densely spaced Pinot Noir on the site beginning in 2001. The clones are Pommard, 114, 115, 777 and 667. The vines are dry farmed. The vineyard is managed and farmed by Steve and the wine is made by Steve at Owen Roe with the help of their crew. Lenné takes its name from Karen's late father Lenny an Englishman and farmer whose spirit lives on at Lenné

2012 Lenné Eleanor's 114 Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 100 cases, \$55. Best barrels from clone 114 block. The wine is named after owner Steve Lutz's mother. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine has a cooked fruit character, something the 114 clone apparently offers in a ripe fruited vintage. Aromas of black cherry, creme de cassis and pomegranate lead to a mid weight palate of succulent black cherry, black currant, and blackberry fruit that tastes slightly burnt. That said, the wine is beautifully crafted with plenty of luscious fruit in this vintage to appeal to fruit hedonists.* **89.**



2012 Lenné cinq élos Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.72, 126 cases, \$72. This wine is offered only in great vintages. The name, cinq élos means "five chosen." A blend of the best barrels in the cellar from 5 separate clones planted in the vineyard (Pommard, 114, 115, 777 and 667). 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, inoculated yeast. Aged 11 months in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Very sexy aromas of purple and black berries, exotic spices and vanilla bean. Mid weight plus in style and texturally superb with a satiny presence that only Pinot Noir can deliver. Delicious flavors of black plum, kirsch and blackberry that seem to come in waves over the palate. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had really come alive with a striking nose offering penetrating scents of very ripe purple berries and spice, layers of dense fruit that saturate the palate,*



and an incredibly long finish. Steve Lutz is very proud of this wine and rightly so. Don't hurry to drink this beauty (a Lolita). **93-95.**

Soléna Estate Jackson Family Wine Estates bought the 35-acre Soléna Estate property and winery in Yamhill-Carlton AVA from Laurent Montalieu and Danielle Andrus Montalieu in 2013. The Montalieus retained their 20-acre Domaine Danielle Laurent Vineyard and the Soléna label and have a new facility that provides cellar storage for Soléna and Grand Cru Estates wines. Soléna wine production is at Northwest Wine Company in Dundee.

2013 Soléna Grand Cuvée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.3% alc., pH 3.55, 4,210 cases, \$28. Sourced from family owned vineyards in Yamhill-Carlton AVA and vinified in small lots. Harvest Brix 21°. Aged 9 months in almost 100% neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of Maraschino cherry, raspberry and spice. Light in weight and both savory and fruity, with flavors of cherry and raspberry and a sweet, vibrant cherry finish that has a bit of astringency and trailing oak.* **88.**

2013 Soléna Guadalupe Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.57, 198 cases, \$40. Vineyard was densely planted to Pommard, Wädenswil and Dijon clones in sedimentary Willakenzie soils in 2006. Harvest Brix 21.7°. Aged 9 months in 38% new French oak barrels. *Light cherry color in the glass. Shy aromas of cherry pie glaze and cedary oak. Light to mid weight flavors of cherries and strawberries. The silky texture is appealing, but the tannins currently dominate the fruit. This wine needs more time in the cellar for the tannins to soften and the fruit to fully emerge.* **89.**

2013 Soléna Willakia Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.6% alc., pH 3.72, 199 cases, \$40. Vines planted in volcanic soils in 2001. Harvest Brix 24°-26°. Aged 9 months in 50% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The brilliant cherry goodness really stands out on the nose and palate, with a dancing attack and extended finish. Very silky in the mouth, with husky tannins that show up on the finish. Oak tends to exert its presence over time in the glass. Still, the fruit is hard to ignore.* **91.**

2013 Soléna Zena Crown Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., \$40. Nekia volcanic soils. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose takes some time to unravel, eventually offering an appealing mix of Bing cherry and ripe strawberry fruit aromas with savory mushroom and woody flora scents. A spirited wine with generous black cherry and cranberry fruit accented with spice. Welcome finesse with excellent balance and inviting vibrancy, finishing with some persistence.* **92.**



2013 Soléna Domaine Danielle Laurent Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., pH 3.60, 995 cases, \$50. Harvest Brix 21°-22°. An 80-acre estate vineyard planted in Willakenzie soil. Densely planted 80-acre vineyard planted to 114, 11, 667, 777, "828," Pommard and Swan selection. The wine includes some Willakia Vineyard grapes. Aged 9 months in 40% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy aromas of dark red cherry and berry with a bit of spice and sous-bois. Very reserved on the palate, with tannin and oak overshadowing the earthy fruit core, and offering little goodness on the finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine was still closed. Very hard to score and I am banking on the future.* **89-90.**

Willamette Valley Vineyards This winery was established in 1983 by winegrower and Oregon native, Jim Bernau. The winery has collaboratively grown its estate vineyards through partnerships with the merger with Bill Fuller of Tualatin Vineyards and the O'Briens of Elton Vineyard. This was the first "crowd funded" winery in the nation and has since grown to 5,000 shareholders.

2012 Willamette Valley Vineyards Whole Cluster Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., \$22. Produced from fermented uncrushed grape clusters (carbonic maceration) and aged in stainless steel. Harvest Brix

21.3°-25.6. Clones 114, 115, 667, 777, Pommard and Wädenswil planted in Jory, Laurelwood and Missoula Flood sediment. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of black cherry, spice, dark rose petal and oak. Light, slightly conflicted flavors of cherry and raspberry, with a floral note. Forward drinking, with supple tannins. Good depth and ripeness with some finish. Chill this wine slightly for pleasurable summer drinking.* **88.**

2012 Willamette Valley Vineyards Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 15,400 cases, \$30. Sourced from three estate vineyards (Estate original winery plantings, Tualatin Vineyard, and Elton Vineyard) planted in iron-rich volcanic soils. Certified sustainable-LIVE and Salmon Safe. Harvest Brix 21°-24.5°. Clones 113, 114, 667, 777, Pommard and Wädenswil. Aged 10 months in 10% new French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of cherry pie glaze, seasoned oak and mulch. Light in weight, with somewhat shallow cherry and red berry flavors framed by modest dry tannins. Lacks initiative on the attack and finish.* **87.**

2012 Willamette Valley Vineyards Bernau Block Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 2,000 cases, \$55. Harvest Brix 23.0°-24.5°. Sourced from 15 acres of original plantings. Clones 667, 777 and Pommard planted in Nekia volcanic soil. Aged 10 months in 35% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasant aromas of fresh cherries and dark red berries. Vibrant on the palate, with sheer beauty of flavor, featuring perfectly ripened dark red fruits backed by integrated tannins. This special wine has a seductively smooth texture, impeccable balance, and finishes with uncommon length that resonates for a minute.* **93.**



Sips of White Wines Tasted Recently

2013 Balletto Russian River Valley Chardonnay 13.6% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.55, 1,273 cases, \$28. Estate grown and bottled. 65% Occidental Road, 18% Saxton Hill, and 17% Cider Ridge vineyards. Goldridge soils. Harvest Brix 21.7°-23.3°. 70% clone 17 (Robert Young Selection) and 30% Old Wente clone. Barrel fermented with lees stirring, 100% malolactic fermentation. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of green apple, lime, lemon and buttery oak. Apple-driven flavors on the palate have good richness and are complimented by oak. The wine is pleasant, but lacks a little vibrancy and finishes a bit shallow.* **88.**



2013 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., \$25, screwcap. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Plenty of nuance to discover in this delightful wine that sports aromas of lemon curd, lemongrass, apple, and nutty oak. A crisp and vibrant style, with flavors of citrus, pear, white peach and kiwi, accented with the right amount of toasty brioche. Very sleek in the mouth with bracing acidity on the refreshing finish. A great value.* **91.**



2013 Dolin Malibu Estate Vineyard Malibu Coast

Chardonnay 14.4% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.51, 136 cases, \$39. First wine with Malibu Coast AVA designation. 900 vines are planted in volcanic soils in proximity to the Pacific Ocean. Barrel fermented and aged 13 months *sur lie* in 25% new French oak barrels. 100% malolactic fermentation. *Moderately light yellow color in the glass. The nose is clean and airy, with scents of lemon zest, crushed shells, and a hint of buttery oak.*

Very charming on the palate with bright flavors of white peach, citrus fruits and the slightest oak compliment. Very refined, with impeccable balance, and a pleasing cut of acidity creating a steely finish. I rarely use the word seductive for Chardonnay, but this wine brings that to mind. A great lobster wine. **94.**



Dutton Estate Winery Dutton Ranch farms over 80 unique separate vineyards located in the coolest areas of the Russian River Valley, primarily in the appellation known as Green Valley.



2014 Dutton Estate Kylie's Cuvée Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Sauvignon Blanc 13.9% alc., pH 3.25%, TA 0.68, 321 cases, \$23. Named for second-born daughter. Sourced from Dutton Ranch's "Shop Block" in Green Valley. Whole cluster pressed, slowly fermented in stainless steel and aged 3-4 months in neutral French oak barrels. No malolactic fermentation. Fined and filtered. *Very light platinum yellow color in the glass. Very nicely appointed nose with fragrant aromas of white peach, grapefruit and grilled pineapple. The flavors echo the aromas with a touch of lemon-lime and subtle grassiness typical of this varietal. Nicely composed with refreshing acidity that leads to a high pitched finish.* **91.**

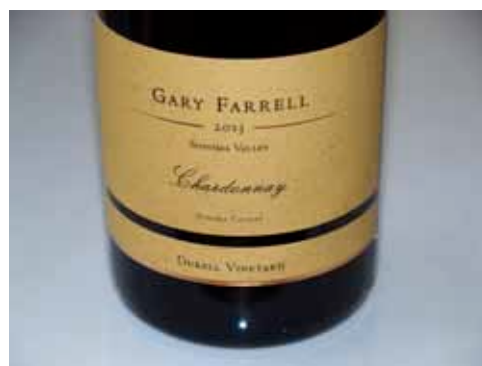
2013 Dutton Estate Kyndell's Reserve-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.6% alc., pH 3.43, TA 0.62, 993 cases, 1,150 cases, \$39. Sourced from Vine Hill Ridge Vineyard. Whole cluster pressed, 100% malolactic fermentation, aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light yellow color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of lemon, apple and lychee lead to a creamy palate of apple, citrus, honey and blonde caramel flavors with a hint of slate in the background. A restrained, but very enjoyable style that exhibits exemplary balance.* **90.**

2013 Dutton Estate Dutton Palms Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Chardonnay 14.4% alc., pH 3.41, TA 0.63, 121 cases, 150 cases, \$43. Vineyard is located in the coolest part of the Green Valley of Russian River Valley, and was planted from the Chardonnay clone (Dutton clone) Warren Dutton used in 1967 to plant the original "Shop Block" Chardonnay Vineyard at Dutton Ranch. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented, 100% natural malolactic fermentation, aged 10 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light golden straw color in the glass. The nose leads with aromas of apple, lemon marmalade and banana. Juicy and crisp in the mouth, with flavors of ripe peach, lemon curd and subtle oak highlights. Very charming, with some finishing intensity and admirable balance.* **92.**



2013 Gary Farrell Russian River Valley Selection Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., pH 3.35, TA .68, 5,861 cases, \$35. Released May 2015. Sourced from seven premium vineyards. Harvest Brix 22°-23°. Whole cluster pressed, inoculated with Montrachet yeast, fermented and aged in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new, for 8 months. *Light platinum yellow color in the glass. Aromas of citrus, pear and warm brioche lead to lush flavors of lemon, tropical citrus, dark caramel and crème brûlée. Slightly creamy on the palate with noticeable oak infusion, finishing crisp in the Gary Farrell style.* **89.**

2013 Gary Farrell Durrell Vineyard Sonoma Valley Chardonnay 13.8% alc., pH 3.35, TA 0.68, 5,881 cases, \$55. Released May 2015. A blend from seven vineyards. Harvest Brix 22°-23°. Whole cluster pressed, inoculated with Montrachet yeast. Aged *sur lie* 8 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Very enticing aromas of lemon oil, pineapple, tropical fruits and a hint of new oak. Soft and smooth on the palate, yet enough vibrant acidity to bring the citrus, apple and pear fruits to life. Good richness and viscosity, with admirable integration of oak, and an uplifting finish fueled by bracing acidity.* **92.**



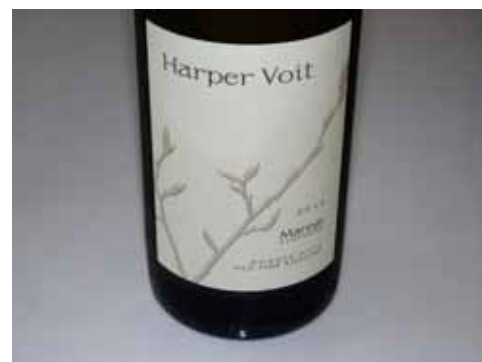
2013 Gary Farrell Russian River Valley Selection Russian River Valley Sauvignon Blanc 13.2% alc., pH 3.11, TA 0.64, 205 cases, \$28. Release June 2015. Sourced from Ritchie Vineyard vines planted in 1972 to clone 1. Harvest Brix 22.0°. 80% fermented and aged in stainless steel and 20% fermented and aged in neutral French oak barrels. The final blend was aged 3 months on primary lees. *Light platinum color in the glass. Lovely and complex on the nose with aromas of pear, lemon, grilled pineapple, canned peach and apricot. Delicious on the palate with good grip, featuring flavors of pear and white stone fruits. A terrific wine that drinks effortlessly and finishes with silken acidity.*

Sauvignon Blanc is one of the most underrated and underpriced wines now produced in California. Check it out! **92.**



2014 Harper Voit Maresh Vineyard Dundee Hills Old Vine Riesling 12.7% alc., RS 13g/L, 85 cases, \$30. Vines planted in 1970. *Very light golden yellow color in the glass. Complex and assertive nose featuring aromas of poached pear, grilled peach, marzipan, citrus, brioche and vanilla. A lovely wine that charms with its liveliness and freshness, featuring flavors of pear, peach, persimmon and even*

tropical fruits. More fruity than mineral driven and not the apparent acidity that expect from this varietal, but I love this peachy rendition. I don't think I have ever experienced such an intense and amazingly long finish in a domestic Riesling. A very unique and special old vine treasure. **94.**





2014 Harper Voit Surlie Willamette Valley Pinot Blanc 13.6% alc., 400 cases, \$20. Sourced from Meredith Mitchell and Yamhill vineyards. Barrel fermented and aged on the lees. *Very light yellow color with a greenish tinge in the glass. Reserved, but fresh aromas of white peach and pear. A demure wine on the palate, but quite seductive, with flavors of pear and peach and perfectly supportive oak. Lees aging adds a very subtle yeasty component. Soft and slightly viscous in the mouth with a juicy finish. One of Oregon's best examples of this varietal.* **90.**

MacRostie Winery & Vineyards Steve MacRostie has been making highly praised Chardonnays since 1974 when he became the inaugural winemaker for Sonoma County's Hacienda Winery. Today he works in partnership with winemaker Heidi Bridenhagen.



2013 MacRostie Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.5% alc., 32,000 cases, \$25, screwcap. A blend of grapes from multiple vineyards in the Sonoma Coast appellation. Full malolactic fermentation. 85% of the wine was aged in French oak barrels (20% new) for 6 months on the lees with occasional stirring, and 15% of the wine was aged in stainless steel. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Lovely aromas of ripe peach, Asian pear and lemon wafer. Bright, crisp and clean flavors of lemon-lime with a lasting finish driven by citrus tang. Beautifully crafted with just a hint of oak adding interest.* **90.**



2013 MacRostie Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., 521 cases, \$32, screwcap. More than 70% of the grapes come from Matthew's Station Vineyard planted by the Knude family and farmed today by the Dutton family. Robert Young clone. Some grapes from Mirabel and Wohler vineyards are mixed in. Harvest Brix 23.2°-24.5°. Whole cluster pressed, 85% malolactic fermentation. Aged 9 months on the lees in 100% French oak barrels, 18% new. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Inviting aromas of lemon oil, lemongrass and buttered brioche. Good fullness of citrus and pear flavor, yet vibrant, with a crisp and refreshing finish. A style that really satisfies.* **90.**

2013 MacRostie Sangiacomo Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay 14.6% alc., 291 cases, \$44, screwcap. Vineyard is located in southern Sonoma Valley and planted on silty clay loam soils. Steve has worked with grapes from this vineyard since his first vintage at MacRostie in 1987. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Whole cluster pressed. Barrel fermented in about 17% new French oak barrels and aged on the lees for 10 months. 100% malolactic fermentation. *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of grilled lemon, brioche and caramel lead to a deliciously rich core of fresh citrus fruits including lemon and grapefruit. Very round with sound acidity, and inviting extract on the finish which has the slightest bit of warmth.* **91.**



2013 Patz & Hall Hudson Vineyard Napa Carneros Chardonnay 14.2% alc., 375 cases, \$55. Released March 2015. Vineyard established by grower and horticulturist Lee Hudson in the 1980s. Sourced since 2005 from the same block that Hudson uses for own Chardonnay. Hudson-Wente selection (isolated by Lee Hudson). Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast fermentation, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new, *sur lie*, with weekly stirring. 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel. Unfiltered. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. The nose is flat-out gorgeous, featuring hi-tone aromas of fresh lemon, pear and buttery brioche. Apple, citrus, pear and honey flavors arrive with aplomb leaving behind a vibrant citrus note on the bright and engaging finish. This is serious, classy juice that is refined, seamless, and nearly perfect in every way.* **WOW! 96.**



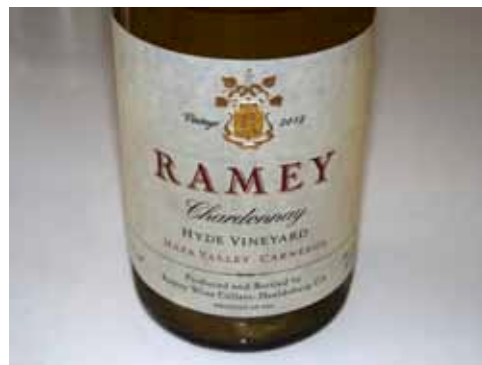
2013 Patz & Hall Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc., \$44. Released November 2014. This wine is made from some of the oldest Chardonnay plantings in western Sonoma County (first planted in 1969). A blend of California heritage clones and selections: Robert Young, Rued, Hyde-Wente, UCD 4 and Spring Mountain. Mostly dry-farmed. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast fermentation, aged in 100% French oak barrels, 38% new, *sur lie*, with weekly stirring. 100% malolactic fermentation in barrel. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Very inviting aromas of yellow peach, almond spread and lemon curd.*

Appealing richness and softness on the palate with lip-smacking flavors of yellow peach, lemon pie, and honey. Affable harmony, with good length on a finish that features a refreshing lemony, saline note. 93.



2012 Ramey Hyde Vineyard Napa Carneros Chardonnay

14.5% alc., 1,212 cases, \$65. Released February 2015. Primarily Old Wente with some Robert Young field selections planted in 1991 and 1997. Harvest Brix 22.9° average. Whole cluster pressed, native yeast fermentation, full native malolactic fermentation in barrel with *sur lies batonnage*. Aged 18 months in 1/3 new Francois Frères French oak barrels. Fined and bottled unfiltered. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. A superb wine with bright aromas of lemon, grilled peach, brioche, and steely resolve. Intensely flavored, yet crisp and lively on the palate, with tastes of lemon, pineapple, peach, vanilla, caramel and spice. Beautifully composed and balanced, and a delight to drink. Hyde fruit is pretty much a guarantee of stunning Chardonnay. 94.*



2013 Rexford Antle Vineyard Chalone Pinot Blanc 13.7% alc., 119 cases, \$28, screwcap. Rocky soils laden with limestone. This 25-acre vineyard was planted in 1989 by legendary winegrower Dick Graff and is farmed organically today. It is one of the few places in California where authentic Pinot Blanc is grown. Harvest Brix 22.5°. Crushed and destemmed, then pressed immediately. Barrel fermented on the lees in 100% French oak barrels, 20% new. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of pear, peach, pineapple and honey. Soft and smooth in the mouth, with impressive intensity of flavor, including tastes of lemon, peach, yellow apple and cake spice. A thoroughly enjoyable wine, with impeccable balance, and unusual expression for Pinot Blanc. This wine brings back memories of the Pinot Blancs I treasured from Chalone many years ago. I don't think there is an equal to this special varietal bottling currently produced in California. 93.*



2013 Sojourn Campbell Ranch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.58, 175 cases, \$45. Young and old vines planted to Old Wente clone. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented with native yeasts, 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged in 20% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfined. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. The charming nose is alive with scents of lemon cake, brioche and dried mango. Seamless on the palate, with inviting richness of lemon, grapefruit and white peach flavors that lead to a lively, crisp finish that begs another sip. Best Chardonnay yet from Sojourn. 92.*

Sonoma Collection California is divided into 17 different grape growing districts. The Sonoma Collection highlights wines of District 3. The owners are Ned Hill, the owner of La Prenda Vineyards Management in Sonoma County and Matt Stornetta who is his operations manager. La Prenda manages 900 acres of land in Sonoma County. In 2013, Ned and Matt released their own wines from vineyards they manage. The bargain priced wines are called District 3. The consulting winemaker is Alex Beloz, previously at MacRostie Winery. Visit www.sonomawinegrowers.com.



2013 Sonoma Collection Sonoma County District 3 Growers Reserve Sonoma County Chardonnay 13.7% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.65, \$18.99, screwcap. An un-oaked Chardonnay produced from grapes picked at lower Brix.

Whole cluster pressed, fermented cold in stainless steel. Aged on lees with no malolactic fermentation. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of lemon wafer, pear and ocean air. Crisp, clean and very likable, with flavors of lemon-lime, pear, green apple, and a hint of tropical fruits typical of Malvasia Bianca. Classically styled and nicely balanced, this wine is enjoyable on its own but will make a rewarding food companion. A terrific value. 91.*



Talbott Vineyards Winemaker Dan Karlsen works with one of California's iconic Chardonnay vineyards: Sleepy Hollow Vineyard, located in the Santa Lucia Highlands. In the past 7 years, 40% of the vineyard has been replanted with closer spacing, a switch to vertical shoot positioning, and the establishment of clonal material that works best on this site. All grapes are kept in-house. The different bottlings are defined by vine age, clone, block and other vineyard-driven factors. Other than small adjustments in aging time and amount of new oak, the wines are vinified in the same fashion so what you taste is what the vineyard provided.

2013 Talbott Kali Hart Monterey Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.56, \$20, screwcap. Released December 1, 2014. 15% racked to French oak barrels (5% new) and aged 9 months *sur lie*. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Shy aromas of lemon, grapefruit, and lemongrass. A refined offering that is quite refreshing, with bright citrus flavors that bring a tang to the finish. Rather demure on the attack and finish, but easy going. 88.*

2013 Talbott Sleepy Hollow Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay 14.7% alc., pH 3.32, TA 0.68, \$42, screwcap. Released April 1, 2015. Estate grown in sand and gravelly soils with marine influences. The wine was made almost entirely from Old Wente clone grapes planted in 1972 from the prized South Block. Aged 10 months *sur lie* in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light golden straw color in the glass. Reserved, but pleasing aromas of apple, grilled peach, and lemon cream pie. Very enticing on the palate with a somewhat creamy texture, and layers of flavor including yellow apple, peach, honey, and nutty toffee. Nicely balanced with a welcome mantle of subtle oak. The texture of this wine is very flattering. 92.*



2013 Three Sticks Origin Durell Vineyard Sonoma Valley Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.66, 409 cases, \$48. 28-day fermentation in concrete egg. Malolactic fermentation prohibited. Aged in stainless steel barrels for 12 months. *Moderate golden yellow color with a hint of copper in the glass. Complex array of scents including grilled lemon and pineapple, pear and honey. Bright flavors of grilled citrus, melon and pear in a rich, ripe, and intensely fruity style that is not bashful. A good cut of acidity on the finish counters the fruit load. Some will embrace the exuberance but I find it somewhat flaunting. 88.*

2013 Three Sticks One Sky Sonoma Mountain Chardonnay 14.8% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.64, 274 cases, \$50. Old Wente selection. 23-day fermentation in French oak barrels. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged 15 months *sur lie* with *batonnage* in 100% French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderately dark golden straw color in the glass. Clean aromas of citrus, pear and white peach with an earthy note. Rich and ripe-fruited, with flavors of lemon, burnt toffee, banana, caramel and honey. Somewhat intriguing but atypical, with an intensely fruity finish that lacks a little verve along with a bit too much oak at play for my taste. That said, there are fans of this style of Chardonnay. 88.*

2012 Wedell Cellars Sierra Madre Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.29, TA 0.68, 90 cases, \$50. Harvest Brix 24.6°. Whole cluster pressed and barrel fermented. 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged *sur lie* with *batonnage* in 100% French oak barrels, 25% new. Unfined and unfiltered. Bottle aged 10 months before release. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lychee, starfruit, grilled peach and brioche. Soft and creamy on the palate, with ripe flavors of white peach, lemon curd, caramel and crème*

brûlée, along with a touch of toffee and toast. A somewhat rich, lush and fruity style with oak complements and soft acidity, but showing off impressive polish and some lemon-infused finishing interest. Tasted twice (one bottle was mildly oxidized: score based on best bottle). 91.

2012 Wedell Cellars Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.42, TA 0.74, 90 cases, \$70. Unnamed vineyard. Whole cluster pressed, indigenous yeast barrel fermentation, 100% malolactic fermentation. Aged *sur lie* for 20 months, with *batonnage* twice monthly during the first 12 months. Unfined and unfiltered. *Deep yellow color with a tinge of orange in the glass. Aromas of cooked fruit, lemon oil, cream and roasted nuts. Moderately rich, with a core of melon, ripe peach, lemon, blood orange and honey flavors, finishing on a soprano note with lemon-driven acidity. The wine has a very ripe, slightly roasted tone. Tasted twice (one bottle was oxidized: score based on best bottle). 86.*



2014 Willamette Valley Vineyards Willamette Valley Pinot Gris 13.9% alc., \$16. Colmar clone planted in Jory and Missoula Flood soils. Harvest Brix 22.6°-24.7°. Cluster-thinned vines, whole cluster pressed, fermented cold in stainless steel on the primary lees with stirring twice a month. *Pale pink color in the glass. Aromas of cut apple, peach and yeast lead to a moderately rich palate of apple and pineapple fruits. Slightly creamy, with good balance, and some finishing fruit. A solid food wine. 89.*

Update on Happenings at Soliste

Soliste was my Winery of the Year in 2013 and those of you on the mailing list know how special these wines are. Co-proprietor and winemaker Claude Koberle is fanatical about quality. He knows that Pinot Noir requires total commitment. As he says, "You can't cheat with Pinot Noir." He feels that you met with great Pinot Noir when the wine is just getting better as you drain the bottle, and want a second bottle. Claude's ultimate goal is to hold back his Pinot Noirs 3 to 4 years before release, acknowledging that the wines are not great until they have spent that time in bottle.

Claude's latest project (hush-hush) is with Aubert de Villaine of Domaine de la Romanee Conti. They have grafted some cuttings from La Tache on to two rows of Swan selection rooted vines at Van der Kamp Vineyard on Sonoma Mountain which Claude reveres and considers a spiritual vineyard. Claude is also heavily involved in the restaurant industry, and recently opened a second restaurant in San Francisco named Octavia which is in the former Quince and Baker & Bankerspace. Chef Melissa Perello, who is heads the kitchen at Claude's other San Francisco restaurant, Frances, serves market-driven food that changes daily. Octavia is 2 miles north of Frances.

I recently dined with Claude at the Cannery Restaurant in Newport Beach where he poured his latest releases. My notes are brief as I enjoyed Claude's banter, but the quality of the wines was unquestionable.

The **2012 Soliste Sonoma Coast Solitaire** (13.5%, 39 cases, \$100) is a single barrel wine vinified in a large 600 liter barrel from a specific forest and tonnelle, inspired by the vinification method used by Francois Bertheau in Chambolle Musigny. The wine has 50% whole cluster and is a single vineyard, single clone and single barrel Pinot Noir (MonoClone®) that undergoes extended barrel aging (28 months). Only 39 cases of 750 ml bottles and 144 magnums. This is truly a Grand Cru quality wine. The nose is exotic with profuse scents of red stone fruit, herbs, pepper, and sous-bois. Wonderful balance, with perfect integration of oak, and a silky palate of juicy fruit. Expect perfection in another 2 to 3 years.



The **2012 Soliste St. Andelain Lake County Sauvignon Blanc** (12.9% alc., 212 cases, \$55) is a special wine. 100% whole cluster, fermented in cigar-shaped barrel made famous by Didier Dagueneau and aged for 16 months. A stunning wine that offers aromas of grassy meadow and lime zest with a brilliant fruit core that lights up the palate with citrus, spice and nutty notes.

The **2014 Soliste Sonoma Coast Soleil Rouge Rosé de Pinot Noir** (12.5%, \$22) is the best rosé yet from Soliste. Lovely aromas and flavors of strawberry, grilled peach, melon and brown sugar. Less nervy, with better acid integration in this vintage.

The **2012 Soliste L'Age D'Or Russian River Chardonnay** (12.1%, \$50). To be released November 2015. Made from the Rued clone of Chardonnay grown at Lynmar. Aged on the primary lees for 16 months. Still tight, but opens over time in the glass to reveal a sleek, round and citrus-infused wine that holds tremendous promise.

2011 Soliste L'Ambroise Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (12.8% alc., 25 cases). "828" Arcus estate clone. This is a celestial wine with aromas of forest floor and raw beef, and a silky palate of bright cherry fruit with good backing tannins.

1970 Van der Kamp Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir (clean skin). A bottle vinified by 85-year-old vineyard owner, Martin Ulysses, and gifted to Claude. Re-corked in 1980. Brownish red in color with a light yellow rim. Unbelievable enjoyment from a very silky wine with flavors of black cherry, pomegranate, fig and fruit leather.



Soliste wines are sold by allocation to a mailing list. Visit the website at www.soliste.com.

Pinot Briefs

West of West Wine Festival (WOW) This annual event is held July 31-August 2, 2015, in Sebastopol. Events include a West County Whole Hog Celebration Friday, July 31, Seminars and Lunch on Saturday, August 1, followed by a Grand Tasting of wines from the West Sonoma Coast provided by 40 winemakers and growers, followed by the Grand Dinner. Sunday, August 2, features a vineyard tour among the towering redwoods along Sonoma Coast's renowned Taylor Lane, followed by a repeat of the Grand Tasting. All Access Passes are \$595 per person, available at www.westsonomacoast.com. As an added event, Ted Lemon of Littorai will be hosting a wine dinner at Valette in Healdsburg on July 30, with farm-fresh ingredients paired with the 2013 Thieriot Vineyard Chardonnay and five 2012 Littorai Pinot Noirs (\$150 per person, all inclusive; tickets at www.eventbrite.com).

Bounty of Yamhill County A full weekend, Friday, August 28 to Sunday, August 30, 2015, to savor the flavor of Oregon wine country. This event was voted Best General Food Festival by USA Today. Welcome dinners with Owen Roe, Matzinger-Davies and Domino IV. Artisan farms tours and classes. Winery dinners at Adelsheim Vineyard, WillaKenzie Estate and Earth Winery. Grand Finale at Sokol Blosser Winery with the vintners, chefs and farmers of Yamhill County. For a complete description of all events and to buy tickets, visit www.bountyofyamhillcounty.com.

Counter Culture: A Celebration of Urban Street Food & International Wine On the evening of July 23, 2015, Anne Amie Vineyards is hosting Counter Culture, a yearly event that precedes the International Pinot Noir Celebration. Food by Bollywood theater, Country Cat, DOC, Ember & Vine, Kuza Burger, Laurelhurst Market, Lovely's Fifty-Fifty, Noraneka, Olympia Provisions, Party Downtown, Pok Pok, Per Que No, Smallwears, and Tastebud. Wine by Brooks Winery, Anne Amie Vineyards, Anthony Road Wine Company (New York), Apollini Vineyards, Authentique, SQ Wines, FEL Wines, Graham Beck Wines (South Africa), Gran Moraine, Hamilton-Russell Vineyards (South Africa), Langdon-Shiverick (France), Lincourt Vineyards, Sokol Blosser Winery, Precedent Wine, and Te Kairanga (New Zealand). Details and tickets at www.anneamie.com.

Meiomi Sold for \$315 Million Joe Wagner, the son of Chuck Wagner of Caymus fame, sold Meiomi Pinot Noir and Chardonnay labels so he can buy more vineyards and develop other wine brands. The Meiomi brand has gained unprecedented popularity in a short time, becoming one of the top two restaurant Pinot Noirs by the glass in a matter of 7 years. Last year, the brand sold 550,000 cases and is on pace to sell more than 700,000 cases in 2015. Wagner will remain as consulting winemaker for Constellation for two years according to *Shanken News Daily*.

Vendange Carmel Inn & Suites Wine-Themed Hotel This hotel has partnered with 14 Monterey County wineries to create a unique guest experience. Each winery sponsors one room or suite, providing its own creative touches. The McIntyre Vineyards room, for example, has a 100-year-old section of a grapevine. Participating wineries that produce Pinot Noir include Cima Collina, Holman Ranch, J. Lohr, Manzoni, McIntyre, Tudor and Ventana. Special new packages are now available through July 30. Visit www.vendengecarmel.com.

Winemaker Film 'Kusuda' This is a 3-minute documentary about notable Japanese winemaker, Hiroyuki 'Hiro' Kusuda, who lives and works in Martingborough, New Zealand. Kusuda follows Hiro during a particularly challenging harvest, when Cyclone Pam threatens the loss of his entire crop. Hiro reflects on the uncontrollable forces of nature, his winemaking process, and the fragility of life itself. The filmmakers continue to film Hiro in hopes of developing a full length feature. View the film at www.loadingdocs.net/kusuda, or by embeddable link at <https://vimeo.com/132291524>.

'Heroic Viticulture' Film Nicolas Sakat has made a documentary while pursuing a bachelor of cinematography at the Beijing Film Academy. The subject is mountain viticulture from Valais, a viticole area in the south of Switzerland. His work has just been uploaded online. The film takes the viewer through the vineyards of Valais. Highly enjoyable! Webpage of the project (in French) is www.sakatland.com/web/?p=558. Full documentary on YouTube with English, French and Chinese subtitles) at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlbtI-gfFng>.

2000 Clos d'Ambonnay Released This expression of a single walled plot of vines, a single grape variety (Pinot Noir) and a single year has been released. Krug Clos d'Ambonnay is made from grapes farmed in a tiny walled .68-hectare plot in the heart of Ambonnay, one of the most distinguished villages in Champagne. This is a powerhouse, very expensive Champagne only released in special years (1996, 1998 and 2000).

Joseph Jewell Wines Opens Tasting Room Winemakers Micah Joseph Wirth and Adrian Jewell Manspeaker announced the recent grand opening of the Joseph Jewell Wines Tasting Room in Forestville. Vineyard and winery tours are planned for the future. For more information, visit www.josephjewell.com.

Youngberg Hill Winery & Inn Celebrating 25 Years Youngberg Hill is celebrating 25 years of history with a dinner prepared by an internationally acclaimed chef from Burgundy, Katherine Frelon. The dinner will feature local, seasonal ingredients paired with a library of Youngberg Hill wines. The date is Wednesday, July 22 at Youngberg Hill (2 days before the start of IPNC). 50 seats are available at \$125 per person including gratuity. For reservations, visit wine@youngberghill.com.

Coquard Wine Presses at Laetitia Winery and Vineyard The two wooden, 30-year-old, Coquard wine presses are the only such presses in North America, dating back to the winery's origins as Maison Deutz, a California estate established by France's Champagne Deutz. In the late 1990s, Laetitia experimented with modern membrane presses, but found the juice coming from the Coquard presses was cleaner and more gently pressed, minimizing residual harshness from stems, skins and seeds. Despite the labor-intensive nature of the Coquard presses, the winery decided that all sparkling wine would be pressed only in the Coquards. In fact, the winery got permission from the Coquard Company to make a signature estate sparkling wine called Laetitia Brut Coquard. The 2010 vintage is currently available.