



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*Pinot Noir is an
Intellectual
Pleasure*

2015 Pinot Noir All-Americans

The wines that most capture my imagination seem imbued with a kind of meaning that no other beverage can match, their tastes conjuring cultural values that often tap into deep emotions.

Elin McCoy, *The World of Fine Wine* 47:2015

At the end of each year, I name my favorite Pinot Noirs for the year. It is the American way to name the best, but there were so many exceptional Pinot Noirs reviewed in California and Oregon, the task was extremely challenging. Because of the excellence of the 2012 vintage in California and Oregon, there was an unprecedented number of wines scored 92 and above.

Picking the best in any lineup of wines is going to be controversial, so this issue always provokes a response from readers. Remember that some of your favorite wines or producers may not be included since tasting every American Pinot Noir release in any one year is a Herculean task. There are well over 2,500 producers of Pinot Noir in California and Oregon, and almost every producer releases multiple bottles of Pinot Noir, meaning there could easily be 10,000 American Pinot Noirs released into the marketplace each year. For the Pinot Noir wines that were left out of the All-American awards this year, the words of Mark Twain ring true. "It's better to deserve honors and not have them, then to have them and not deserve them."

In choosing the All-American Pinot Noirs, I follow several dictums.

- 1) I take my responsibility seriously and follow a number of regimented steps to arrive at the wines that I consider truly extraordinary and deserving of the title, "All-American." All wines under consideration are tasted in private at my home in a quiet setting in the late morning, and often the same bottle is rechecked again later in the day or the following day. Extended evaluation of the wine gives me special insight into quality, balance and age ability of wines. The wines are tasted at about 63°F and are sampled in Burgundy stems. I usually taste 8 to 12 wines a day to give each wine the appropriate attention it deserves. Occasionally I will decant a wine if the winemaker recommends it or I think aeration will benefit the evaluation.
- 2) I do not taste wines blind, but strive for integrity, consistency and objectivity. I frequently have tech notes on each wine available, and that assists me further in understanding the winemaking and the wine. As the Hosemaster of Wine™ says, "Actually reviewing wines blind is honorable work, though far too humbling to pursue for a living."
- 3) I focus on current drinkability, since most consumers prefer to drink their American Pinot Noir relatively young.
- 4) I score all wines using the 100-point scoring system, but my emphasis remains on concise, unpretentious, and understandable tasting descriptions intended to reveal the style and quality of the wine, and in turn, guide the consumer toward Pinot Noir that they might enjoy.
- 5) My score guidelines are as follows: 94-99-Extraordinary; 90-93-Outstanding; 86-89-Very Good. I do not publish reviews of wines that score less than 80 since I cannot recommend them. I use the Pinot Noir Geek icon for Pinot Noir signifying wines rated as extraordinary. The Pinot Noir Value icon designates wines that offer an exceptional price/quality ration. Generally, this is a wine priced at or below \$36 that is also in the Very Good or above category.
- 6) I also review Chardonnay and my procedures are the same. Occasionally I will review sparkling wines, and rarely other varietals.

- 7) I wrestle with stylistic differences among Pinot Noir wines. I make a concentrated effort to separate my personal Pinot Noir stylistic preferences from the objective assessment of the wines. In other words, I try to reward wines for their excellence regardless of style. It comes down to distinguishing between appreciating and liking. As wine writer Jake Lorenzo has noted, "If the style is not one of my favorites, I hope I have the experience and generosity to appreciate what the winemaker set out to do."
- 8) Pinot Noir is a chameleon of wine making critical and precise evaluation very challenging. Pinot Noir can vary from bottle to bottle, day to day, and week to week. Bottle variation is troublesome, but fortunately I often have two bottles available, and I only report a review of the better bottle.
- 9) The 2015 All-Americans were judged on merit, independent of price, case production, vintage and region of origin. Most wines tasted in 2015 were from the 2012 and 2013 vintages. It is somewhat unfair to compare wines from disparate vintages, but the evaluation of each wine is taken on its own merit in the context of the vintage.
- 10) I have no monetary arrangement with any winegrower or winery and I do not accept advertising on my website. I do not receive or demand compensation from wineries to review their wine or publish their reviews or label images.
- 11) The reviewed wines are culled primarily from winery submissions with some coming from my personal cellar of purchased wines.
- 12) Only finished bottled wines formally reviewed in controlled, and therefore comparable circumstances, are candidates for All-American consideration. I sample many wines casually at home, at wineries, at social dinners, at walk-around tastings at wine festivals, at competitive wine judging events, at organized wine tastings, and at winery-hosted dinners, but I do not include these wines in the All-American selection process.
- 13) I review more California Pinot Noir than Oregon Pinot Noir. This is because I am based in California, I travel more often to California wine regions, there are significantly more producers of Pinot Noir in California compared to Oregon, and more samples are submitted to me for review from California. This in no way is a reflection of comparative quality or my personal preference between Pinot Noir from the two states.
- 14) Some expensive "cult" Pinot Noirs are not reviewed because they can only be tasted at wineries and are too costly to purchase and subject them to the rigorous tasting procedure I follow at home for all submitted wines.
- 15) Some wineries submitted wines for consideration and are deserving of multiple major All-American awards, but are only allowed a single first or second team award. Considering that some wineries only produce one or two Pinot Noirs, while others release multiple wines, it seems only equitable to limit an All-American first or second team award to one wine per winery.
- 16) As in American college teams, there are eleven offensive Pinot Noir All-Americans on a team plus a kicker for a total of twelve so each team of All-American Pinot Noirs has 12 members.
- 17) Some wines may still be available from the winery, retailers, or the secondary marketplace. If you cannot obtain a certain coveted All-American wine, remember that there will always be another vintage. Try to focus more on the producer than on any one wine as the best producers consistently craft quality wine across their lineup in each vintage. An alternative wine may not be the same song, but it will have the same composer.
- 18) I recognized wineries whose wines I met for the first time in 2015 and show special promise. I call this "Wineries Met With for First Time in 2015." These wineries are singled out later in a special section of this issue.

Average price for 2015 California First Team Pinot Noir All-Americans: \$70 (\$55-\$120)

Average price for 2015 Oregon First Team Pinot Noir All-Americans: \$70 (\$45-\$100)

Average price for 2015 California and Oregon First Team Chardonnay All-Americans: \$62 (\$30-\$115)

Average price for 2015 California Value-Priced First Team Pinot Noir All-Americans: \$33 (\$25-\$38)

Average price for 2015 Oregon Value-Priced First Team Pinot Noir All-Americans: \$31 (\$25-\$35)

ABV (label) of 2015 California First and Second Team Pinot Noir All-Americans: 12.2%-14.9%

ABV (label) of 2015 Oregon First and Second Team Pinot Noir All-Americans: 12.4%-14.3%

ABV (label) of 2015 California and Oregon First Team Chardonnay All-Americans: 13.1%-14.5%

2015 California Pinot Noir First Team All-Americans

2012 Maggy Hawk Jolie Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

14.9% alc., pH 3.73, TA 0.54, 312 cases, \$66. Dijon clone 115. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 64% new. · Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is subdued upon opening, but blossoms over time in the glass to reveal aromas of dark cherry liquor, spice, and plenty of floral goodness including violets and roses. The nose was even more captivating the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle and was reminiscent of capturing a whiff of seductive perfume on a beautiful woman. The mid weight plus core of dark cherry and raspberry fruit is incredibly flavorful and reveals many nuances over time including spice, conifer, rose hips tea and just the right touch of oak. Elegant and sleek with amazing length, this wine is the whole package. Compared to the 2011 vintage, this wine is a bit more elegant, more fashionable and shows more adroit oak integration. I have tasted this wine on three other occasions and was blown away each time. An exemplar. Score: **98**. Reviewed May 25, 2015. Note: 2012 Maggy Hawk Hawkster Anderson Valley Pinot Noir scored **97**.



2012 Pisoni Pisoni Estate Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir

14.2%, \$75. · Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas leap from the glass including blackberry, cardamom spice and oak vanillin. Juicy and full-bodied, but not jammy, with a gorgeous fruit core of blackberries, boysenberries and plums framed by generous, but balanced tannins. Some earth-based goodness chimes in as well. The fruit clings to every nook and cranny and refuses to go away, displaying a sweet, tenacious finish of uncommon length. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Very approachable now, but has the stuff to last 20 years. I thought I had died and gone to heaven when I tasted this beauty. Score: **98**. Reviewed January 23, 2015.



2012 COBB Diane Cobb: Coastlands Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 225 cases, \$85. A co-fermentation of 18 to 20 different Pinot Noir selections from Diane Cobb's nursery block of dry-farmed, own-rooted vines that are among the oldest in the region. Seventh vintage. 40% whole clusters. Aged 22 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep, penetrating scents of cherry, black raspberry, spice, rose petal and humid bark. Ever-expanding flavors of black cherry, grenadine, black raspberry, and Asian 5-spice that saturate every nook and cranny in the mouth. Impeccable harmony with supportive fine-grain tannins, and a huge, peacock tail finish that is stunning. I was at a loss for more superlatives the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle when the arsenal of aromas and flavors were entirely seductive. Score: 97. Reviewed May 25, 2015.*



2012 LaRue Rice-Spivak Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

12.6% alc., 125 cases, \$70. Clones are 115, 667 and Swan. Less than 5% whole cluster. Aged 17 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Very exotic aromatic profile brimming with alluring scents of black cherry, spice, rose petal and a hint of sweet oak. The nose reminds of one that reflects whole cluster fermentation. This is a special wine of charm and character, offering juicy cherry fruit that dances across the palate. Accents of spice and flower bouquet add interest. The experience is bright and energetic with great harmony and elegance. The wine offers a refreshing cut of acidity on the long finish that seduces with spiced cherry and red berry fruits. Very difficult to refrain from drinking the whole bottle. Score: 97. Reviewed May 4, 2015.*



2013 Gary Farrell Toboni Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.63, 694 cases, \$55. Released May 2015. Toboni Oakwild Ranch is located in the Santa Rosa Plain. Planted in 2001 to 115, 667, 777 and Pommard. Partially de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak, 10 to 15 days extended maceration post fermentation, aged 9 months on lees in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. Racked off primary lees once just before bottling. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Deep aromas of dark red cherries and berries with many subtle nuances including spice, citrus zest, and wine cave. The nose becomes more generous over time in the glass and it is hard to take your nose away from the glass. The lively fruit flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate are very seductive. The tannins are silky and the remarkably intense and lip-smacking finish resonates for at least a minute. Wines from this vineyard can be meaty and gamey, but this version is more fruity and vibrant. I guarantee you will love this wine which is the best I have ever tasted from this vineyard. Score: 96. Reviewed May 14, 2015.*



2013 Kutch McDougall Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

12.2% alc., 500 cases, \$59. Vineyard planted in 1998 in Graywacke and Sandstone soils. Dijon clone 114. VSP trellising, spur pruned, 8' x 5' spacing. 935 feet elevation, 3.4 miles inland from the coast. Aged in 50% new and 50% used French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely scent of black cherry, blackberry jam, wilted rose and underbrush. Delicious mid weight plus flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and boysenberry supported by firm but balanced tannins and the slightest hint of oak. The tremendously flavorful attack of sappy fruit leads to an extraordinarily long and juicy finish. Enjoyable now, this wine will benefit from more tannin integration over time. This is a wine that brings you to your knees, makes you turn your eyes to the heavens, and give thanks. Score: 95-96. Reviewed January 22, 2015.*



2012 Donum Estate 1870 Carneros Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., pH 3.77, TA 0.63, 73 cases, \$120. 100% Donum clone from the three finest blocks in the Donum Estate Vineyard. *The finest blend from the Estate Vineyard and bottled only in exceptional vintages. The juice spent 17 to 33 days on the skins, before being drained to French oak barrels, 75% new, and aged 14 months without racking. The favorite four barrel blend was then determined and blended and bottled as the first 1870 Pinot Noir.* · Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely aromas of dark strawberry, raspberry and enchanting sous-bois. Very refined and polished with impeccable balance. Vivid flavors of blackberry, black raspberry, pomegranate and spice, framed by structured but tucked in tannins, and finishing with uncommon drive and persistence. This wine takes the best features of the Donum Carneros Pinot Noir wines and blends them into one glorious package. Wow! Score: **95**. Reviewed March 15, 2015.



2012 Joseph Phelps Freestone Vineyards Pastoral Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

13.9% alc., \$75. This 34.5-acre estate vineyard surrounds the Freestone winery and is but 8 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean. Calera and 777 clones. 30% whole cluster. 33% fermented in oak open top fermenters. Aged 14 months in 55% new and 45% 2-year-old and 3-year-old French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Haunting aromas of black cherry, sous-bois, rose petal and spice box. A truly harmonious drinking experience with every component singing in tune. Delicious flavors of black cherry and black raspberry with an accent of exotic spices and black tea. The fruit holds on to the peacock finish for what seems like a minute. Perfectly integrated acidity holds the rich fruit in balance. This wine is true to its mission.* Score: **95**. Reviewed December 12, 2015.



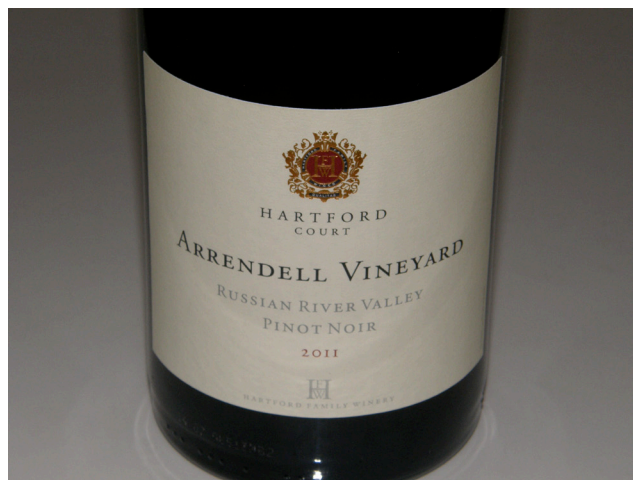
2012 FEL Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., 645 cases, \$65. Released December 1, 2014. A blend of clones including Dijon and Pommard, as well as Martini and Calera selections. Harvest Brix average 24.6°. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of fresh black cherry, rose petal and spice, with some cedary oak chiming in over time. Layer upon layer of gorgeous black cherry, kirsch and black raspberry goodness envelope the palate. A sexy, suave wine that is plush and velvety in the mouth, yet there is enough acidity to keep the experience fresh and vibrant. Nothing is out of place in this magnificent wine that finishes with a flourish of perfectly ripened black stone fruits. I ran out of superlatives with this one, but WOW sums it up. Still terrific the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating good age ability. Score: 95. Reviewed May 4, 2015.*



2012 Hartford Court Arrendell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.8% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.59, 298 cases, \$90. Released January 2015. This low-lying vineyard sits in a very cold meso-climate that allows full expression of the terroir. The old vines were planted in 1975 and struggle to ripen a 1 ton-per-acre fruit load of heirloom selections. Aged 14 months in 100% new French oak barrels, 45% new. Unfined and unfiltered. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. A wonderful array of fresh scents greet the drinker including black cherry, kirsch, cassis, sous-bois and violets. Sappy and robust, with intense layers of flavor that unfold on the palate in stages to reveal notes of boysenberry, cassis, plum reduction sauce, and earthy herbs. Very smoothly textured with balanced tannins and a lingering finish. A special wine of uncommon personality and breeding. Score: 95. Reviewed May 4, 2015.*



2013 Laetitia Single Vineyard Les Galets Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., pH 3.78, TA 0.563, 209 cases, \$60. Composed of grapes from low yielding blocks. The name means “stones” in French. Only produced in the most promising vintages. Multiple picks from late September to early October. Harvest Brix 25.5°. Dijon clone 115. 4-day cold soak, whole berry fermented in small open top fermenters with an addition of RC212 yeast. After 6 days of fermentation, the must was gently pressed and racked to 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing aromas of boysenberry, blackberry, rose petal and vanilla soar from the glass. Brightly fruited with layers of dark fruits and exotic spices. Highly distinctive, with a firm, but complimentary tannic backbone, a hint of oak seasoning, juicy acidity and a silky mouthfeel. An exceptional wine of unusual breeding that will bring you to your knees. Score: 95. Reviewed November 5, 2015.*



2013 Hirsch Vineyards Estate Block 8 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

13.4% alc., 290 cases, \$85. Located on the West Ridge of the vineyard, this section has iron oxide-laden soils that are unique within the vineyard. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Demure aromas of red cherries and red berries and spice lead to a delicious core of fresh, well-spiced cherry and strawberry fruits that are framed by sublime tannins. A touch of earthiness and oak seasoning adds interest. A complete wine that emotes due to its texture, flavor and roundness. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, this wine continued to stand out, reminding me of a great Chambertain. The vintner made a prudent decision to bottle this wine separately. Score: 94-95. Reviewed November 5, 2015.*



2015 California Second Team Pinot Noir All-Americans

2013 Davis Family Vineyards Soul Patch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., \$55. Double Gold 2015 Sonoma County Harvest Fair. A barrel selection of favorite barrels of the vintage. Some whole cluster fermentation to lift the aromatics. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. As typical, this wine needs considerable decanting or several years in the cellar before it can be fully enjoyed. Upon opening, the nose is reluctant with subdued fruit trying to emerge. Highly structured and very tight, the wine showed great promise initially with bountiful black cherry and blackberry fruit veiled by oak and tannins. When tasted 4 days later from a previously opened and recorked bottle, this wine had completely transformed. In a word it was fantastic. The deep aroma and flavor of black cherry was intoxicating, there was considerable nuance shown by subtle spices and herbs, the oak had taken a backseat seasoning role, and the tannins had become very suave. The wine assumed an irresistible polish and developed extraordinary length on the finish. Score: 94-95. Reviewed December 12, 2015.*

2012 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 and persistence. Clearly the best Wayfarer Pinot Noir in this vintage. Score: 94-95. Reviewed July 12, 2015.*

2013 Benovia La Pommeraie Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.57, 300 cases, \$56. Released September 2015. George Martinelli Frei Road Vineyard farmed by the Martinelli Family. Name of wine pays homage to the history of the site which was once an apple orchard. Dijon clones 777 and “828.” 10-day cold soak, indigenous yeast fermentation lasted for almost 3 weeks. Aged 16 months in 33% new French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. This is a real crowd pleaser with intoxicating aromas of dark berry jam, toasty oak and rose petal. The mid weight plus core of showy and gorgeous purple and black fruits literally explode on the palate. The ripe tannins are well matched and there is enough juicy acidity to keep the wine vibrant. A bombastic but gentle wine that displays the hallmark of a great Pinot Noir. This wine will part your hair!. Score: 94. Reviewed November 5, 2015.*

2013 Black Kite Angel Hawk Anderson Valley Pinot Noir

14.9% alc., 190 cases, pH 3.56, TA 0.58, \$85. Clones 114, 115 and Pommard. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Gorgeous label. The aromas leap from the glass, penetrating the olfactory senses with black cherry, blackberry, peat, citrus, cardamom and redwood timber scents. Luscious, but angelic on the palate, with mid weight plus flavors of black cherry and black raspberry fruits. A very sexy wine with a velvety mouthfeel, silky tannins, complimentary oak, and enough acid to energize the luscious fruit load. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, offering an incredible attack and finish and a just plain delicious drinking experience. A serious wine with intentions. Score: 94. Reviewed April 4, 2015.*

2012 Furthermore Gloria Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.4% alc., pH 3.61, 164 cases, \$40. Inaugural wine from this vineyard. Calera, Swan and Pommard clones. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% of which were new Cadus. · *Light cherry red color in the glass. Enticing aromas of red cherry pie glaze, cranberry, rose petal and conifer. Inviting, forward flavors of cherry,*

raspberry, sandalwood and baking spices including cinnamon. Lighter in weight, but packing a wallop of flavor that hangs on through a lengthy and silky finish. When re-tasted later in the day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had become an irresistible cherry bombast and my family couldn't keep their hands off it. Score: 94. Reviewed March 16, 2015.

2013 Ken Brown Rita's Crown Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir

14.7% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.56, 323 cases, \$60. This is one of the highest elevation vineyards in the region at 600 to 950 feet. The soils are shallow and the vines are exposed to coastal fog and ocean winds. Planted in 2007, it has quickly become one of the most highly regarded vineyards in the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Clones 667, 777 and "828." · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Soaring perfume with an array of dark fruits including black cherry and black raspberry, with a hint of spice and rose petal. Flat-out delicious mid weight plus core of black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors matched to balanced tannins and juicy acidity. The mid palate attack is eye opening, the seductive mouthfeel is velvety, and the richly endowed finish leaves an impression. A very classy offering from one of Central California's winemaking icons, and one of the best Pinots I have had from this region in 2015. Score: 94. Reviewed November 22, 2015.*

2013 LUMEN Sierra Madre Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir

13.9% alc., 99 cases, \$49. A barrel selection. Harvest average Brix 23.7°. Clones 667 and Pommard 5. Aged in 84% neutral French oak and 16% new Hungarian oak. · *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. The aromas of fresh boysenberry, plum, spice and toasty oak draw you into the glass. Beautifully balanced and polished on the palate, with flavors of black raspberry, boysenberry and plum with a slight earthy undertone. The oak seasoning is complimentary, the tannins are proportional and the wine's juicy acidity makes for refreshing drinking. The intensely aromatic spiced plum on the very long finish is especially impressive. This wine truly reflects Santa Maria Valley terroir and is the best Pinot Noir I have ever had from this vineyard. Score: 94. Reviewed August 18, 2015.*

2012 MacPhail Lakeview Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir

14.5% alc., pH 3.58, TA 0.58, 192 cases, \$49. Inaugural release from this 8.6-acre vineyard planted in Goldridge sand loam soil. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Clones 114 and 115. 84% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, native and proprietary yeast fermentation, native malolactic fermentation in barrel, batonage weekly for 3 months, aged 16 months sur lie in 100% French oak barrels, 37% new. Unfined and lightly filtered. · *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose reminds one of the holidays, with aromas of cherries, berries and Christmas spice. Delicious Bing cherry fruit floods the mouth with a bit of purple berry and spice chiming in. The tannins are soft and balanced, the mouthfeel is all velvet, and the extraordinarily intense finish made me sit up in my chair. Still prodigious the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, with all components working in perfect harmony. Score: 94. Reviewed November 22, 2015.*

2013 Sante Arcangeli Split Rail Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.59, 370 cases, \$36. This vineyard is located at 1,700 feet elevation on a Corralitos mountaintop. Clones include Martini, Wädenswil, Mt. Eden, Swan, 32 and Pommard 4. Harvest Brix 22.5°-24.5°. 100% de-stemmed, aged sur lie with batonage for 10 months in 95% French and 5% Hungarian oak barrels of which 30% were new and 70% were used. Unfined and unfiltered. · *Moderately light cherry color in the glass. Lovely nose with alluring aromas of Bing cherry, sandalwood and spice cabinet. A delightful wine that is deep on the palate with an impressive attack of fleshy dark cherry, black raspberry and spice flavors complimented by a subtle vein of savory herbs in the background. The fine-grain, slightly weighty tannins provide good structure, and the persistent finish brings waves of vivid, flamboyant fruit. Score: 94. Reviewed January 23, 2015.*

2012 Soliste Foret Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

14.0% alc., 241 cases, \$85. Clone 23 (Mariafeld) from Guidicci Vineyard in Occidental. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly to reveal glorious aromas of black cherry, black plum, sous-*

bois and spice. Quite bold for a Soliste Pinot Noir in this vintage, but still offering the Soliste style of elegance and intensity. Well-spiced black cherry, blackberry and black plum fruits flood the palate with goodness and hold on through a velvety, vibrant finish. Oak lends a gentle touch and the tannins are infused with maturity. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, this virile wine will age beautifully. Score: 94. Reviewed November 5, 2015.

2013 Waxwing Lester Family Vineyards Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir

13.4% alc., 123 cases, \$39. Vines planted in 1998 on a sandy loam hillside bordered by redwoods. Sustainable viticultural practices, careful canopy management, minimal late season deficit irrigation. A mix of Dijon and heritage clones including Mt. Eden, Wädenswil and Mariafeld. 50% of fruit de-stemmed as whole berries and 50% foot-stomped whole cluster. 5-day cold soak, native fermentation, aged 11 months in once-used French oak barrels. · *Moderately light cherry color in the glass. Plenty of lovely whole cluster spice on the nose along with aromas of cherry, rose petal and sandalwood. Delicious middleweight flavors of red cherry, red raspberry, spice and crystallized rose. Bright with good tension and balanced tannins, finishing clean and uplifting. I could drink this all day. Score: 94. Reviewed January 23, 2015.*

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. Score: 94. Reviewed July 12, 2015.*

2015 California Pinot Noir Honorable Mention All-Americans

- 2012 COBB Rice-Spivak Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 95**
- 2012 Wayfarer The Traveler Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 94-95**
- 2012 Asuncion Ridge Vineyards Barrel Select San Luis Obispo Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Bailiwick Londer Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Black Kite Redwood's Edge Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Couloir Chileno Valley Marin County Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Furthermore Eden Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Goldeneye Ten Degrees Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Loring Wine Co. Keefer Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Loring Wine Co. Aubaine San Luis Obispo County Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Domaine de la Côte La Côte Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir**
- 2012 Donum West Slope Carneros Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Drew Morning Dew Ranch Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Gary Farrell Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Joseph Phelps Quarter Moon Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Laetitia La Colline Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 LUTUM La Rinconada Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 MacPhail Mardikian Estate Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 94**
- 2011 Onward Cerise Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Patz & Hall Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Patz & Hall Pisoni Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Paul Lato "Atticus" John Sebastiano Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 94**
- 2013 Screen Door Cellars Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 94**
- 2011 Scherrer "Big Brother" Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 94**
- 2012 Talisman Red Dog Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir**
- 2012 En Garde Russian River Valley Reserve 93-94**
- 2012 Hartford Court Hailey's Block Estate Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 93-94**
- 2013 Kutch Falstaff Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 93-94**
- 2012 Littorai The Haven Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 93-94**
- 2013 Pellegrini Hurst Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 93-94**
- 2013 Pisoni Pisoni Estate Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 93-94**
- 2012 Soliste Barrique 9 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 93-94**
- 2012 Wayfarer Mother Rock Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 93-94**

2015 California Value Priced First Team All-Americans

2012 McHenry Swan Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$25, 92

**2013 Mignanelli Highlands Ranch Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir
\$26, 92**

2013 Weatherborne Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$35, 92

2009 Whitethorn Demuth Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir \$35, 92

2013 FEL Anderson Valley Pinot Noir \$38, 91

2013 Laetitia Estate Arroyo Grande Valley Pinot Noir \$25, 91

2013 Manzoni Home Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands \$35, 91

2013 Nuggucciet Cellars Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir \$36, 91

**2013 Wait Cellars Devoto Garden Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River
Valley Pinot Noir \$33, 91**

2012 Alma Rosa Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$35, 90-91

2012 Big Basin Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$36, 90-91

2013 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Anderson Valley Pinot Noir \$35, 90-91

2015 California Value Priced Second Team Pinot Noir All-Americans

2013 Bailiwick Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$36, 90

2013 Birichino Saint Georges Central Coast Pinot Noir \$21, 90

2013 Birichino Lilo Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$33, 90

**2013 Briceland Vineyards Phelps Vineyard Humboldt County Pinot Noir
\$35, 90**

2013 Mignanelli KW Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir \$32, 91

2013 Brooks Note Marin County Pinot Noir \$36, 90

2013 Loring Wine Co. Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$32, 90

2013 Loring Wine Co. Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir \$36, 90

2013 Morgan Twelve Clones Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir \$34, 90

2014 Roessler Wine Cellars Black Pine Sonoma Coast \$26, 90

2012 Vin Ver'Ray Conzelman Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir \$23, 90

2013 Wait Cellars Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$36, 90

2012 Wedell Cellars Wavertree Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir \$30, 90

2015 California Value-Priced Pinot Noir Honorable Mention All-Americans

Remarkable quality for the price: ***

- 2013 Weatherborne Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$35, 90**
- 2013 Balletto Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$29, 89**
- 2013 Benovia Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$36, 89**
- ***2013 Bogle California Pinot Noir \$9.99, 89**
- 2013 Briceland Vineyards Humboldt County Pinot Noir \$31, 89**
- 2012 Conarium Madeline's Cuvée Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir \$35, 89**
- 2013 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Pinot Noir \$28, 89**
- 2013 Farmstead Long Meadow Ranch, \$29, 89**
- 2013 Ferrari-Carano Anderson Valley Pinot Noir \$36, 89**
- 2013 Frank Family Carneros Pinot Noir \$35, 89**
- 2013 J. Lohr Fog's Reach Arroyo Seco Pinot Noir \$35, 89**
- 2013 La Crema Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$30, 89**
- 2013 Landmark Vineyards Overlook California Pinot Noir \$25, 89**
- 2014 Loring Wine Co. Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$36, 89**
- 2012 MacRostie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$25, 89**
- 2013 Mignanelli Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$36, 89**
- 2013 Pali Wine Co. Huntington Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir
\$22.50, 89**
- 2013 Rivers-Marie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$25, 89**
- 2013 Ron Rubin Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$25, 89**
- 2012 SER Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$33, 89**
- 2013 Siduri Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$32, 89**
- 2013 Stemmler Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$28, 89**
- 2013 Talbott Logan Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir \$25, 89**
- 2012 the gardener Carneros Pinot Noir \$26, 89**
- 2013 Truchard Carneros Pinot Noir \$35, 89**
- 2013 Willowbrook Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$28, 89**

- 2013 Turtle Vines Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$34, 88-89**
- ***2013 Mayhall-Tibbs Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$10.99, 88**

2015 Oregon Pinot Noir First Team All-Americans

2012 Alexana Signature Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 250 cases, \$75. Favorite 10 barrels from the 2012 vintage. Aged 11 months in 38% new French oak barrels and bottle aged for 14 months before release. · *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The pleasing nose is relatively shy, offering aromas of dark fruits and a hint of oak vanillin. Full-bodied, lush and concentrated on the palate, with layers of dark red and purple fruits. Impeccably balanced with enough tannic bones to age and a complimentary whisper of smoky oak, this wine retains a juicy, vibrancy despite its heft and finishes with uncommon length and purpose. An impressive wine that emotes. Score: 95. Reviewed January 22, 2015.*



2012 De Ponte Cellars Baldwin Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., 223 cases, 150 magnums, \$75. Sourced from the De Ponte Cellars Estate Vineyard. Aged 12 months in 80% new French oak barrels and the remainder in 2-5-year-old French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, cassis, spice and oak leap from the glass. The mid weight plus flavors of well-ripened purple and black fruits attack with mouth filling richness, yet the wine is supple and light on its feet. This is a connoisseur's wine with admirable balance and sophistication with a finish that lingers for what seems like a minute. Cellar worthy. Score: 95. Reviewed March 16, 2015.*



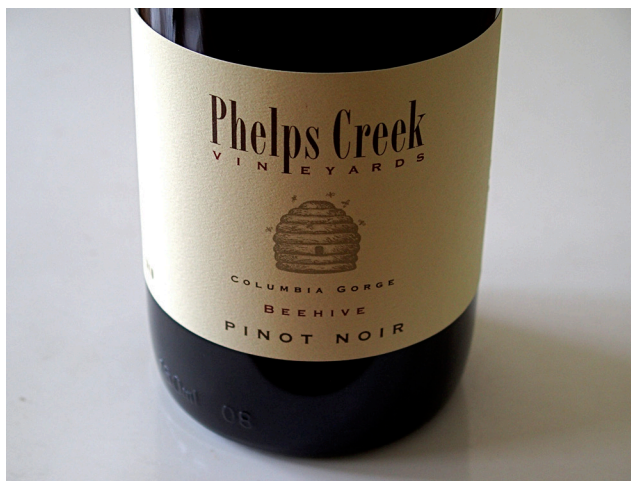
2012 Lachini Vineyards Cuvée Giselle Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.545, 328 cases, \$72. This is a selection of the finest 13 barrels from the Estate Vineyard East, Middle and West blocks. Yields averaged 2.6 tons per acre. 40% Dijon clones, 30% Pommard clone, and 15% Wädenswil clone with a small amount of "suitcase clone." Unfined and unfiltered. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Enchanting perfume of wild, dark berries, cherry pie glaze, spices and a hint of white pepper. A stunning wine in every respect, with a well-ripened core of black cherry and dark berry fruits. Very juicy and vivid with structured fine-grain tannins adding support along with a compliment of tasty oak. A very intriguing wine that exhibits wonderful harmony. When tasted later in the day from a previously opened bottle, I couldn't get enough of this joyous juice. WOW! Score: 95. Reviewed September 3, 2015.*



2010 Phelps Creek Beehive Columbia Gorge Pinot Noir

13.4% alc., TA 0.62, 80 cases, \$54. The Beehive Block is south of the original estate vineyard planting, the site of abandoned commercial beehives on a field when the property was acquired. The clone 777 planted here has extraordinary character in cooler years like 2010. Harvest Brix 23.6°. A 3-barrel selection were aged in once-used French oak barrels for 24 months. · *Medium reddish purple color in the glass. Unrelenting aromas of black cherry, spice, and potpourri. Wow! Terrific attack and finish with wondrous harmony and finesse, featuring delicious mid weight flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and spice. A stunning wine that has an earthy vein in the background and is not simply fruity. This wine is currently drinking at its apogee. Score: 95. Reviewed May 25, 2015.*



2012 Van Duzer Alchemy Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1%, \$65. The best blocks, lots and barrels blended like alchemy. · Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is like cherry pie day at baking school, with hi-tone aromas of black cherries, spice and vanilla. The cherry core is succulent on the palate and there is good structural bones, but the wine is soft and comforting and offers good tension. The balance is spot-on, and the wine finishes with an explosion of luscious black cherry fruit. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with more flamboyant aromatic and fruit expression. This wine will quickly give you a Pinot high. Score: **95**. Reviewed May 14, 2015.



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. Score: **94-95**. Reviewed July 13, 2015.



2012 Erath Prince Hill Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., pH 3.56, TA 0.75, 1,203 cases, \$50. This wine represents a tie both to the winery's past and to its future. Prince Hill Vineyard is owned and managed by Erath's founder, Dick Erath, who first planted the vineyard in 1983. Currently, Erath uses a majority of the fruit from Prince Hill as the centerpiece of its range of single-vineyard Pinot Noirs. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 40% new. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose leads with hi-tone aromas of red cherry, strawberry and sandalwood. The delicious cherry and strawberry flavored mid weight core explodes on the palate and lingers on the finish for an eternity. Juicy and vibrant, with well-matched tannins, this superb wine really stands out from the pack. Score: 94. Reviewed September 29, 2015.*



2013 LUMOS Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.2% alc., 143 cases, \$45. Release January 1, 2016. Vineyard is USDA certified organic. Vegan-friendly. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting perfume of dark berries and pie cherries with an earthy underpinning. Heavenly flavors of marionberry, plum, pomegranate and spice that fills the mouth with layers of goodness. This wine comes at you from all angles and refuses to leave on the fruit-laden finish. A Pinot Noir that is both husky and masculine, yet refined and sophisticated. The serious fruit intensity is deftly balanced by a tannic backbone that insures age ability. I can't say enough good things about this special wine. Score: 94. Reviewed November 22, 2015.*



2012 ROCO Wit's End Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.0% alc., 250 cases, \$60 (\$45). Dijon clones planted in sedimentary soil. Estate grown and vinified by Rollin Soles. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, house-cultured indigenous yeast, post-fermentation soak, aged in French oak barrels for 18 or more months, a combination of new, one, two and three-year-old tight-grained barrels. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Highly scented nose offering aromas of cherry, baking spice, and a floral-based perfume. Superb flavor, with an intense attack and finish that sails along, featuring black raspberry and black cherry fruits. Ideal harmony with balanced t n' a, and a caressing, velvety mouthfeel. Way too easy to drink. Score: 94. Reviewed September 3, 2015.*



2013 White Rose Estate Guillan Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

12.9% alc., \$95 (Club members priority). 100% whole cluster fermentation. Aged in French oak barrels, 13% new. · *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. The nose draws you into the glass with elevating aromas of black cherry, Moroccan spices, cinnamon toast, pine sap and floral goodness. A bombastic combination of cherry and spice flavors attack the palate with noticeable energy, expanding over time in the mouth and grabbing on to the finish with tenacity. A classy wine that also offers a seductive, silky mouthfeel. Still pumping out plenty of generous aroma and flavors two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Score: 94. Reviewed December 12, 2015.*



2013 Lenné cinq élus 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 élus 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). Score: 93-95. Reviewed July 13, 2015.*



2012 Evening Land Seven Springs Vineyard La Source Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.9% alc., \$75 (sold out). An expression of both rocky and shallow soils, containing old Pommard vines that are farmed organically and biodynamically. 100% de-stemmed, natural fermentation after a 4 to 5-day cold soak in open top oak and concrete fermenters. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. · *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is dark fruited, with hints of oak-driven toast and vanilla. Stunning entry and finish with layers of well-spiced black cherry and blackberry fruits in a full-bodied style. The tannic backbone is well proportioned and the texture is one of refinement. Despite its richness, the wine has good vibrancy. A classy offering that makes a statement and should benefit from another year or two in bottle. Score: 93-94. Reviewed May 14, 2015.*



2015 Oregon Pinot Noir Second Team All-Americans

22012 Antica Terra Antikythera Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

516 cases, \$100. Released March 1, 2015. · *Amazing depth of color. Interesting aromatic drama, with scents of black cherry, blackberry, spice, Bailey's Irish Creme, pine needle and a hint of oak. Full-bodied and rich, yet angelic in texture with velvety softness, offering delicious flavors of black raspberry, cassis, iron and spice. A whisper of oak chimes in. Well-ripened in this vintage and a noticeable departure from the previous two vintages with more fruit and more structure. A delightful wine that harkens back to the Sine Qua Non Pinot Noirs of the past, and can serve as a poster child for the voluptuous 2012 vintage in Oregon. Score: 94. Reviewed May 14, 2015.*

2008 Daedalis Cellars Maresh Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

12.4% alc., 24 cases, \$60. From the oldest vineyard on Worden Hill Road in the Dundee Hills. 60% Wädenswil and 40 % Pommard clones. 32-day cold soak. Native fermentation. Unfined and unfiltered. · *Moderately light red cherry color in the glass. Terrific aromatic presence with vivid aromas of cherry and rose petal. Juicy and light on its feet, feminine in character, with a charge of cherry and red berry fruit on the attack and an amazingly long finish that seems to return in waves. Classy with a capital C. Ideal now, but could hold short to mid term. Score: 94. Reviewed February 8, 2015.*

2012 De Ponte Cellars Lonesome Rock Ranch Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.8% alc., 502 cases, 102 magnums, \$44. This vineyard is among the small number of vineyards located closer to the Pacific Ocean in the Willamette Valley. Aged 10 months in 20% new French oak barrels and 80% in 2-5-year-old French oak barrels. · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas are enticingly fresh featuring black cherry, spice, peppercorn, rose petal and a hint of anise-laced oak. Stunning elegance with very suave, structured tannins supporting the mid weight flavors of fresh black cherry and black raspberry. Highly seductive, with a subtle earthy vein in the background. Easy to like now. Score: 94. Reviewed March 16, 2015.*

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. Score: 94. Reviewed July 13, 2015.*

2012 Van Duzer Bieze Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.3% alc., pH 3.50, TA 0.52, 119 cases, \$60. This vineyard is adjacent Seven Springs Vineyard at 600 feet elevation. Jory soils. 100% clone 777. 5 days of extended skin maceration. Aged 10 months in French oak

barrels, 44% new. · *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Deep Bing cherry aroma with accents of sous-bois and floral bouquet. A very charming wine on the palate with vivid fruit flavors of black raspberry, cherry and plum with a compliment of spice, cola and nutty oak. The wine is very giving, with seamless tannins and a seductive texture that is like touching purple velvet. The entire experience is one of grace and polish. Still great the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Score: 94. Reviewed May 14, 2015.*

2012 Lachini Vineyards PRIMA Lachini Estate Vineyard Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.72, 75 cases, \$100. Second vintage of this ultra premium Pinot Noir which represents the finest expression of the Estate Vineyard's terroir. This wine is only crafted in worthy vintages. 3 barrels: 1 of Dijon 115, 1 of Dijon 114, and 1 of Pommard. Aged nearly 18 months. The abbreviated crest on the special label indicates a dedication to the owners family's heritage. The name PRIMA means "FIRST" or "BEST." · *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The aromas leap from the glass showing zeal and purpose with scents of marionberry, blackberry, cassis, tobacco and Prada leather coat. Still a bit brooding and mysterious, but highly seductive, with a mid weight plus core of luscious and juicy purple and black fruits. The fruit seems to burst on the mid palate, filling the mouth with goodness. The wine's tannins are well matched to the fruit load, and the resulting overall harmony is impressive. One feature that really stands out is the suave and velvety mouthfeel. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had become more open and expressive. Keep this beauty in the cellar for another year or two at least for full enjoyment. Score: 93-94. Reviewed September 3, 2015.*

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. Score: 93-94. Reviewed July 12, 2015.*

2012 Privé Vineyard le sud Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.0% alc., \$69. · *Moderately light cherry color in the glass. Enticing aromas of cherry, leaf, spice and balsam lead to a mid weight core of fresh and juicy cherry flavor with a whisper of oak in the background. Very elegant and more giving than the le nord, with suave tannins and a deeply aromatic, cherry-fueled finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle, the nose was more expressive. Two days later, the wine was still hitting on all cylinders. Patience will be rewarded. Score: 92-94. Reviewed January 23, 2015.*

2012 Cornerstone White Label Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

14.1% alc., 1,500 cases, \$50. Sourced from multiple vineyards in several appellations. Clones are Pommard, 115, 777, 114 and Wädenswil. Aged 16 months in 100% French oak barrels, 56% new. · *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly in the glass to reveal inviting aromas of raspberry jam and cherry cobbler. Juicy, vibrant and beauty of flavor, offering middleweight tastes of black cherry and black raspberry with a pleasing touch of spice. Impressive grip and personality and highly enjoyable now, but with the tannic backbone to age. A very long and expansive finish seals the deal. Score: 93. Reviewed March 16, 2015.*

2013 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., 200 cases, \$55. A blend of grapes from three different blocks including clones 777 and Pommard. One of Willamette Valley's oldest vineyards, established in 1971. · *Light reddish purple color in the glass. This wine has one of those noses you want to go on sniffing, featuring cherry, cranberry relish, graham and sous-bois. The cherry flavor bursts on the palate, caresses the mouth, and persists on the finish. A touch of red strawberry and spice box adds interest. A cozy wine with modest tannins, a juicy grip, and a crisp finish filled with bombastic cherry goodwill. Score: 93. Reviewed September 3, 2015.*

2013 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. Score: 93. Reviewed July 13, 2015.*

2013 Winderlea Weber Vineyard Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir

13.0% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.60, 230 cases, \$48 (sold out). Weber Vineyard was formerly named Ana Vineyard and with the first release under the new name, the longtime growers Arthur and Vivian Weber are celebrated. This vineyard has some of the oldest own-rooted Pinot Noir in Oregon, dating to the 1970s. Pommard primarily with some Dijon 777. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 8% new. · *Light cherry red color in the glass. The nose really impresses out of the gate with soaring aromas of red cherry and spice. Delicious attack of deep cherry flavor with added notes of spice and cola. Well-matched tannins and a slightly gravelly texture add to the appeal. A complete, vibrant wine that really wakes up the senses. Score: 93. Reviewed November 6, 2015.*

2015 Oregon Pinot Noir Value-Priced First Team All-Americans

2012 Love & Squalor Antsy Pants Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$36, 92

**2012 LUMOS Wren and Temperance Hill Five Blocks Willamette Valley
Pinot Noir \$25, 92**

**2013 LUMOS Wren and Temperance Hill Five Blocks Willamette Valley
Pinot Noir \$25, 92**

2012 Patton Valley Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$32, 92

2010 Airlie Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$25, 91

**2012 DION Vineyard Winemaker's Reserve Limited Release Chehalem
Mountains Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$35, 91**

**2012 Gresser Vineyard Select Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley
Pinot Noir \$32, 91**

**2012 Lange Estate Reserve Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$35,
91**

**2013 Seven of Hearts Bjornson Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette
Valley Pinot Noir \$35, 91**

**2013 J. Wrigley Vineyards "Mac" McMinnville Willamette Valley Pinot Noir
\$28, 90**

2012 Van Duzer Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$32, 90

2013 Violin Sunny Mountain Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$33, 90

2015 Oregon Pinot Noir Value Priced Honorable Mention

2012 Love & Squalor Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$24, 90

2011 Love & Squalor Antsy Pants Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$36, 90

2012 Broadley Estate Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$25, 89

2012 Cooper Mountain Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$28, 89

**2011 DION Winemaker's Reserve Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley
Pinot Noir \$35, 89**

**2013 Luminous Hills Estate Yamhill-Carlton Willamette Valley Pinot Noir
\$35, 89**

2014 Ponzi Tavola Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$25, 89

**2013 Seven of Hearts Armstrong Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Willamette Valley
Pinot Noir \$35, 89**

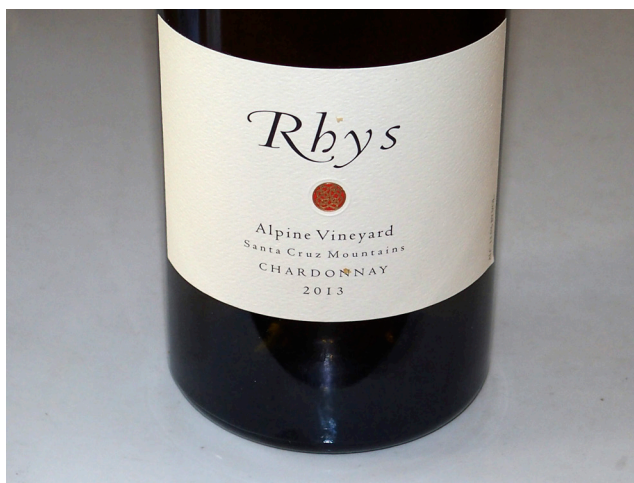
2013 Van Duzer Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$32, 89

2012 Ransom Selection Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$29, 88-89

2015 California & Oregon Chardonnay First Team All-Americans

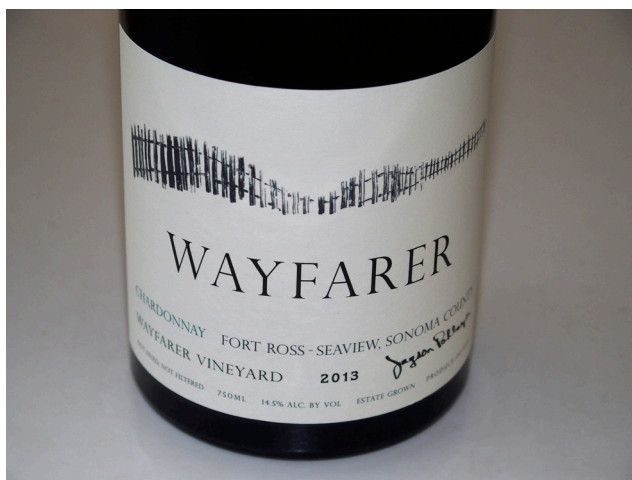
2013 Rhys Alpine Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay

13.5% alc., \$69. · *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Gorgeous and intoxicating aromas of lemon, pineapple, yellow peach and crushed chalk. Equally sensational on the palate with a perfect marriage of luscious lemon cake, pineapple and pear flavors with uplifting acidity. A hint of complimentary nutty, vanillin oak adds to the appeal of this laser focused wine. The finish is incredibly long and refreshingly racy. I was so taken by this wine, that I stopped tasting other wines on this day and had a generous glass with lunch. A delicious, edgy wine without rival. (BTW, I did not see the glowing reviews of this wine by other notable wine critics before tasting this wine) Score: 99. Reviewed November 22, 2015.*



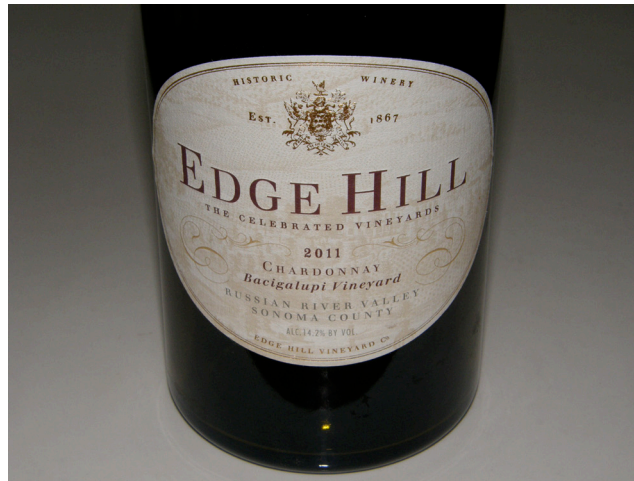
2012 Wayfarer “Wayfarer Vineyard” Fort Ross-Seaview Chardonnay

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. Score: 98. Reviewed July 12, 2015.*



2012 Edge Hill Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay

14.3% alc., 414 cases, \$115. Allocated to mailing list members. Fermented and aged in French oak barrels. · *Light golden yellow color in the glass. This is a sensual wine with a perfume of cut yellow apple, honey, lemon oil and toasty oak. Round and polished on the palate, the uplifting flavors of lemon, white peach, apple are embellished with oak seasoning. Impeccably balanced, and thoroughly satisfying, previously hidden nuances seem to appear with each sip. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. I believe this is easily a 15-year wine. Score: 97. Reviewed June 27, 2015.*



2013 Patz & Hall Hudson Vineyard 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! Score: 96. Reviewed July 13, 2015.*



2013 LUTUM Gap's Crown Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

14.17% alc., 200 cases, \$50. Harvest Brix 23.9°. Aged 12 months in 100% French oak barrels, 30% new. The wine was racked, lightly fined and put back into barrel before being bottled unfiltered. · *Light golden yellow hue in the glass. This is an exceptional wine that checks all the squares. Uplifting aromas of lemon cake, peach, sea breeze, and chalk dust lead to a flat-out delicious core of lemon, yellow grilled peach and yuzu zest. Impeccable balance with seamless integration of oak and a bright, juicy demeanor. The finish is remarkable for its length, expansive lemon flavor, and cleansing acidity. Goes down like mother's milk. Score: 95. Reviewed May 14, 2015.*



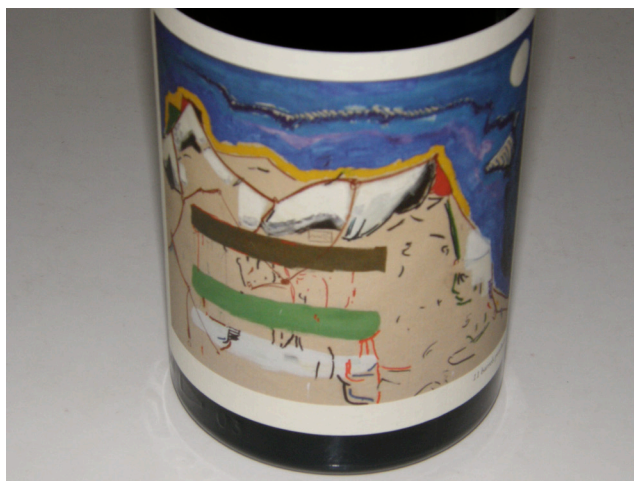
2012 Benovia Fort Ross-Seaview Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

14.1% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.58, 340 cases, \$48. Released April 2015. Charles Vineyard located on third coastal ridge from the ocean. Dijon clones 76, 95 and 96. Whole cluster pressed and fermented with indigenous yeast. Aged in 24% new French oak barrels. · *Very light golden yellow color in the glass. Intense and penetrating aromas of lemon curd, pear, nutty oak and saline minerality. Exceptional presence in the mouth with bright flavors of lemon, white peach and vanilla creme. Crisp and lively with a finish that perks up the senses. This special wine has noteworthy elegance and balance. Score: 94. Reviewed November 5, 2015.*



2012 Chanin Los Alamos Vineyard Santa Barbara County Chardonnay

14.21%, \$37. · *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. A marvelous wine with aromas of lemon curd, pear, tropical fruits, walnut and crushed sea shells. Impressive transparency with vibrant flavors of golden apple, pear, and pineapple. Oak seasoning is very subtle. Slightly creamy, with very good energy and cut. A complete wine deserving of accolades. Score: 94. Reviewed March 16, 2015.*



2012 DANCIN Vineyards “Chastinelle Reserve” Southern Oregon Chardonnay

13.7% alc., 100 cases, \$30. A blend of five clones (Robert Young, Espiguettes 352, Dijon 76, Wente and Draper) grown on the estate and neighboring Panner-Hanson Vineyard. Indigenous yeast fermentation, aged sur lie in a blend of neutral French oak barrels and stainless steel barrels. Weekly battonage. Aged 7 months. · *Light golden straw color and clear in the glass. The nose is fresh and bright, with inviting aromas of lemon, peach and tropical fruits. Slightly creamy on the palate with vibrant flavors of lemon, pear and peach and a subtle accent of tropical fruits and oak in the background. A superb wine with excellent harmony, a gentle demeanor, and a good cut of refreshing acidity on the smooth, lemon drop-driven finish. Score: 94. Reviewed January 23, 2015.*



2012 Evening Land Seven Springs Vineyard Summum Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay

13.1% alc., \$90 (sold out). Only produced in vintages that bring out the best characteristics of the highest elevation of the vineyard. Sourced from old vine Dijon 76 clone planted in 1995 that sits slightly higher on the hill than the fruit for the La Source Chardonnay. Long, gentle pressing of whole clusters, spontaneous indigenous fermentation, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 25% new with gentle lees stirring, and an additional aging in tank for another 5 months. · *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Inviting aromas of pear, citrus, melon, flinty reduction and a hint of oak. Slightly creamy on the palate, and very fruity and flirty, with flavors of lemon cake and white stone fruits with a touch of caramelized oak. Impeccable balance and a dry, lengthy finish that vanishes like fine Champagne. One of Oregon's greatest Chardonnays. Score: 94. Reviewed May 14, 2015.*



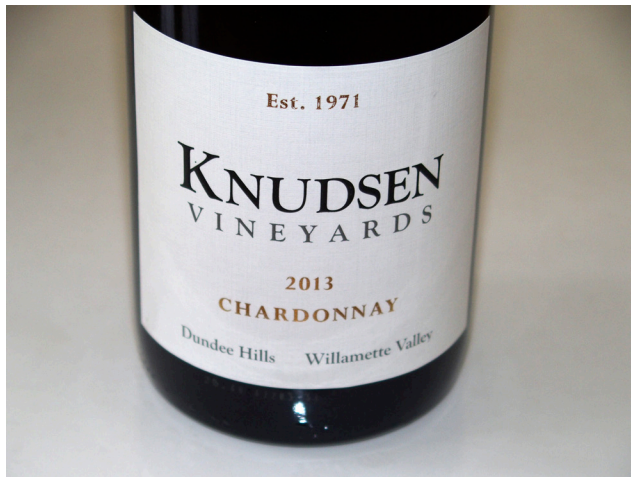
2013 Gypsy Canyon Old Vines Bien Nacido Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay

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. Score: 94. Reviewed July 12, 2015.*



2013 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay

13.5% alc., pH 3.39, TA 0.60, 125 cases, \$45. Dijon 76 and 96 clones. 100% malolactic fermentation. Barrel fermented 6 months in primarily older French oak barrels with 35% new and 6 months in bottle. · *Moderately light golden yellow color in the glass. Elevating aromas of fresh citrus and apple tart. Delicious array of layered flavors, including lemon, pear, apple, baking spice, honey and caramel. Impressive depth of flavor in a clean and invigorating style, offering a lemon-drop-fueled finish alive with flinty acidity. An exceptional wine that will impress even diehard white Burgundy devotees. Score: 94. Reviewed April 20, 2015.*



2013 Red Car Zephyr Farms Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay

13.8% alc., pH 3.20, TA 0.84, 100 cases, \$58. Grapes picked at naturally high acid levels in this vintage. Prosser clone planted in Goldridge sandy loam. Harvest Brix 22.6°. Aged 14 months in French oak barrels, 25% new and 75% neutral. · *Moderate golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Lovely aromas of lemon peel, cut apple and pastry cream arrive slowly over time in the glass. Instantly giving on the palate, with delicious flavors of lemon, grapefruit, green apple and toffee complimented by the faintest oak. The racy finish is incredibly focused, long and intense. Vivid, vibrant and refreshing. Score: 94. Reviewed November 22, 2015.*



2015 California & Oregon Honorable Mention Chardonnay

2013 Dolin Malibu Estate Vineyards Malibu Coast Chardonnay 94

2012 Ramey Hyde Vineyard Carneros Chardonnay 94

2013 Red Car Ritchie Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 94

2013 Scherrer Helfer Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 94

2013 Gary Farrell Rochioli Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 93

2012 Hartford Court Seascape Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 93

2012 Patz & Hall Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 93

2013 Reuling Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 93

2013 Dutton-Goldfield Rued Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 92

**2013 Dutton-Goldfield Dutton Ranch-Walker Hill Vineyard Green Valley of
Russian River Valley Chardonnay 92**

2013 Dutton-Goldfield Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Chardonnay 92

2013 FEL Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Chardonnay 92

2013 Kessler-Haak Sta. Rita Hills Chardonnay 92

2013 Rally Point Russian River Valley Chardonnay 92

2013 Truchard Carneros Chardonnay 92

2013 CrossBarn by Paul Hobbs Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$25, 91

**2012 Gresser Vineyard Select Chehalem Mountains Willamette Valley
Chardonnay \$18, 91**

2013 Red Car Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$38, 91

**2012 Sante Arcangeli Family Wines Bald Mountain Vineyard Ben Lomond
Mountain Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay \$32, 91**

2013 Ser Coastview Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay \$28, 91

**2013 Sonoma Collection District 3 Grower's Reserve Sonoma County
Chardonnay \$18.99, 91**

2013 Laetitia Arroyo Grande Valley Chardonnay \$20, 90

2014 Loring Wine Co. Santa Lucia Highlands Chardonnay \$24, 90

2013 MacRostie Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$25, 90

2013 MacRostie Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$32, 90

2013 Migration Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$32, 90

Notable Pinot Noir Producers First Met With in 2015

Not a week goes by that I don't find out about some brave, passionate soles who put their money out and take a chance in starting a new winery. The Pinot Noir winery universe has become very crowded, but I found the following producers worthy of your attention based on my initial sampling of their wines. Because these wineries are relatively new, many offer Pinot Noir that has a high quality to value ratio. A few of the wineries listed are established, but 2015 was the first year I met with their wines.

Analemma Wines Founded by Steven Thompson and Kris Fade in 2010. The cornerstone of this winery is one of the oldest vineyards in the Pacific Northwest - Atavus Vineyard. The small team farms a diverse selection of vineyards in the Columbia Gorge AVA. Featured winery at the 2015 International Pinot Noir Celebration. www.analemmawines.com.

Ancillary Cellars A collaboration between celebrated Napa Valley vintners Mike Smith and Mark Carter. Carter owns the Carter House in Eureka, California, where the 301 Restaurant has a Wine Spectator Grand Award wine list. Smith began working for Thomas Rivers Brown in 2001, and Brown introduced Smith to Carter. The first Pinot Noir release was from the 2012 vintage. Vineyard sources are in the Sonoma Coast. www.ancillarycellars.com.

Belden Barns The estate vineyard was originally planted on Sonoma Mountain by Dave Steiner in the early 1970s. The current owners, Nate and Lauren Belden, acquired the site in 2005 and restored the vineyard to historic standards. Much of the fruit is sold to notable wineries with some held back for the Belden Barns label launched in 2014 with the release of 2012 vintage estate grown wines. Justin Harmon is the winemaker. www.beldenbarns.com.

Birichino Wines Owners and winemakers Alex Krause and John Locke founded this winery in Santa Cruz in 2008. They have a combined 35 years of making and selling wine both domestically and internationally. Their flagship wines are Malvasia Bianca and Grenache, but their two Pinot Noirs are brilliant examples for the price. www.birichino.com.



Bryter Estates Owners Bryan and Terin Ignozzi launched second careers when they released their first wines from the 2009 vintage. The 2012 Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir was stellar. www.bryter.com.

Cellars 33 A San Francisco urban winery that offered its first Pinot Noir in 2011. Proprietor and winemaker John Fones learned his winemaking at Freeman Winery in Sebastopol. Grapes are sourced from North Coast vineyards. www.cellars33.com.

Conarium A partnership between winemakers Dan Green and Greg Nelson. Excellent vineyard sources in the Central and North Coasts. www.conariumwines.com.

Cobden Wini Proprietor and winemaker Mark Davis, assistant winemaker at O'Brien Estate Winery in Napa Valley, crafts small amounts of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Mark is an honors graduate from UC Davis in viticulture and enology. The inaugural vintage was 2012. www.cobdenwini.com.

Crowley Wines Owner and winemaker Tyson Crowley worked with many of Oregon's top producers before venturing out on his own in 2005. He favors Wädenswil and Pommard Pinot Noir clones and works with family owned vineyards that are cooler, high elevation sites. Growers are committed to non-irrigated vines and organic viticulture. Native yeasts, extended aging in mostly neutral oak and minimal fining and filtration. A featured winery at the 2015 International Pinot Noir Celebration. www.crowleywines.com.

Dolin Malibu Estate Vineyards Launched in 2005 by Elliott and Lynn Dolin, this winery has emerged as one of the leading producers of new Malibu Coast AVA. The estate Chardonnay is outstanding as are the Pinot Noirs from notable vineyards in the Central Coast. www.dolinestate.com.



Father John Winery Nicholas Maloney, a Sonoma native and grandson of the renowned Episcopalian priest, Reverend John Weaver, started his label in 2010. He currently lives in Beaune, France and produces Pinot Noir from Sonoma County sources and a Chardonnay from Burgundy. www.fatherjohnwinery.com.

Keeler Estate Vineyard The Keelers bought a 200-acre farm in Amity, Oregon in 1989 and methodically planted biodynamically farmed vineyards. Darcy Pendergrass crafts about 1,000 cases annual of multiple varietals including an estate Pinot Noir that I recommend. www.keelerestatevineyard.com.

LUMEN This winery is a partnership between iconic Santa Barbara County winemaker Lane Tanner (Hitching Post and Lane Tanner labels) and Will Henry. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are offered from Santa Barbara County vineyards and reflect the elegant, lower alcohol style of Lane Tanner. www.lumenwines.com.

Mignanelli Winery This winery was founded in 2011 by Byron Mignanelli, who focuses on site-driven coastal California Pinot Noir. Native yeasts, 40% or more whole cluster, and minimum additions. The wines are modestly priced considering the high quality. www.mignanelliwinery.com.

Panthea Winery & Vineyard A boutique winery located in Philo in the Anderson Valley and adjacent Klindt Vineyard started by winemaker Kelly Boss and his spouse Jessa. The 2011 and 2012 Pinot Noir releases were particularly impressive. www.pantheawine.com.

Ransom A small artisan producer of organic wines and spirits from Oregon grapes started in 1997 by founder Tad Seestedt. A 40-acre farm was acquired outside of Sheridan, Oregon, in 2008, bringing the winery and distillery together for the first time. Value priced Pinot Noir is produced under the Ransom and Jigsaw labels. www.ransomsprits.com.

RASI Wine Company Rachel Silkowski, the young assistant winemaker at Loring Wine Company in Lompoc started producing a small amount of Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir under her own label (“racy”) with the 2013 vintage. The initial releases are impressive. www.rasiwine.com.

Rubin Family Vineyards & Winery Ron Rubin offers wines made exclusively from the Green Valley of Russian River Valley AVA. A 20-acre estate vineyard supplies fruit for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir crafted by winemaker Joe Freeman. www.rubinvineyards.com.

Reustle Prayer Rock Vineyards A family owned winery located in the Umpqua Valley of southern Oregon. Stephen and Gloria Reustle established their vineyards in 2001 and offered the first estate grown wines in 2004. A wines are estate grown from a 40-acre vineyard. The winery has won many awards in wine competitions. www.reustlevineyards.com.

Screen Door Cellars Winemakers Bobby and Shannon Donnell produce small amounts of classic Russian River Valley Pinot Noir of exceptional quality. www.screendoorcellars.com.

small + tall This boutique winery is focused on limited production Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from the Sta. Rita Hills and Santa Maria Valley. Owner and winemaker Joanne Duray developed a curiosity for wine as a child while watching her Italian immigrant grandfather tend to his wines in his Michigan basement. In 2011, after much imbibing and study, she transitioned from award-winning hobby winemaker to commercial winemaker. Her mentors have included Peter Hunken of Hocus Pocus and Wes Hagen of Clos Pepe Vineyards. She studied chemistry at UC Davis and earned a Vintage Certificate from UCLA. Wines are produced in Lompoc. www.smallandtallwines.com.

(Sonoma Collection) District 3 Matt Stornetta and Ned Hill created Sonoma Valley winery Water into Wine, which produces District 3 Wine. Launched in 2014, District 3 refers to Sonoma and Marin counties, lumped together as one of the 17 different grape growing districts created by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Matt Stornetta is the winemaker and Alex Beloz is the consulting winemaker. The winery produces about 800 cases of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and a Red Blend with a very high value to price ratio.

Stolo Family Vineyards & Winery Don and Charlene Stolo bought 53 acres just east of the downtown of Cambria in 2002 which included an existing 9-acre vineyard planted in 1998. Winemaker Nicole Bertotti Pope, who mentored at Domaine Carneros and Talley Vineyards, is the winemaker. www.stolofamilyvineyards.com.

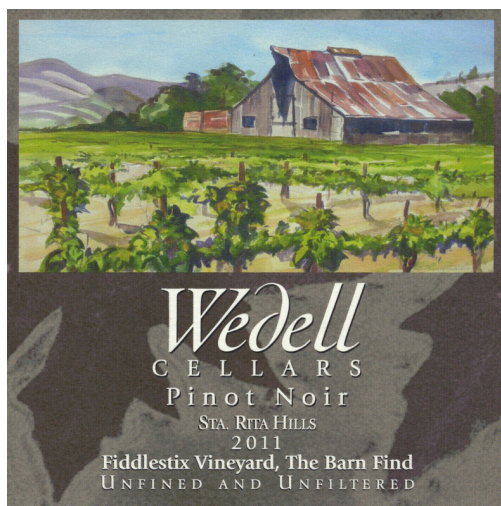
Weatherborne Winemaker Chris Carter released his first Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir from the 2012 vintage. A graduate of UC Davis, he has worked in a number of cellars in California, Oregon and New Zealand before starting his own label. I was really impressed by the 2012 and 2013 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noirs which also represent great value. www.weatherborne.com.



Vin Ver'Ray A partnership of winemaker Julien Fayard and Cal Nicholson who founded Nicholson Jones Selections. The first Pinot Noir from this winery that I sampled was from the 2012 vintage, Conzelman Vineyard in Anderson Valley, and was an extremely satisfying offering. www.nicholsonjones.com.

Violin Wine This winery was started by Will Hamilton in 2013 with a focus on Willamette Valley Pinot Noir produced from sourced grapes of five vineyards of friends and growers. www.violinwine.com.

Wedell Cellars This winery is not strictly new to me since I reviewed wines from the 2005 and 2006 vintages. I reconnected in 2015 and was extremely impressed by the wines I was offered to review, one of which was one of my 2015 All-Americans. www.wedellcellars.com.



The Whithers Winery Proprietor Andrew Tow started out crafting a few barrels of wine for friends and family with the assistance of winemakers David Low and Tyson Freeman at Anthill Farms Winery in Healdsburg. The wines were so successful that Andrew and partners launched The Whithers label in 2013. The winemaker is David Low assisted by Tyson Freeman. Pinot Noir is offered from Sonoma Coast and Anderson Valley vineyards. www.thewhitherswinery.com.

Wilde Farm Wines Noted winemaker Pax Mahle produces small amounts of Pinot Noir from Donnelly Creek Vineyard in the Anderson Valley.

Wonderment Wines Owner and winemaker Stephanie Cook left a successful career as founder of a catering company to enter the wine business. She mentored at Robert Biale Vineyards and in 2011 crafted her first Pinot Noir. She honed her skills at Spottswode, Anomaly Vineyards and Spy Valley Wines in Marlborough. www.wondermentwines.com.

Quotable Wine Quotes of 2015

Quotes have relevance in a historical context because they tell us about the topics and controversies that are prevalent at a certain date in time. They also represent a gift that says plenty with few words.

“Can there be any other business where there’s so much bullshit?”Carole Meredith, retired UC Davis professor and winemaker

“Wine writing attracts too many hobbyists and enthusiasts and too few people with writing talent. The writing problem isn’t confined to tasting notes. Tasting notes are symptomatic of a more generalized ailment: Most wine writing is lousy.”Neil Beckett

“Wine critics and porn stars are hedonists who generally aren’t paid much for what they do but whose jobs confer significant non-monetary benefits.”Mike Steinberger

“What we need more of now....are excellent and authoritative and punishing critics - perceptive enough to single out the voices that matter for legitimate praise, abusive enough to remind us that not everyone gets, or deserves, a gold star.”Mike Steinberger

“Some people get really upset by wealthy people buying wineries and pretending they’re the winemaker. I think it’s a great social experiment that leads to redistribution of wealth.”Randall Graham, winemaker

“The good news for growers, wineries and consumers is that the trend in California is towards picking fruit in less of a ridiculously overripe condition than was the practice during the last decade.”Mark Greenspan, *Harvest: The Final Vineyard Decision*

“Too many wines today, including some that are seriously expensive, are interchangeable in taste and devoid of individual character.”Matt Kramer

“Matching a wine to the context in which it is to be drunk is more important than matching the wine with specific foods.”Jacqueline Friedrich

“Does every winemaker and marketing person have to say about their single-vineyard wines, ‘I try to stay out of the way and let the vineyard speak for itself.’ What if its just a stupid vineyard?”Ron Washam HMW

“People are buying wine as a wealth store....I buy wine to drink, because drinking wine gives me pleasure. Who knew the rich got as much pleasure from just looking at it?”Jeff Siegel, *The Wine Curmudgeon*

“The wines that most capture my imagination seem inbred with a kind of meaning that no other beverage can match, their tastes conjuring cultural values that often tap into deep emotions.”Elin McCoy

“Flavor descriptors have nothing to do with judgment. What you can find doesn’t necessarily correspond to what you conclude.”Matt Kramer

“People are talking about wine in the context where it should be judged....Not in a roomful of wines....It’s at your dinner table, at your back patio, and that’s what I think is what I see is the Internet has brought us a delightful, lovely anarchy.”Bo Barrett, Chateau Montelena

“Although wine professionals are interested in aspects of wine production such as vineyard location and enological processes, and often give priority to such information on the back label of fine wine bottles, wine consumers overall are not. Wine consumers appear far more driven by their notions of wine quality and image/brand, and their expectations of an enjoyable and pleasurable sensory experience.”Wendy Parr

“No two bottles of wine sealed with corks will perform identically over time, the difference is infinitesimal at first, progressively becoming ever more evident over time.”....James Halliday

“Terroir is widely used with the connotation, ‘I’ve got it, while all you’ve got is dirt.’....David Schildknecht

“The brutal fact of the matter is that very few wine enthusiasts - and, arguably, still fewer professional critics - have anything more than the sketchiest understanding of the connection between land and wine.”....David Williams

“It is incredibly difficult, arduous and time-consuming to rack up the level of experience necessary to review and score wines with consistency.”....Lisa Perrotti-Brown

“Professional tasters will tell you that despite providing an occasional source of joy, tasting wines is hard work. It takes concentrated effort to get to grips with the liquid in the glass, to fix its character in mind and come to a judgment about its quality.”....Barry C. Smith

“When we sip and swallow a wine, we experience not its taste but its flavor, which is largely due to retronasal olfaction. The term flavor picks out something perceived conjointly by touch, taste and smell, and is used in sensory science to distinguish it from what is detected by taste proper (gustation).”....Barry C. Smith

“Brands are what drive people to buy wine - ratings don’t really sell wines.”....Ian Dorin, Wine Director, Wine Library, Springfield, N.J.

“When you understand the land and the people, you appreciate the wine.”....Christian Gourdin

“Great Wine is a wine that’s great at the moment. It’s the moment that makes the wine.” Ian Dorin, Wine Director, Wine Library, Springfield, N.J.

I can’t easily think of a wine that steals my heart by wearing its alcohol on its sleeve.”....Hugh Johnson

“There is much in California wine that is not even remotely ‘Grande.’ At one extreme, winemakers are producing wines that are so sweet, alcoholic and oaky that they lose their identity completely: sometimes it is even a struggle to identify which grape they are made from.”....Dominic Fentou

“Ultimately I believe it’s incumbent on people who are scoring things in their professional fields to show a level of restraint and integrity in the way they rate things.”....Red & Green Wine Review

“All too often, a high price reflects relative scarcity rather than objective quality.”....Paul Gregutt

“Taking the alcohol listed on the label seriously is like believing the guy’s height or the woman’s weight on Match.com. The wine is always going to be shorter and fatter than you expected.”....Ron Washam HMW

“Williams Selyem’s Summa and Rochioli Pinot, those wines stood up. They were a personal inspiration for me.”....Ted Lemon, winemaker, Littorai

“One of the descriptions of angels is that they’re the better side of people who never have to suffer. And that is what Pinot is about. Pinot suffers. That’s why these sites tend to be really fringe places where all kinds of terrible things happen: hailstorms and fog in August. You don’t grow great Pinot on the valley floor.”....David Hirsch, Hirsch Vineyards

“I don’t think I’ve ever heard anyone say they hate Pinot Noir.”....Ron Washam HMW

“Dedicated Pinot Noir lovers have always seemed a breed themselves and endlessly revel in the smallest differences that terroir or even a few rows either way in a vineyard can make.”....Stephen Eliot

“If plants had a climate change ambassador akin to the animal kingdom’s polar bear, it would probably be Pinot Noir.”....Carrie Miller

- “Think of it (Pinot Noir) as the Goldilocks of grapes, producing flabby and boring wine if it’s too hot, flat-out refusing to ripen if too cold, but creating magic in a glass when conditions are just right.”....Carrie Miller**
- “What happens when and if the predilection for Pinot gets even more widespread than it is? I can tell you. We will become Burgundy, and our Pinots will come with price tags not dissimilar to those now-discouragingly costly beauties from across the pond.”....Charles Olken**
- “Pinot Noir is the capricious and precocious child that rewards humility and patience. Harvest each unique vineyard with your best tuition, protect the wine from evil, allow it to express itself with a minimum of interference, trust is providence.”....Mitch Richmond, former Bouchaine winemaker**
- “Pinot Noir has a longer, narrower pollen tube. It’s harder for the pollen granule to get down the shoot and fertilize the seed. That’s probably why Pinot Noir has its reputation as the heartbreak grape. It needs ideal conditions to set fruit: good airflow, good sunlight but not too much.”....Prudy Foxx, viticulturist**
- “Of all the places in the world that grow Pinot Noir with high typicity, the Tamor Valley in Tasmania is the coolest and the Russian River Valley is the warmest - and with the climate warming, there’s potential for even bigger and bolder wines.”....Greg V. Jones**
- “You can grow Chardonnay in a parking lot in Fresno; not Pinot Noir.”....Greg Jones, Emeritus**
- “There’s more climatic variation in Western Sonoma County than anywhere else in the world.”....Paul Sloan, Small Vines Wines**
- “It is admittedly simplistic to say that Cabernet is a hedonistic pleasure and Pinot is an intellectual pleasure. Both varieties provide plenty of enjoyment across all fronts. But, the reason Pinot is the most demanding wine on the tasting table is that we simply have to work harder to search out those very nuances that then make the variety so special on our dining table.”....Charles Olken**
- “Fine old Burgundy smells, among other more divine things, like the crotch of a woman you love so much you want to consume her.”....Terry Theise**

Pinot Briefs

Pinot Noir Most Popular Variety on Wine Searcher A report posted by Don Kavanagh December 3, 2015, on wine-searcher.com looked at the website's databases to find what people were searching for during 2015. Red wine searches outweighed white wine searches by a factor of 2.5. Pinot Noir was the most popular individual grape in searches classed by variety. There were almost 11 million searches for Pinot Noir wines, compared to 8.2 million for Cabernet Sauvignon in the 12 months to November. This is the second year in a row more people have searched for Pinot Noir. Whites have remained about the same, with Chardonnay by far the leading variety. The 2015 annual American Wine Consumer Preference Survey launched by Sonoma State University and the Wine Business Institute found that Chardonnay was the preferred varietal of 50% of respondents, followed by Merlot (49%), White Zinfandel (41%), Pinot Grigio (40%), Cabernet Sauvignon (38%), and Pinot Noir (38%).



Wineries Talk Dry but Americans Drink Sweet Jonathan Pey, winemaker at Pey-Marín Vineyards in Marin County, California, submitted a letter to the *Wine Spectator* editor recently revealing that he had sent a bottle of the 2013 Meiomi Pinot Noir to the ETS Lab in St. Helena, California. The wine had the following numbers: pH 3.81, TA 0.59, glucose 6.9 g/L, alcohol 13.59%. Jonathan noted, "So, are we Pinot Noir 'traditionalists' making wine for ourselves - to make us feel good about being traditional, "pure" and all that? Are we too caught up with stem inclusion, natural yeasts and the like? Or should be make Pinot Noir that, clearly consumers want?" The 2015 annual American Wine Consumer Preference Survey by Sonoma State University and the Wine Business Institute asked participants, "How do you prefer your wine to taste?" 58% preferred "fruity," 57% "semi-sweet," 56% "smooth," 49% "sweet," and 26% dry (no sugar).

Resveratrol May Replace Sulfites in Wine A report published in the *Journal of Life Sciences* found that resveratrol could be substituted for sulfur dioxide (SO₂) without changing the physical and chemical properties and the flavor profile of the wine. Resveratrol also increased the color intensity in the wines studied. Also, resveratrol levels were increased 14-fold to 39-fold, depending on how much was added.

West of West New York West Sonoma Coast Vintners (WSCV) presents West of West February 9, 2016, at Manhattan's City Winery. Consumer VIP Library Tasting and Consumer Tasting of cool-climate Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah. A media and trade seminar and tasting will precede the consumer tastings. Visit www.westsonomacoast.com for information and tickets.

Oregon 2015 Growing Season Third Hottest in 12 Years Amalie Robert Estate Vintage Update provided this chart which includes the 2015 growing season. If you want to read about one vintner's view of the 2015 vintage in detail, visit the Amalie Robert Estate FLOG (it's lengthy but reads well especially with a glass of Pinot in hand) www.amalierobert.blogspot.com.

