



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

Volume 10, Issue 31 June 5, 2016

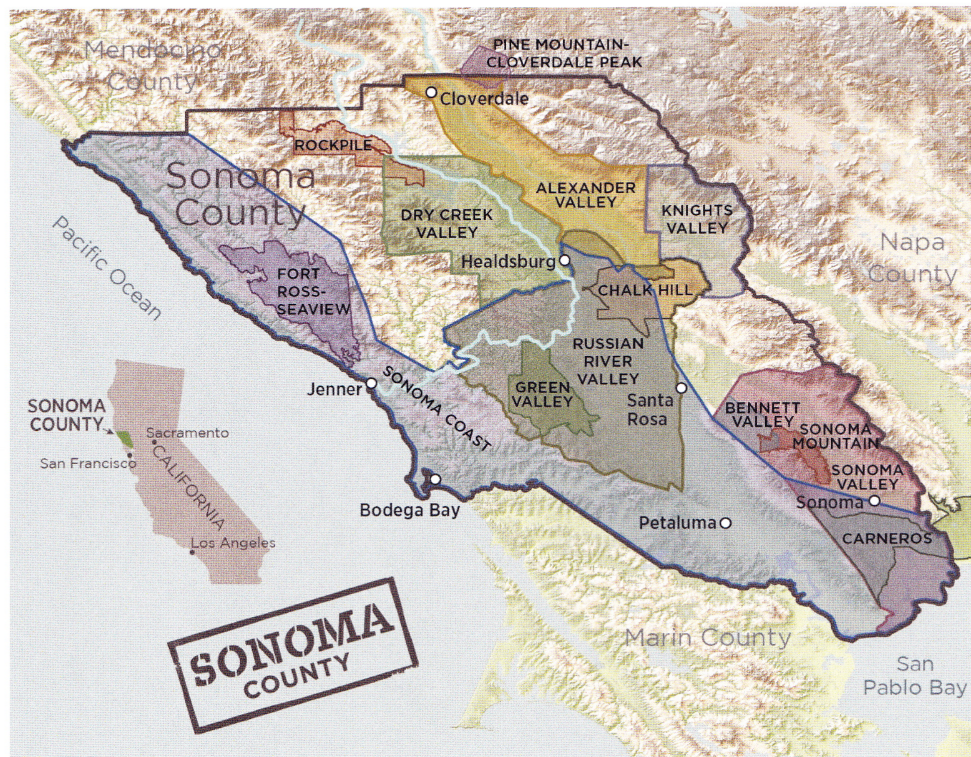
*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

2016 Sonoma County Barrel Auction

"The French have a word for it: terroir. The Americans have two words for it: Sonoma County."

I was one of the fortunate members of the media to be invited to the 2016 Sonoma County Barrel Auction. The wine trade event was sponsored by the Sonoma County Vintners, more than 260 member wineries and affiliated business representing the 17 appellations of Sonoma County (www.sonomawine.com).

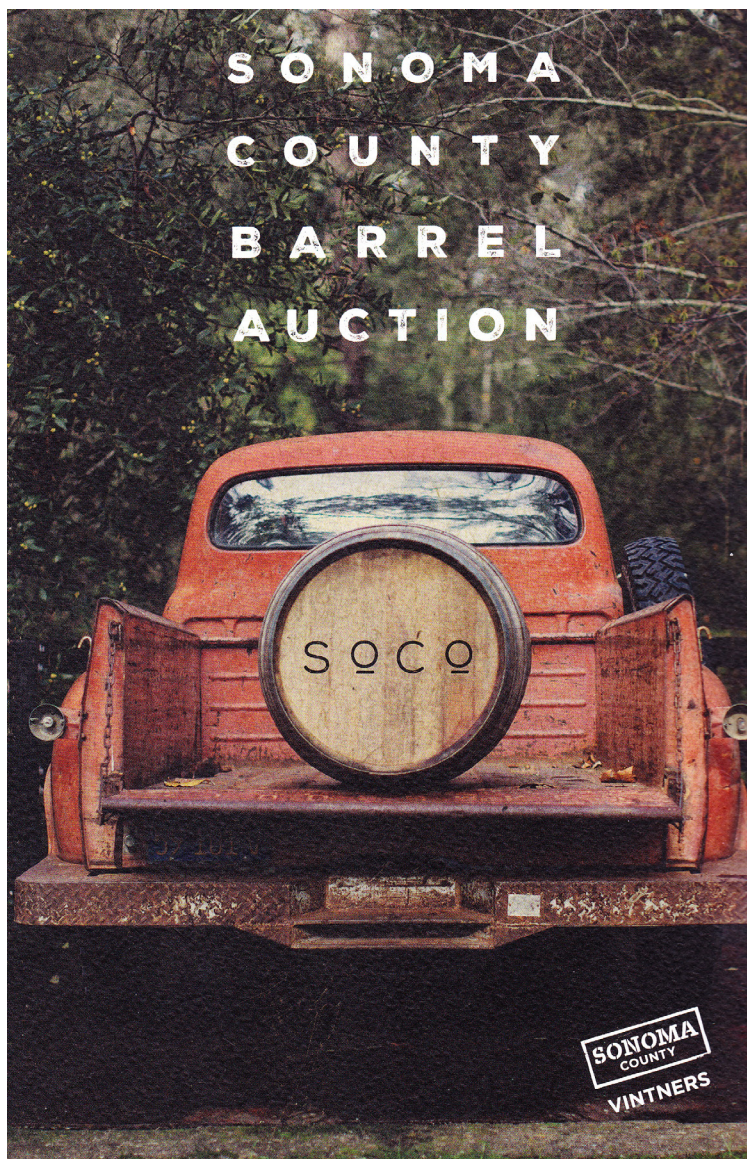
Sonoma County



Sonoma County is home to over 60,000 acres of vineyards and more than 400 wineries, stretching from the Pacific Coast in the West to the Mayacamas Mountains in the East. There are a multitude of soil types and microclimates, making Sonoma County flush with terroir riches. The top AVAs for Pinot Noir are Bennet Valley (700 vineyard acres and 17 wineries), Carneros (6,481 vineyard acres and 22 wineries), Fort Ross-Seaview (715 vineyard acres and 5 wineries), Green Valley (2,860 vineyard acres and 10 wineries), Russian River Valley (13,896 vineyard acres and 94 wineries), Sonoma Coast (5,055 vineyard acres and 7 wineries), and Sonoma Mountain (667 vineyard acres and 3 wineries).

This year's Sonoma County Barrel Auction featured 75 lots of which eighteen were 10-case lots, seven were 20-case lots and 50 were five-case lots, representing sixteen of Sonoma County's seventeen appellations. Each lot was a one-of-a-kind, never before and never again limited production offering blind tasted and personally selected by a curated panel of three Master Sommeliers (Evan Goldstein, Keith Goldston and John Szabo), three Masters of Wine (Sandy Block, Bob Paulinski and Liz Thach), and one holding both Master Sommelier and Master of Wine titles (Doug Frost). Of the Pinot Noir lots, one was from vintage 2014 and thirty were from vintage 2015.

The wines were previewed for the wine trade and media on Thursday, April 28, 2016, at Comstock Winery in Healdsburg (Sonoma Valley, Alexander Valley and Dry Creek Valley Preview) and Pellegrini Wine Co. in Santa Rosa (Russian River Valley, Petaluma Gap and West Sonoma Coast Preview). Additional preview tasting was held at the Vintners Inn the morning of the Auction on Friday, April 29, 2016. More than 250 top wine professionals and media attended the event where the mood was upbeat and friendly.



The auction raised a total of \$693,800, increasing this year's fundraising total by more than fifty percent over last year. All the successful bidders were members of the licensed wine trade such as retailers, restaurateurs, importers and distributors and their enthusiasm reflects the high regard for Sonoma County wines. Profits from the 2016 Sonoma County Barrel Auction support ongoing marketing initiatives of Sonoma County Vintners and their AVA partners.

I thought I was in heaven at this event because I was able to taste all 31 Pinot Noir and all 7 Chardonnay barrel sample auction lots. I have listed the Pinot Noir lots here for interest along with any pertinent comments and

the auction price the item fetched. Unfortunately, because these wines were sold to the wine trade, most pinotaficionados will never have the chance to drink them. If you do get the opportunity, do not pass it up. All photos are by Will Bucquoy for the Sonoma County Vintners.



A luncheon preceded the Barrel Auction on Friday where a 2014 Rodney Strong Sonoma County Chardonnay and 2014 The Calling Russian River Valley Pinot Noir were on the menu. Toasting was done with Gloria Ferrer Carneros Blanc de Noirs. However, many special Sonoma County wines were being passed around by winemakers and winery owners throughout the luncheon and wine literally flowed like water. The idea, of course, was to get people freed up to bid on the wine lots. The auctioneer was John Curley, an award-winning broadcaster with a television and radio career spanning 30 years (photo above). He possessed dynamite energy, and lent boundless entertainment to the proceedings.

Lot #2: "Feeling Lucky?" 5 cases of 2015 UV-Lucky Well Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir crafted by winemaker Matt Courtney at Arista Winery. The vineyard is located next to Silver Eagle Vineyard at the extreme western region of the Russian River Valley. This wine is from one block planted to Calera selection and the winemaker's favorite barrel from this particular vineyard block. All free run juice aged in 4-year air-dried French oak barrels. \$6,000.

Lot #4: "The Robert's Road Pinot Blend - Poetry You can Drink" 5 cases composed of 2015 Bruliam Wines Gap's Crown Vineyard 50% and 2015 MacPhail Family Wines Sangiacomo Roberts Road Vineyard 50% Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. Crafted by winemakers James MacPhail and Kerith Overstreet who blended their finest juice from these two iconic Petaluma Gap vineyards. \$5,000. (apologies to Robert Frost)

*Two vines diverged on Roberts Road
And happy that I could source from both
As if one vintner, together we stood
And mixed all clones from whence I could
From where they bloomed in the windy gap*

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Never before and never again
Two vines diverged on a road and I -
I mixed two vineyards traveled by.
And that has made all the difference*

Lot #5: "Balletto's Best" 5 cases of 2015 Balletto Cider Ridge Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. This hillside vineyard is located in the hills southwest of Sebastopol where there is excellent southwest slope exposure and Goldridge soils. Of the 650 acres of vineyards farmed by John Balletto, this is among the most cherished sites and among the top ten percent of the grapes farmed. The winemaker was Anthony Beckman. \$6,000.

Lot #6: "Exceptional Vineyard, Exceptional Wine" 5 cases of 2015 Benovia Martaella Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Winemaker Mike Sullivan chose two heritage clones (UCD 90 and UCD 96) from the Martaella Estate Vineyard grown at very high density for this bottling. \$9,000.

Lot #7: "Judgment of Paris 40th Anniversary Barrel" 20 cases of 2015 Bacigalupi Vineyards Russian River Valley Chardonnay. Composed of original Wente clone from Bacigalupi Vineyards, Dutcher Crossing Winery, Flanagan Wines, Gary Farrell Vineyards & Winery, and MacRostie Winery & Vineyards. Winemakers were Ashley Herzberg, Kerry Damskey, Cabell Coursey, Theresa Heredia and Heidi Bridenhagen. \$15,000.

Lot #10: "CIRQ Heritage Clones" 5 cases of 2015 CIRQ Estate Treehouse Vineyard 50% and Bootlegger's Hill Vineyard 50% Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Calera, Mt. Eden and Swan selections combined in a blend by winemaker Michael Browne. A big, bold, fruity Pinot Noir that was a bit tight but a powerhouse that was definitely not for the timid. \$13,500.

Lot #12: "Pinot Perfection" 5 cases of 2015 Dutton-Goldfield Cherry Ridge Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. This Pinot Noir is from one of the most treasured blocks of this Dutton Ranch Vineyard located in the heart of the Green Valley of Russian River Valley AVA. The vineyard overlooks the foggy Petaluma Wind Gap. This wine, crafted by Dan Goldfield, had never been bottled separately. \$8,000.

Lot #13: "The Melting Pot" 5 cases of 2015 Davis Bynum Winery Jane's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. 45% Dijon 667, 40% Pommard 4, and 15% Swiss Mariafeld 23. This winery produced the first single vineyard (Rochioli) Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley in the 1973 vintage. Forty years later, the winery is under the ownership of Tom Klein and the heritage of Davis Bynum lives on. The winemaker was Greg Morthole. \$5,000.

Lot #14: "Soul Patch 20th Anniversary Selection" 5 cases of 2015 Davis Family Vineyards Soul Patch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Soul Patch is an organically farmed estate vineyard planted in 1995 by winemaker Guy Davis and his family. This hand-selected blend contains six clones. \$5,500



Lot #15: "Hand-harvested, Biodynamic Grown" 5 cases of 2015 DeLoach Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Winemaker Brian Maloney. \$8,000.

Lot #25: "Laguna Ridge Neighborhood" 10 cases of 2015 Joseph Swan Vineyards and Davis Family Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Lots were selected from several of the Laguna Ridge's finest vineyards including the estate vineyards of Joseph Swan and Davis Family Vineyards. Winemakers Rod Berglund and Guy Davis. \$9,500.

Lot #26: "The Pearl" 5 cases of 2015 Gloria Ferrer Estate Carneros Pinot Noir. This wine was sourced from a tiny subset of the Q block located on the Circle Bar Ranch. This hillside site is extremely windy with rocky, thin, well-drained soil combined with volcanic rock and gravelly clay loam from the sea. It took years to determine the proper clone and rootstock combination for this extreme location. The wine was crafted by Steven Urberg from less than two acres of vines planted to UCD 32 clone. Inaugural bottling from this site. \$4,500.

Lot # 29: "The KB Elixir" 10 cases of 2015 Kosta Browne Winery Russian River Valley (50%) and Sonoma Coast (50%) Multiple Vineyards Pinot Noir. Neither press or free run, this wine is obtained from fermentation tanks while they rest overnight, waiting for the press. Rather than have them contribute their intensity to another wine, they kept them separate to demonstrate their power and beauty. \$46,000.

Lot #30: "Top Secret" 5 cases of 2014 Guarachi Family Wines Sun Chase Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. This wine was inspired by the owner and chief winemaker Alex Guarachi's daughter's horse "Top Secret." This vineyard is one of Sonoma Mountain's highest at 1,400 feet elevation. Winemakers who collaborated on this wine include Alex Guarachi, Paul Hobbs and Julian Gonzales. \$7,500.

Lot #31: "Late Disgorged Brut Rosé" 5 cases of 2007 J Vineyards & Winery Late Disgorged Russian River Valley Brut Rosé. This was the only sparkling wine in this year's auction and is the first and only late-disgorged vintage Brut Rosé from J. It is composed of Chardonnay (55%), Pinot Noir (40%) and Pinot Meunier (5%). The wine spent nearly eight years aging on yeast lees in the bottle. A custom dosage was developed for this lot. Winemaker was Nicole Hitchcock. I thought this was spectacular with an inviting bead, tight acidity and a pleasing leesy, nutty, cherry and brioche flavor profile. \$6,500.

Lot #34: "Thale's Vineyard Pommard Block" 5 cases of 2015 MacRostie Winery & Vineyards Thale's Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. A single block of MacRostie's own Thale's Vineyard in the heart of the Russian River Valley and home to the new MacRostie Estate House. Crafted by Heidi Bridenhagen from 2-year-old Pommard clone vines. \$5,000

Lot #37: "A Vision of Green Valley" 20 cases of Martin Ray Vineyards & Winery Tina Marie Vineyard Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Clones 667, 115, 777 and "828," planted in Goldridge sandy loam and cared for by Ron Block. Winemakers include Bill Batchelor, Lindsay Haughton and Dan Goldfield. \$14,000.

Lot #41: "Best of the Migration Estate" 20 cases of 2015 Migration Running Creek Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Sourced from a Duckhorn estate vineyard that has been meticulously developed. A selection of the best blocks and barrels from this site. Winemaker was Bo Felton. \$17,000.

Lot #42: "Forty-Year Commemorate Cuvée" 5 cases of 2015 Olivet Lane Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. The Olivet Lane Vineyard contains 20 acres of Martini clone Pinot Noir originally planted by Vincent and Aida Pellegrini in 1975. Winemaker Lynn Krausman selected the barrels for this Pinot Noir. \$6,000.

Lot #45: "100% Pinot Perfection to the Tenth Degree" 10 cases of 2015 Patz & Hall Multiple Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. A blend of the most exceptional lots of clone 115 grapes grown at some of Sonoma County's most spectacular vineyards. Patz & Hall to the tenth degree: 100% Patz & Hall, 100% Pinot Noir, 100% clone 115, 100% new French oak barrels, 100% 2015, 100% Russian River Valley, 100% Sonoma County, 100% unfiltered, and 100% perfection. Winemaker was James Hall. \$12,000.

Lot #46: "Trenton Estate Swan Selection The Mother Block" 5 cases of 2015 Joseph Swan Vineyards Trenton Estate Vineyard Old Barn Hill Block Joe's Vines Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Joseph Swan was the first vintner to plant Pinot Noir south of the river in what is now the Russian River Valley AVA. The Swan clone is still recognized as one of the most highly desirable selections of Pinot Noir. This lot was crafted by Rod Berglund from the first block of vines planted and only available as this one-time auction lot. \$9,000.

Lot # 47: “Bondi Ranch - One Barrel, One Block, One Clone, One Time” 5 cases of 2015 Martinelli Winery Bondi Home Ranch Green Valley Pinot Noir. This wine is from the Martinelli family’s favorite barrel, from their favorite block, and from their favorite clone that is the soul of Bondi Home Ranch Pinot Noir every year and is typically blended with other blocks. The winemaker was Bryan Kvamme. \$10,000.

Lot #51: “Katherine Lindsay Estate Block A9” 5 cases of 2015 Paul Hobbs Winery Katherine Lindsay Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. This wine was sourced from Katherine Lindsay Estate Block A9, historically the source of the winery’s top Pinot Noir, Cuvée Augustina. Primarily Calera clone planted in 2000 in Goldridge sandy loam. Winemaker was Paul Hobbs. \$17,000.

Lot #55: “Schug Estate Block 8” 10 cases of 2015 Schug Carneros Estate Schug Estate Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir. This wine was sourced from Block 8, a UCD 12 Pommard clone (“old Pommard”) planted in 1989. These are the estate’s oldest vines. Winemakers are Walter Schug and Michael Cox. This was a very impressive wine with admirable suavity and elegance with a generous cherry and raspberry fruited finish. \$6,500.



Lot # 61: “The Vineyard. The Barrel. The Winemaker.” 5 cases of 2015 Three Sticks Wines Durell Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. 2015 was the first year that winemaker Bob Cabral made a wine from this vineyard. Bob selected one outstanding block of Pinot Noir for this lot. A custom oak barrel was crafted and hand-toasted specifically for this wine by winemakers Bob Cabral and Ryan Prichard. This wine has a unique toasty oak profile due to the barrel but also featured a delicious black cherry core with impeccably balanced tannins and acidity. A true treasure. \$7,000.

Lot #62: “Founders’ Block” 5 cases of 2015 The Calling Sunny View Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. A boutique Pinot Noir crafted by winemaker Dan Goldfield. \$4,500.

Lot #63: “Last Stop Pinot Noir” 5 cases of 2015 Twomey Cellars Last Stop Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. This vineyard was recently acquired by Twomey. It is nestled in the rolling hills of Forestville. This wine is Twomey’s first single-barrel production of an auction lot and their inaugural single vineyard Pinot Noir crafted from Last Stop Vineyard fruit by winemaker Erin Miller. 30% whole cluster created considerable textural interest in the well-endowed, cherry-driven wine which needs some time to shed its oak and tannin cloak but the potential is impressive. \$6,000.

Lot #65: “River Road Ranch Pinot Noir, Block Selection, UCD37” 20 cases of 2015 Trione Vineyards & Winery River Road Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Sourced from a single block of the estate 115-acre River Road Ranch located in the heart of the Russian River Valley AVA. The block and UCD37 clone were chosen by winemaker Scot Covington. \$10,000.

Lot #66: "Rochioli Estate Single Vineyard Selection Big Hill" 10 cases of 2015 Rochioli Vineyards & Winery Big Hill Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. This vineyard was planted in 2009 using cuttings from Rochioli West Block. This selection had never previously been bottled separately. The winemaker was Tom Rochioli. \$21,000.

Lot #72: "Bob's Ranch Sonoma Coast" 5 cases of 2015 Walt Wines Bob's Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. Sourced from Walt Wines single vineyard estate in the Sonoma Coast AVA. This lot was crafted by winemaker Megan Gunderson Paredes from a Hyde selection planted in a single hillside block. \$7,500.

Lot # 73: "West Sonoma Coast Vintners Founders Lot" 20 cases of 2015 West Sonoma County Vintners Founders Lot Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. Multiple winemakers from wineries included Peay Vineyards, Red Car Wine Company, Failla Wines, Freeman Vineyard & Winery, Littorai Wines, and Joseph Phelps Vineyards. Very expressive for a young wine with considerable textural interest. \$18,000.

Lot #74: "The Deuce" 5 cases of 2015 Westwood Estate Winery Annadel Gap Vineyard Sonoma Valley Pinot Noir. A collaboration between winemaker Ben Caine and consulting winemaker David Ramey drawn from two blocks in the Annadel Gap Estate Vineyard. Dijon clones 115 and 943. I absolutely loved this wine that had a perfect balance between luscious blackberry and black cherry fruits and toasty oak. \$4,500.

Lot #75: "35th Anniversary Blend" 20 cases of 2015 Williams Selyem Winery 35th Anniversary Blend Sonoma County Pinot Noir. This wine is a tribute blend from Russian River Valley (80%) and Sonoma Coast (20%) vineyards that Burt Williams originally sourced. This was a fitting homage to William's vision and these vineyards still form the backbone of the site-driven wines for which Williams Selyem Winery is known today. An artful blend by winemaker Jeff Mangahas. This was one of the top Pinots I tasted with amazing aromatic presence, loads of spiced fruit, and a finish that went on and on. \$40,000.

Besides the Barrel Auction lots, some vintners were pouring newer releases of Pinot Noir at the Preview events. Vintners talked about the 2015 vintage that featured warm weather early, then cool weather during flowering resulting in small berries, many shot berries and very low crop levels. Not much wine but the quality and textural interest is high and the wines are very expressive for youthful wines in barrel. The general result was wines of concentration and one Sonoma Coast winemaker described them as "ethereal."

These wines I tasted really made an impression:

Flanagan Wines A new label for me and the 2014 Flanagan Chardonnay that was being poured was really, really good. Young winemaker Cabel Coursey, who makes wines at Flanagan and Lombardi, is one to watch.

Balletto Vineyards I spent some time talking with the winemaker, Anthony Beckman. He has it dialed in after ten years at Balletto and the 2013 Cider Ridge Sonoma Coast Chardonnay and Pinot Noir were flat out great.

Kanzler Vineyards The 2013 Kanzler Estate Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir was composed of clones 667, 115 and Pommard 4 and was heavenly aromatic with a smooth and engaging mouthfeel. Young Alex Kanzler is making some special wines here.

Alquimista Cellars A new project from Greg La Follette and Patrick Dillon producing wines from unique, even remote vineyards. The 2014 Alquimista Mes Files Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir was being poured and this is definitely a new label to check out.

Scherrer Winery No surprise here as Fred Scherrer continues to quietly produce many stellar Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays from Sonoma County. Fred's Hilford Vineyard Chardonnay has beat out many French white burgundies in blind tastings. Fred doesn't hurry his wines to market (he typically has two or even three vintages in storage at once), and he was pouring the 2012 Hallberg Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (he described it as an "Audrey Hepburn" wine) and the 2012 King Family Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (he described it as "Jane Russell" in type). Both wines were superb.

Dehlinger Winery The 2013 Goldridge Pinot Noir was a dreamy wine bursting with cherry and spice flavors. My notes say, "Wow."

West Sonoma County Wines that were notable: 2013 Alma Fria Holtermann Vineyard, 2013 COBB Jack Hill Vineyard, and 2013 Fort Ross Estate.

Sonoma County Icons Honored

An added feature of the 2016 Sonoma County Barrel Auction was a 2016 Sonoma County Wine Icons Library Tasting held at Martinelli Winery on Thursday, April 28, 2016. This event was an invitation-only VIP reception to honor four icons who helped shape the heritage and history of Sonoma County winemaking,

The 2016 Sonoma County Barrel Auction icons include:

Helen Long Bacigalupi Along with her deceased spouse, Charles, Helen founded Bacigalupi Vineyards. At 90 years of age, Helen Bacigalupi is celebrating the 60th anniversary of Bacigalupi Vineyards and three generations of her family's Russian River Valley heritage. Among her many accomplishments, she provided a significant portion of the Chardonnay grapes in the 1973 Chateau Montelena blend that won the famed Judgment of Paris in 1976. I have talked with Helen many times and she is a remarkable matriarch of the Bacigalupi family.

Tom Klein A fourth generation California farmer, Tom Klein earned a business degree from Stanford and spent the first part of his career as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company. In 1989, Tom and his family acquired Rodney Strong Vineyards and made the winery a leader in the movement towards sustainability. He also bought the Davis Bynum label and has continued the excellence of this Russian River Valley historic winery.

David Americo Rafanelli David is the third generation proprietor of A. Rafanelli Winery. He was an integral part of the Dry Creek Valley becoming its own AVA in 1983, and bringing Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel to world class status.

Tom Rochioli Tom's father, Joe Rochioli, Jr., made history in the Russian River Valley when he began planting Pinot Noir on his family's property in 1968. Tom was the one who persuaded Joe to make their own wine under the Rochioli label. He was one of the first to establish the single vineyard concept in California after a visit to Burgundy.

From left to right: David Rafanelli, Tom Rochioli, Helen Bacigalupi and Tom Klein. Photo courtesy of Will Bucquoy for the Sonoma County Vintners.



Return to Paris: Bacigalupi Family Celebrates 40th Anniversary of Judgment of Paris

The day after the Sonoma County Barrel Auction, the Bacigalupi Family hosted a forum titled, “Return to Paris,” honoring the legacy of Bacigalupi Vineyards and their important role in the winning 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay at the 1976 Judgment of Paris.

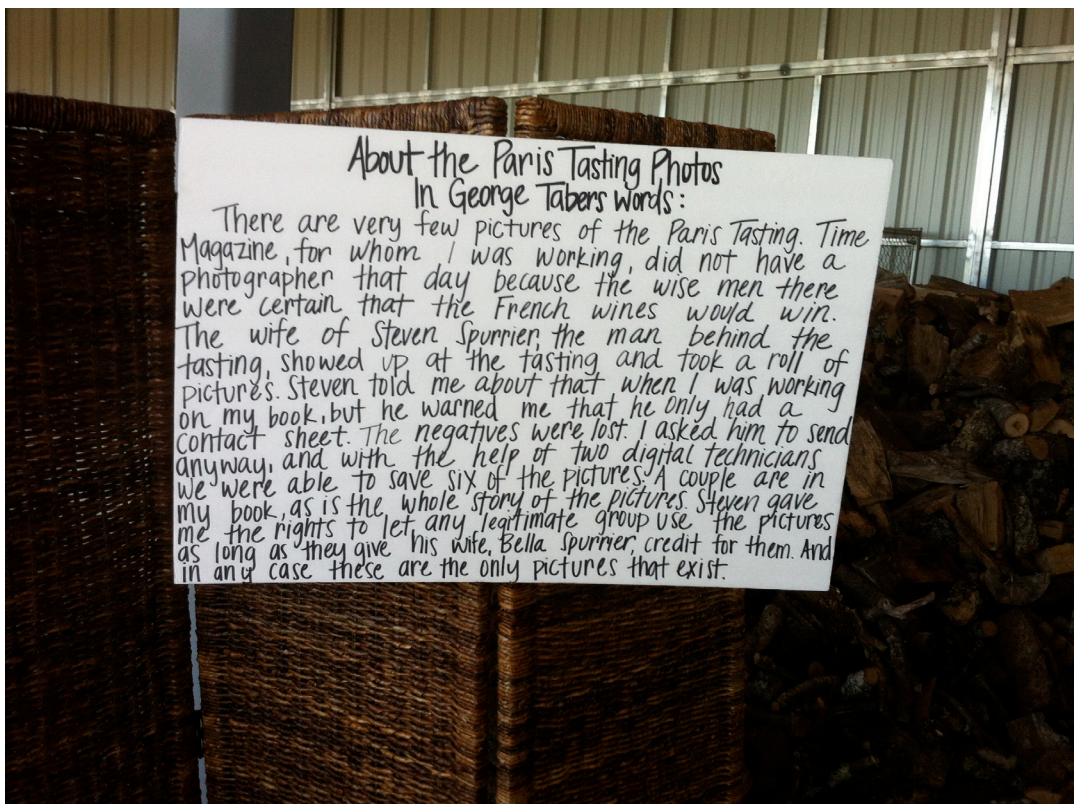
The forum was moderated by internationally renowned sommelier, wine educator and journalist, Christopher Sawyer. Other forum members included Rod Berglund, owner and winemaker at Joseph Swan Vineyards, David Breitstein, founder of retail wine and spirits enterprise Duke of Bourbon in Canoga Park, California, Frederick Ammons, winemaker at Rudd Wines, and Rusty Gaffney, MD, “Prince of Pinot.”

Rod was the founding winemaker of La Crema Viñera (the predecessor to La Crema) and made his first Russian River Valley Pinot Noir in 1979. In 1987 he joined Joe Swan to help him finish that year’s harvest and in 1988 took over the winemaking at Joseph Swan Vineyards. David Breitstein established his retail store in 1967 and received many industry accolades. In 2009, the Culinary Institute of America, Greystone, unveiled “A History of California Wine: The David and Judy Bernstein Collection,” the first major educational exhibit in the United States to document the rich history of California wines as told through rare bottles. Frederick Ammons is the sixth American to complete the *Diplôme National d’Enologie* from the prestigious *Faculté d’Enologie*, in Bordeaux. After nine years as the first winemaker with the Harlan team at The Napa Valley Reserve, he joined Rudd Oakville Estate in 2013. Rudd has made wines from the original Chardonnay plantings at Bacigalupi Vineyards for 16 years.

The setting for the intimate event was the Bacigalupi’s equipment barn. Forum members spoke from the bed of a truck in true wine country style.



The first photo below that was displayed at the event shows a rare photo by Bella Spurrier from the Judgment of Paris tasting along with the original weight tag of Bacigalupi Vineyards "Pinot Chardonnay" from Chateau Montelena. The second poster is George Tabor's comments about the Judgment of Paris.



Return to Paris Tasting

During the event, forum members and attendees blind tasted six Chardonnays from both France and California as a simulation of the original Judgment of Paris tasting. The wines included the following:



2014 Bacigalupi Vineyards Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.2% alc.. Aromas of baked apple and buttery brioche lead to a creamy palate of pear and apple flavors and fine balancing acidity. I correctly guessed this wine as from California.

2014 Edge Hill Bacigalupi Vineyards Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.0% alc.. Sourced from the original Chardonnay old Wente plantings dating to 1964. Welcome restraint in this wine propelled by aromas of citrus, butterscotch and caramel, and flavors of lemon, Granny Smith apple. Soft but not creamy on the palate with a steely finish. I incorrectly guessed this to be a French white Burgundy.

2013 Domaine Latour-Girard Les Narvaux Mersault 13.0% alc.. Aromas of lemony herbs with leaner flavors of apple and pear. Smooth but not creamy mouthfeel. I correctly guessed this to be French white Burgundy.

2012 Joseph Swan Ritchie Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.3% alc.. Oak-dominated aromas of caramel, butterscotch, and toast. Slightly tropical fruit flavors with added citrus notes. Slightly creamy and lower in acidity. I correctly guessed this to be a California Chardonnay.

2011 Chateau Montelena 40th Anniversary Release Napa Valley Chardonnay 13.8% alc.. Riper fruit aromas and butterscotch lead to a somewhat lean palate of apple and pear flavors with a crisp, soprano finish. I incorrectly guessed this to be a French white Burgundy.

2012 Domaine Laflaive Clavoillon Puligny Montrachet 1er 13.0% alc.. My favorite nose with a pleasing fusion of citrus, toast and flinty aromas. A complete wine with apple-driven flavors, juicy acidity and a very long finish. I correctly identified this as a French white Burgundy.

Although results were not tabulated the sixty people in attendance were split as to their favorites with most votes going to Chardonnays from Bacigalupi Vineyards and Joseph Swan Vineyards. Chateau Montelena was not the winner of this tasting! The forum members preferred the Laflaive Chardonnay.

Historical Revelations

Parked next to the equipment barn at Bacigalupi Vineyards is the original Volkswagon pickup truck that Helen Bacigalupi drove to deliver the Chardonnay grapes to Chateau Montelena in 1973. Helen Bacigalupi recounts that she drove the grapes over the Mayacamas Mountains herself. She said that the engine struggled to handle the weight of the grapes so she would floor it at the bottom of the hill and pray that the pickup made it to the top. She estimates that she made 15 trips to deliver the Chardonnay grapes (although the Chateau Montelena weight tag shows six separate weight lots). The grapes sold for \$815 per ton.



I have detailed the Bacigalupi's story and their contribution to the winning Chateau Montelena Chardonnay in several features in the *PinotFile*. Refer to www.princeofpinot.com/article/1690/. One item that needs to be emphasized for historical accuracy is the source of the Chardonnay grapes that went into that winning wine. Mike Grgich made 1,800 cases of the 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay, crafted from 40 tons of grapes from the Russian River Valley, Alexander Valley and Napa Valley. 14 tons were from the Bacigalupi Vineyard in the Russian River Valley, about 20 tons were from grower Henry Dick in Alexander Valley, and the remaining 5 tons were from Napa Valley growers Lee Paschich and John Hanna. The label attributed the grape source to "Napa and Alexander Valley" in an attempt to downgrade the contribution of Napa's rival, Sonoma County. Chateau Montelena never sourced Chardonnay grapes from Sonoma County after the 1973 vintage.

The Bacigalupi Chardonnay plantings were sourced from Karl Wentz in Livermore and undoubtedly the Alexander Valley Chardonnay vines as well, either directly from Wentz or the Robert Young Vineyard that was planted in Alexander Valley with budwood from the Wentz Livermore vineyard in the 1960s.

The 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay was included in a 2014 Smithsonian exhibition, "101 Objects that Made America," along side Abraham Lincoln's hat, Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, and Neil Armstrong's space suit. New York Times reporter George M. Taber chronicled the 1976 Judgment of Paris in this book, "*Judgment of Paris: California vs France and the Historic 1976 Paris Tasting that Revolutionized Wine.*"



My Presentation

Return to Paris Through the Eyes, Mind and Palate of Wine Critics

Talking Points:

- 1) Historical Perspective: fortuitous planting of the right Chardonnay clone (Old Wente) at Goddard Ranch at the right site at the right time.
- 2) Clonal Perspective: different aroma and flavor profiles from Chardonnay clones Old Wente, Wente and offspring such as Rued.
- 3) Stylistic Perspective: in the current Chardonnay camp there are three groups. Russian River Valley Middle Reach Chardonnay fits best in the fruity, 100% barrel fermented, full or nearly full malolactic fermented style.
- 4) Regional Perspective: in a review of my tasting notes over the past few years of Russian River Valley Chardonnays, excluding Grass Valley and Sebastopol Hills, there are recurrent themes in the wines and why I like the wines.

Historical Perspective

In 1976, at the time of the Judgment of Paris tasting, won by 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay over some of France's most prestigious Chardonnays, I was just beginning my medical practice, had little expendable income, and although I enjoyed wine, I bought little.

Looking back, Chardonnay just wasn't that popular in the United States at that time, and certainly not in 1964 when Helen and Charles Bacigalupi planted their Chardonnay in the Russian River Valley. Much of California's existing Chardonnay vines were destroyed during Prohibition because the delicate fruit did not withstand shipment to home winemakers in the East Coast. By 1960, it was estimated that only about 230 acres of Chardonnay existed in California, mainly in Livermore and Napa, with 70 acres of those owned by the Wente family in Livermore.

When looking back from a historical perspective, I realize the plantings of Chardonnay at Goddard Ranch by Helen and Charles Bacigalupi in 1964 represented a fortuitous confluence of the proper clone, the proper site, and the right time. The Bacigalupi's had white grapes planted at Goddard Ranch, but they brought little income, so they decided to pull those vines out and replant. Fortunately, they consulted with Paul Heck, a partner in Korbel Champagne Cellars at the time, and Bob Sisson, the University of California at Davis farm advisor for Sonoma County, and planted Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. This was despite the thinking of many Russian River Valley locals who considered it folly to plant grapes like Pinot Noir and Chardonnay that nobody wanted.

Karl L. Wente supplied the Bacigalupi's with a Wente selection of Chardonnay from his Livermore plantings and 6 acres were planted on St. George rootstock in 1964, and field budded the following year. A 4-acre block of these original plantings, known as the "Paris Tasting Block," is still thriving and the grapes are sold exclusively to Rudd Winery in Oakville where the Chardonnay is bottled under the Edge Hill Estate label.

During the 1960s there were other growers experimenting further with Chardonnay in California. In 1968, there were nearly 1,000 bearing acres, but it wasn't until the 1970s that Chardonnay plantings took off. By the end of the 1970s, more than 7,000 acres of bearing and nonbearing Chardonnay vines dotted the California landscape in all climate regions according to Professor Amerine a faculty member of the University of California at Davis. The Chardonnays of the time, such as those from iconic producers such as Stony Hill and Hanzell, were leaner, age worthy and Chablis-styled, and Chardonnay sales lagged other varieties. Even the 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay entered in the 1976 Judgment of Paris was easily confused for a French white Burgundy at the tasting.

By 1988, however, more popular styles of California Chardonnay evolved, Chardonnay was found to be very adaptable to many soils and climates, and Chardonnay plantings reached a total of 45,000 acres, overtaking France's total Chardonnay acreage. Although Chardonnay thrives in cool Winkler Region 1 climates, it also excels in warmer areas such as the Middle Reach of the Russian River Valley where Goddard Ranch is located, and where the fruit ripens more fully, producing more highly flavored wines than in cooler zones.

Today, Chardonnay is America's favorite wine, accounting for 22 percent of all varietal wine sales. Sales are only 1.5 percent less than the combined dollar sales of Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, White Zinfandel and Riesling. According to Nielsen, in the 52 weeks ending February 27, 2016, Chardonnay accounted for more than \$2.5 billion in off-premise sales, equaling more than 30 million cases. About 110,000 acres of Chardonnay are now planted in the United States (an estimate according to Brad Alderson). California produces the most Chardonnay (89 percent).

When looking back from a historical perspective, I realize the plantings of Chardonnay at Goddard Ranch by the Bacigalupi's represented a fortuitous confluence of the proper clone, proper site and proper time.

Clonal Perspective

The term "Wente clone" is confusing and its history is convoluted. The term has been used both for an older selection with small clusters that typically contain a high percentage of shot berries or hens and chicks (millerandage), and for the more productive selections at Foundation Plant Services (FPS) that can be traced back to the Wente vineyard in Livermore, California.

Old Wente Clone: Non-certified budwood, non-heat treated. Small clusters with very small berries, shot berries, fairly thick skins, low yields, lemon character. The clone can be picked early in the Russian River Valley

yet still have plenty of acidity along with richness, concentration and phenolic structure (according to winemaker Theresa Heredia). Many winemakers prefer Old Wente clone over Wente clones 04 and 05. Offshoots include Hyde, Sterling, Rued, Stony Hill and Robert Young selections. Photo below of millerandage in Chardonnay grapes:



Wente FPS selections including FPS 04 and FPS 05: Certified at FPS by budwood from Martini plantings in Carneros at Stanly Lane Vineyard. Louis Martini, Jr., took budwood from Stony Hill Vineyard vines (Old Wente Chardonnay sourced from Wente vineyard with the permission of Herman Wente and first planted in 1948) for planting at Stanly Lane in 1951 or 1952. Dr. Olmo of University of California at Davis (UCD) took selections from Stanly Lane beginning in 1955 that would later become Chardonnay FPS selections including 04-08 and 14. The Wente clones 04 and 05 were registered in 1969. Earlier, 04 and 05 were combined at UCD in what was called clone 108 consisting of different mother vines that underwent heat treatment at the same time. This was called the Davis or Wente clone and distributed through the 1960s where it was planted extensively in the Napa Valley. Clones 04 and 05 were separated in 1969, first appeared on the FPS Registered list in 1973, and are now workhorses in California. Larger bunches, lower skin to juice ratio so less concentration and structure than Old Wente. Grapes still maintain acidity even in warmer years. High yields, good consistency, but less personality than Old Wente. The Wente clones 04 and 05 clusters do not exhibit hens and chicks tendency.

FPS Old Wente Clone FPS 72: Once known in California as FPS 02A or simply 2A, this plant material was donated to the FPS public collection by the Wente family from vineyard selections at a production block in the Arroyo Seco appellation. The plant material underwent heat treatment in 1961-1962, was numbered FPS 02 and planted in the new FPS vineyard. It was distributed widely to many growers in California but was removed from the list of registered vines in 1968 because of positive testing for leaf roll. It resembled the Old Wente clone with small berries and shot berries. About 1991, FPS 02A plant material returned to FPS, underwent shoot tip tissue culture treatment to eliminate leaf roll and other viruses, and reappeared on the FPS registered list in 2002 as Chardonnay FPS 72. This clone exhibits hens and chicks.

Many of the details outlined here are from an article on Chardonnay history and selections at FPS, appearing in the FPS Grape Program Newsletter (November 2007) written by Nancy L. Sweet: www.iv.ucdavis.edu/files/24489.pdf.

The Bacigalupi's had hit the clonal jackpot and planted Old Wente clone at an ideal site and at a time when Chardonnay was poised to become America's favorite white varietal.

Stylistic Perspective

The Wente family in Livermore bottled the first Chardonnay in California in 1933 and labeled it Pinot Chardonnay, a term originated by the French. As noted previously, the early Chardonnays were too lean for many American palates. It wasn't until the 1970s and thereafter that the familiar and popular "California style" of Chardonnay appeared: ripe, buttery and oakey, produced with riper grapes, acid-lowering malolactic fermentation, aging and lees stirring in oak barrels.

Today, there are basically three styles of Chardonnay:

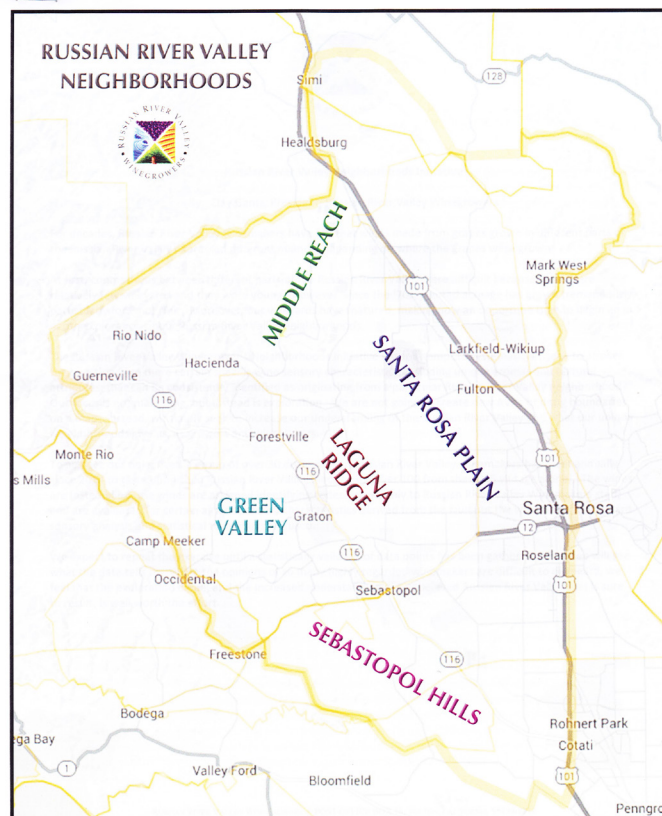
- 1) Crisp, fresh and lean styles with little or no malolactic fermentation and little or no oak barrel treatment. These wines feature focused and pure flavors of citrus, green apple and acid-fueled "minerality."
- 2) "California style." 100% barrel fermented, 100% malolactic fermented styles that are rich, buttery and fruity. This style features flavors of toast, caramel, pineapple, brioche, and butter along with white stone and citrus fruit, and creamy textures.
- 3) In between types that combine barrel and stainless steel fermentation with varying amounts of malolactic fermentation.

In the 1980s, I developed a taste for Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. I became fond of the "California style" Chardonnay that was wildly popular and was prevalent among Russian River Valley Chardonnays. I spent a small fortune on Kistler Russian River Valley Chardonnays because I really liked the wines and my wife adored them. It was a matter of keeping the home fires burning. I also found many other producers and styles to delight me.

From a current perspective, I still prefer this style of Chardonnay that is often criticized as too popular and food averse. Studies have shown that lovers of rich, oaky Chardonnay are mostly males and over 60-years-old so I fit right in.

Regional Perspective

The Middle Reach is the warmest of the sub regions of the Russian River Valley yet is still relatively cool. This sub region was made famous by the early plantings of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir by the Helen and Charles Bacigalupi and others.



Typically, the Russian River Valley Chardonnays from warmer sub regions such as the Middle Reach have rich, riveting, even lush fruit flavors. The wines are often creamy in mouthfeel with a citrus-fueled and fruity finish. Acidity is rarely high since malolactic fermentation is often employed to de-acidify the wines, yet the best examples still have enough acidity to energize the wine.

The Middle Reach style is driven primarily by tradition and market demand. Many producers pick the fruit riper in the Middle Reach to achieve concentration and acidulation may be needed as a result. If a decision is made to pick earlier, better acidity is achieved and concentration can be built in the cellar by lees inclusion and stirring and barrel selection.

When I looked back over the last few years at my reviews of Russian River Valley Chardonnays, excluding those from Green Valley and Sebastopol Hills, these were the recurring characteristics:

Nose: white stone fruits, lemon, yellow or baked apple, honeysuckle, buttery brioche, caramel, nut oil and vanilla pod

Palate: lemon curd, pear, grilled peach, poached or baked apple, apricot, pineapple and other tropical fruits, honey, crème brûlée, caramel, roasted nuts, butterscotch, and oak-driven spice and toast.

It is important to remember that most of the nutty, buttery, toasty and smoke flavors are the result of malolactic fermentation with some contribution from oak. Lactic acid bacteria convert tart malic acid to softer lactic acid. The buttery notes in particular come from diacetyl that is a byproduct of malolactic fermentation.

Sips of Recently Tasted Sonoma County Pinot Noir

Bacigalupi Vineyards, Healdsburg

After working with his parents, Charles and Helen Bacigalupi for many years, son and second generation John Bacigalupi took the viticulture reins with his wife, Pam Heck Bacigalupi, who had grown up in a wine family at Korbel Winery. More recently, their third generation offspring, Katie Bacigalupi Row and Nicole Bacigalupi Derrico, spearheaded the launch of the Bacigalupi label and tasting room. Winemaker Ashley Herzberg crafts multiple varietals at Bacigalupi, all of which have garnered top reviews in the wine press. Visit www.bacigalupivineyards.com. A photo of a young Helen and Charles Bacigalupi below.



2014 Bacigalupi Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 200 cases, pH 3.60, TA 0.60, \$65. 57% Wente clone, 43% Pommard clone. Harvest Brix 25.4°. 100% de-stemmed. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 40% new, with lees stirring. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Hard to coax much fruit out of the primary nose which offers mainly aromas of oak-driven toast and espresso at this stage. Much more expressive on the palate with a mid weight core of black cherry fruit that is ripe and fresh. The texture is lush and seamless, but the finish is only modest and the oak treatment is a tad heavy-handed.* **88.**

2014 Bacigalupi Vineyards Goddard Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.61, 95 cases, \$70. Inaugural bottling in honor of the Bacigalupi's 60th anniversary of farming premium grapes in the Russian River Valley. Harvest Brix 25.0°. 100% Wente clone. 100% de-stemmed, fermented whole berries. Aged in French oak barrels, 40% new, with lees stirring. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. The nose is entirely seductive, sporting bright aromas of Bing cherry, rhubarb and spice. Deeply flavored with well-ripened cherry fruit accented with notes of cola and dark cocoa. Elegant and charming, with velvety tannins and deftly integrated oak.* **91.**

Benovia Winery, Santa Rosa

Winemaker and General Manager Michael Sullivan continues to craft outstanding examples of Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from estate vineyards and purchased grapes. The 2014 vintage was the third consecutive drought year and Sonoma County received less than half of its average rainfall. The growing season was ideal and the earliest harvest on record resulted in a crop that was much larger than average. The wines are more structured like the 2012 vintage wines. Only the 2014 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir is part of the spring release. The other Pinot Noirs need more time in bottle and will be released in the fall. I tasted the wines about three months after bottling and gave a range of predicted scores based on more development in bottle. The wines are stellar in this vintage and I look forward to re-tasting them in another 5 months. The wines are sold primarily through a mailing list. Visit www.benoviawinery.com. The new Benovia winery is pictured below.



2014 Benovia Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., \$38. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of darker cherries, underbrush and barrel lead to a mid weighted wine with a good attack of dark red berry and stone fruits with typical Russian River Valley spice. Oak plays supportive in background, the tannins are well merged, and the finish is intensely fruity. The wine was noticeably more aromatic and flavorful the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 88-89.*

2014 Benovia La Pommeraiie Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc.. Vineyard is located along the Laguna Ridge at the edge of the Green Valley AVA and is planted to Dijon clones 777 and "828." *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is entirely seductive even at this young age with aromas of dark red cherries a a field of Pinot Noir at bloom. Full-bodied and sappy, with flavors of purple and black fruits accented with a touch of oak. Plush, velvety and fruit-driven at this stage with mellow tannins and a bold, intensely fruited finish. The most concentrated wine in the 2014 lineup, yet engaging and balanced. 91-93.*

2014 Benovia Bella Una Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc.. A blend of estate fruit. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Fresh aromas of cherry, strawberry and red grape. More forward drinking with flavors of red and dark red cherries and berries. Very silky, with juicy acidity, balanced tannins and an overall impression of vibrancy. 91-92.*

2014 Benovia Martaella Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc.. This is an estate vineyard that surrounds the winery. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens reluctantly in the glass over time, offering scents of dark fruits, woodland and underbrush. Purple and black fruits are featured in this mid weight plus styled wine with structured tannins. Appealing refinement and polish with a smooth texture and a fruit-driven finish. Unchanged the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 91-92.*

2014 Benovia Tilton Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc.. This is an estate vineyard perched on a ridge top near the town of Freestone and is the winery's coolest vineyard site. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A very tightly wound wine at this stage with shy aromas of grape, cherry and woodland. Lighter weighted in this vintage with a core of oak-kissed dark red fruits and bright acidity. Much more expressive the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **89-90.**

2014 Benovia Cohn Vineyard Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc.. The winery's oldest estate vineyard first planted in 1970 and located just west of the Russian River Valley AVA. *Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. Seductive aromas of crushed black cherries, spice and old leather. On the palate, this wine only hints at its future potential, with a well-ripened core of black fruits and spice with oak in the background. Noticeable more enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with intriguing aromas and flavors of black cherry and exotic spices.* **92-94.**



Bevan Cellars, Santa Rosa

Winemaker Russell Bevan currently crafts wines in Santa Rosa, but in 2016 construction began on a new winery and cave at Tench Vineyard in Bennett Valley, just a few miles from where Russell grew up. Some of the winery's Bordeaux varietals are grown within 2 miles of the new winery. Russell mentions Greg La Follette and Phillip Togni as his mentors. He has focused on small vineyard sources in Napa and Sonoma counties and become well known for his bodacious Cabernet Sauvignons. He also consults for other clients including Wren Hop, Jemrose, Chateau Boswell and Harbison. Bevan's long time partner, Victoria DeCrescenzo has played an important role in the winery as well. The wines are sold through a mailing list. The Pinot Noirs are full-bodied and rich, highly fruit-driven, yet balanced and easily approachable with alcohols tucked in. Visit www.bevancellars.com.

2014 Bevan Cellars Summit 2114' Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., \$75. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Full-bodied and luscious, with aromas and flavors of black fruits, dark chocolate and espresso. The fruit is almost overwhelming, but is tamed by balanced tannins and proper acidity. Rather monotone without nuance at present, but a big and bold expression of Pinot Noir. More open and giving the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle indicating some cellaring is advisable.* **90.**

2014 Bevan Cellars Summit 1376' Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., \$75. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Engaging aromas of boysenberry, blackberry and spice with less oak in put than the 2114' bottling. An explosion of purple and black fruits greet the palate, along with complimentary oak-driven notes of dark chocolate and caramel, yet the hedonistic load of sappy fruit is tempered by firm tannins. This wine is not for the timid and is about as big as Pinot Noir gets. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the spectacular charge of fruit stood out and the oak overlay had tempered further. This wine is not my preferred type of Pinot Noir, but it is very well done in this style.* **91.**



Additional bottling outside Sonoma County

2014 Bevan Cellars Rita's Crown Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$75. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose offers a shy assemblage of dark fruits backed by toasty oak and the slightest hint of volatile acidity. Full-bodied on the palate, with flavors of black raspberry, blackberry and cassis. The mouthfeel is plush and velvety, the oak is deftly integrated, and the fruit-driven finish satisfies. Still shy*

aromatically the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, with the velvety texture and glorious fruit still impressive. 91.

Bougetz Cellars, Napa

Winemaker Thomas Bougetz has a background in science and technology, but his interest in wine led him take up winemaking at the Northwest Wine Academy in Seattle, Washington. He works with vineyards from Santa Barbara to Eastern Washington, and although the emphasis is on Cabernet Sauvignon, he offers Pinot Noirs from the Sonoma Coast and Russian River Valley. Visit www.bougetzcellars.com.

2013 Bougetz Cellars The Cairn Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.57, 200 cases, \$39. Sourced from Volamus Vineyard. Clones 115, 667 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 26.0°. 15% whole cluster fermented. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new and 60% once-used. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. An array of scents greet the drinker including black cherry, blackberry, underbrush, earthy flora and sawdust. A mid weight plus styled wine that is packed with earth-kissed, sweet black fruits accented with flavors of anise, tar and char. Open and giving, with balanced tannins and a sweet blackberry finish. The wine was more enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle showing less oak overlay. 88.*

2014 Bougetz Cellars The Cairn Catie's Corner Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.75, TA 0.58, 135 cases, \$39. Harvest Brix 25.9°. Wädenswil 1A and 2A clones. 20-year-old vines. 15% whole cluster fermented. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 40% new and 60% once-used. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. This wine benefited greatly from air exposure, showing considerably better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Initially the nose offered primary oak scents but more fruit emerged the next day. The mid weight core of black cherry fruit, cola and spice flavors were juicy and appealing as was the soft texture, but the oak intrusion over rode the bright fruit expression. The following day the oak overlay had lessened and the fruit had come forward with noticeable improvement. I am not sure where this wine will go, but it seems to definitely need more time in bottle to shed the barrel adjunct. 88-89.*

COBB Wines, Cazadero

The wines reviewed here continue the pattern of excellence from Ross Cobb's Sonoma Coast offerings. Picked relatively early, using an appropriate amount of whole clusters, and employing a lengthy *elevage*, the wines are highly aromatic and have an appealing elegance and complexity that makes for a distinguishable "COBB style." Ross Cobb notes, "I think my wines can seem counterintuitive to some people, or at least run counter to their expectations. People see alcohol levels of 12.5% or 13.0% and they have a certain set of expectations. Then they taste the wines and discover their aromatic power, depth of mouthfeel and intensity of spice. There is an idea out there that something has to be sacrificed to make a great lower alcohol Pinot Noir. I have never believed that." The three wines reviewed here underwent at least 22 months of barrel aging. Ross addresses this choice by saying, "People might assume that we do so to increase the oak signature, but that's not the goal. In addition to using just 30% to 35% new oak for these wines, our barrels have very light toast levels. Perhaps even more important, the barrels are very tightly grained. The tighter the grain, the slower the oak extraction, and the subtler the overall influence. We age longer in barrel because it gives our wines greater integration upon release. This allows the wines to fully show the layered complexity of their sites." A Chardonnay from Mariani Vineyard was introduced with the 2013 vintage. The wines are highly allocated through a mailing list at www.cobbwines.com.

2013 COBB Jack Hill Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., 200 cases, \$75. From a 2-acre hillside vineyard near Occidental in western Sonoma County. A very cold site surrounded by dense oak and Douglas Fir trees. Three Dijon clones planted in Goldridge sandy loam. 30% whole cluster fermented. Aged 30 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is to die for with uplifting aromas of cherry, rose petal, spice and pine bark. Light to mid weighted flavors of red cherry and red berries with added notes of green herbs, iron and subtle tar. Quite elegant, with silken tannins and a suave, cherry-fueled finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose was still spectacular with more fruit expression. 91.*



2013 COBB Rice-Spivak Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 12.5% alc., 450 cases, \$70. From a 6-acre vineyard near Sebastopol in western Sonoma County. Dijon and Swan clones planted in Goldridge sandy loam. Aged 22 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Often my favorite COBB bottling, this wine has a glorious nose featuring cherry, rose petal, baking spice and dark chocolate aromas. Elegant and suave, with exquisite balance, this mid weight beauty flaunts its delicious essence of fresh cherries with enticing accents of spices including cinnamon. Very easy to drink now with seamless oak integration and a glorious finish of more than respectable length.* **94.**



2013 COBB Diane Cobb: Coastlands Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 275 cases, \$85. A half acre was planted Coastlands Vineyard to over 20 varieties of Pinot Noir in 1989. The dry farmed block was later expanded to 1.5 acres with a single selection Diane Cobb believed was the best performer in the original trial block. This bottling is a co-fermentation of the nursery Pinot Noir clones and commemorates Diane Cobb who passed away in 2006. Aged 22 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, baking spices, red hots and beef lead to a light to a mid weighted style offering fruit flavors of cherry and strawberry along with whole cluster savoriness. The wine has structured but elusive tannins and a vibrancy that appeals. The intense finish seems to return in waves and rises noticeably above the other 2013 COBB Pinot Noirs reviewed here. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, I noted, "It is hard to believe so much flavor and nuance originates from such a lightly colored wine. This is a perfect example of the glory of Pinot Noir." Even beyond the great finish, this wine has something special that is indescribable.* **95.**



Dehlinger Winery, Sebastopol

Dehlinger is a Russian River Valley iconic winery founded by Tom Dehlinger in 1975 on Vine Hill Road before the Russian River Valley appellation had been established. The second generation, Eva (general manager and winemaker) and Carmen (sales manager), are now the face of the winery. Eva joined the winery in 2007 after studying Earth Sciences Management at Stanford and spent a year studying viticulture and terroir at the masters level at the University of Burgundy in Dijon, France. Pinot Noir was planted in the Estate Vineyard between 1975 and 2011 with primarily Pommard and Swan, with smaller amounts of Martini, Dijon 943 and Calera. Pinot Noir bottlings include Goldridge, Altamont, and in special vintages, High Plains and Octagon. Tasting by appointment is currently suspended as the coordinator is on pregnancy leave. Visit www.dehlingerwinery.com.

2013 Dehlinger Altamont Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., \$70. This wine comes from the hilltop sections of the Dehlinger Estate Vineyard where Altamont soil predominates. The wines generally show darker fruit flavors and aromas of baking spices. A small percentage of whole cluster is included. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine is lush with flavor in the typical Dehlinger style, but has laser-like clarity and balance. The nose leads with aromas of Bing cherries, sous-bois, baking spices and oak cask. Soft in the mouth, with luscious flavors of black cherry and boysenberry framed by cashmere tannins. There is a deft sprinkling of oak in the background and a finish bright with cherry flavor. This wine was significantly better two days later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle which predicts age ability.* **92.**



2012 Dehlinger Goldridge Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., \$55. This wine comes from deeper Goldridge soils in the Estate Vineyard and tends to have more approachability. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Regal aromas of black cherry, black raspberry and rose petal lead to a mid weight plus styled wine with a delicious core of black cherry fruit that is supported by silky tannins and balanced acidity. A thread of toasty oak plays in the background. This wine has gorgeous balance and generous amounts of black cherry and blackberry fruit haunting the uplifting peacock tail finale.* **94.**



2012 Dehlinger High Plains Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.9% alc., \$75. From the top sections of the Dehlinger Estate Vineyard, only produced in special vintages. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Delicate aromas of cherries, baking spices and sandalwood lead off. Very elegant, but highly flavorful, with a delicious core of bright cherry and red berry fruits with a bit of sauvage. The tannins are well matched in this mid weight styled wine and the finish has pleasing persistence.* **92.**

Domaine Della, Santa Rosa

Proprietor and winemaker David W. Hejl launched DELLA wines with fellow founders and subsequently changed the name to Domaine Della. Hejl is a former CEO and GM of Kosta Browne Winery who began crafting Pinot Noir in 2010. The winery's Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays are released in the spring and fall to active mailing list members. The designated website, www.domainecella.com, is currently inactive so visit www.facebook.com/dellawines/.

2014 Domaine Della Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.59, 250 cases, \$60. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 47% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Considerable swirling is needed to coax the demure aromas of black cherry, red berry, underbrush and roasted nuts to the forefront. More enjoyable on the palate, with a mid weight plus charge of black cherry and black raspberry fruits accented with baking spices. Suave in texture with balanced tannins and some length on the finish that leaves a slight sense of alcoholic warmth in its wake. Although the chemistry of this wine would indicate comparable acidity to the Sonoma Coast bottling, this wine does not have the same vibrancy.* **89.**

2014 Domaine Della Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.51, TA 0.59, 150 cases, \$60. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 47% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Black cherry and pomegranate aromas lead off with some nutty oak in the background. Silky on the palate with a serenade of cherry and pomegranate fruit flavors. Beautifully balanced, with inviting crisp acidity driving a pleasurable vibrancy and offering a juicy finish that has some staying power.* **91.**

Dutton Estate Winery, Sebastopol

Vineyard-designated Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc from Dutton Ranch estate vineyards in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast appellations. Dutton Estate Winery was established in 1995 by Tracy and Joe Dutton. Joe is co-owner of the Dutton Ranch that dates to 1964 and today encompasses over 80 vineyards spread over 1,300 acres of vineyards. The Duttons sell grapes to about sixty different wineries with many of them using the respected Dutton Ranch designation. Visit www.duttonestate.com.

2014 Dutton Estate Manzana Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.62, 201 cases, \$56. Vineyard is located in the heart of the Green Valley. Clones "828," and 115 planted in 2001. Goldridge sandy loam soils. 100% de-stemmed, cold soak, open top fermentation, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. A selection of the best barrels from the Manzana lot. *Moderate*

reddish purple color in the glass. The nose opens slowly in the glass to reveal aromas of black cherry, dark red rose and forest floor. The cherry and raspberry fruits attract attention on the attack and the ever expanding flavors are very satisfying. The fine-grain texture is of interest, there is a good underlying cut of acidity, and the finish is replete with generous fruit as well as blessed with lengthy intentions. 92.

2014 Dutton Estate Jewell Block Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.87, TA 0.49, 143 cases, \$53. Vineyard is located in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. The site was formerly home to Gravenstein apples and contains Goldridge sandy loam soils. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 66% new. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Uplifting and persistent aromas of cherries and strawberries lead to a well-spiced palate of red cherry fruit framed by gentle fine-grain tannins. Soft and satiny in texture with an elegant demeanor, making for a very easy friendship. Spice up your life. 90.*

2014 Dutton Estate Thomas Road Vineyard-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.56, 148 cases, \$56. Vineyard is located in the northeastern part of the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Planted to Dijon 115 in 1997. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of muddled cherries, earth, iron and a persistent, but subtle scent of acetic acid. Impressive attack of well-spiced black cherry fruit with notable mid palate presence, finishing with appealing juiciness. Slightly more dense and firmly tannic than the other 2014 Pinot Noirs reviewed here, with a gamey, savage edge, but still sleek and refreshing. 89.*

2014 Dutton Estate La Familia-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.85, TA 0.52, 95 cases, \$60. Sourced from Kozlowski Family Vineyard located in the heart of Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Vineyard was planted to Pommard clone in 1998 in Goldridge sandy loam soil. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Regal aromas of fresh black cherry pie, nutmeg and herbs. Delicious charge of seductive cherry and raspberry fruits in a mid weight style with impressive palate fullness and overreaching length. Wonderful harmony and a baby's bottom texture. A beguiling wine that is quite friendly in the mouth. 93.*



2013 Dutton Estate Karmen-Isabella-Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., pH 3.49, TA 0.59, 1,186 cases, \$44. A selection of the Dutton's favorite three vineyards (Manzana, Marty's and Thomas Road) with the goal of producing a vision of the Russian River Valley. The wine is named after the Dutton's youngest daughter and is a blend of reserve barrels. Clones "828," 777 and 115. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy aromas of red cherry rose petal and underbrush. Vibrant, with good acidity, offering a mid weight melange of dark red cherry and berry flavors shadowed by toasty oak. The supportive tannins are finely honed, and there is some staying power on the enjoyable finish. 89.*

Furthermore Wines, Graton

This winery is quite a success story. It began modestly in 2006 when two lifelong friends and partners began producing single vineyard Pinot Noir at Crushpad, later shifting production to a San Francisco urban winery. In 2011, the first estate vineyard, Nevina's Vineyard in the Sonoma Coast, was added. In January 2016, Graton Ridge Cellars estate vineyard, winery, label and tasting room were acquired and Erica Stancliff was hired as head winemaker. She is the winemaker also for her own Trombetta Family Wines label and has had winemaking experience at Paul Hobbs CrossBarn, Rudd and Viña Cobos. Small lot single vineyard Pinot Noirs are offered from coastal vineyards as far south as Santa Barbara County and as far north as Mendocino County. Visit www.furthermorewines.com.

2014 Furthermore Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 328 cases, \$N/A. *Light cherry red in color with a slight haze (unfiltered). The nose is perfumed with aromas of cherry, rose petal, pine sap and sandalwood. Light in weight, with flavors of well-spiced cherry and raspberry framed by suave tannins. Elegant, like cherries draped in a lacy evening gown. Forward drinking and enjoyable. 89.*



2013 Furthermore Nevina's Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.73, 150 cases, \$60. Clone 777. Harvest Brix 24.2°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Deep, penetrating aromas of darker cherries and darker red berries along with the scent of rose petal and woodlands. The palate seems whole cluster inspired with flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, plum and spice, with hints of vanilla and root beer. Impressive attack and mid palate presence with streamlined tannins and a juicy demeanor, finishing with pizzazz. Noticeably better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 94.*



2013 Furthermore Gloria Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.61, 181 cases, \$45. Calera, Swan and Pommard clones. Harvest Brix 25.4°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate light reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is alive with scents of black cherry and sous-bois. Polished, elegant and charming, with mid weight flavors of black cherry, plum, anise and spice. Seamless with some finishing length. Even better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.*

2013 Furthermore Keefer Ranch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.62, 204 cases, \$55. Harvest Brix 24.7°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Delicate aromas of cherry, dried herbs and sandalwood. Plush, suave and easy to cozy up to, with a core of bright cherry fruit encased in soft tannins. The finish is remarkable for its lengthy trail of spiced cherry. Great vineyards always show up. 92.*

Additional 2013 bottlings from outside Sonoma County

2013 Furthermore La Encantada Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.51, 126 cases, \$45. Clones 667 and 777. Harvest Brix 26.8°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. A well-crafted wine that offers uplifting aromas of black cherry, spice and scrub brush. The blackberry and black raspberry fruits lean to the riper side with even a subtle note of black raisin creeping in. Oak contributes a coffee and dark chocolate note. The tannins are well-proportioned and there is enough acidity to compliment the fruit load. The slightest sense of alcoholic warmth shows up on the finish. 90.*

2013 Furthermore Sierra Mar Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.60, 133 cases, \$55. Pisoni and "828" clones. Harvest Brix 28.0°. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Earth-kissed aromas of blackberry jam lead to a delicious melange of luscious black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors with a welcome hint of spice and oak. Nicely balanced, with a lengthy finish that had good cut. The most richly endowed wine in the 2013 lineup. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the nose had really blossomed and the texture had become quite soft and sexy. 93.*

Kosta Browne, Sebastopol

Founded by Dan Kosta, winemaker Michael Browne and co-owner Chris Costello, this is one of the most recognizable names in California Pinot Noir, having earned considerable praise from the wine press and consumer for over fifteen years. A magnificent winery is located in The Barlow complex in Sebastopol, a testament to the winery's success. The wines are sold through an allocated mailing list at www.kostabrowne.com. The winery is not open to the public. The three 2014 appellation blends reviewed here are spring 2016 offerings (along with the One Sixteen Russian River Chardonnay reviewed elsewhere). Like other Sonoma County Pinot Noirs from the 2014 vintage reviewed here, the wines are still relatively tight and need time to open in the glass, and are even more open the following day from a previously opened bottle. Kosta Browne recommends cellaring their Pinot Noirs for 2 to 3 years after release or decanting ahead of time if you wish to try them sooner. There is very little to differentiate these big, fruity wines.



2014 Kosta Browne Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.59, \$68. Sourced from a variety of vineyards including Jenkins, Keefer Estate, Koplen, Martinelli Moonshine and Martinelli Zio Tony. 5-day cold soak, fermented in 5-ton open tops including wood and concrete, 14-day average ferment, 2% whole cluster. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Engaging aromas of black cherry, cola and oak spice. Full-bodied on the palate with a packed mouth of black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors. Sappy and luscious, with firm but balanced tannins and minimal oak presence. Much better the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, showing aromas of Bing cherry, cola, spice and red hard candy and echoing flavors of satisfying brightness.* **90.**

2014 Kosta Browne Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.55, TA 0.59, \$68. Sourced from a variety of vineyards including Gap's Crown, Goldrock, Griffin's Lair, Kanzler, Klopp and Walala. Fermented in 5-ton open tops, 5-day cold soak, 14-day average ferment, 7% whole cluster. Some lots 100% concrete aged, with remainder aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 55% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The most expressive nose of the three 2014 appellation wines, sporting aromas of black cherry, dark berries, spice and caramel. Robust and virile, featuring an array of purple and black fruits framed by firm, svelte tannins, finishing with a bright, generous fruitiness.* **90.**

2014 Kosta Browne Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.59, \$68. Sourced from Garys', Pisoni, Rosella's, Sierra Mar and Soberanes vineyards. 5-day cold soak, fermented in 5-ton open tops including wood, 14-day average ferment, 2% whole cluster, Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 49% new. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. A jammy wine with aromas and flavors of black fruits, cassis, anise and Oolong tea. Bulky and fruit-driven, yet balanced, with a silky mouthfeel. More enjoyable the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Perfectly fine, but no real appellation identity.* **89.**

MacRostie Winery & Vineyards, Healdsburg

Founder Steve MacRostie and winemaker Heidi Bridenhagen craft small-lot, vineyard-driven Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from superb Sonoma County vineyard sources. Steve's 42-year career has allowed him to develop close relationships with some of Sonoma County's finest growers including Kent Ritchie, the Duttons, Sangiacomos, Martinellis, Bacigalupis and Klopps. In recent years, Steve and Heidi have re-imagined the

winery's Pinot Noir program, including building a new small-lot Pinot Noir winery where they can do upwards of 70 small fermentations in each vintage. Only wines that deserve vineyard-designation are chosen through blind tasting. The winery's new tasting room on Westside Road is open daily. Visit www.macrostiewinery.com.

2013 MacRostie Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 396 cases, \$42, screwcap. Sourced from several vineyards include the winery's Thale's Vineyard as well as Flax, Tina Maria, and Widdoes Ranch. Harvest Brix varied from 24.9° to 26.2° on four separate days. 100% de-stemmed into 1-ton fermenters. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new, 40% one-year-old, and the rest neutral. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, sandalwood, nutty oak and discrete spices. Forward drinking and balanced, with mid weight flavors of black cherry and strawberry framed by modest tannins. A solid everyday drinker and an admirable example of the Russian River Valley appellation. 88.*

2013 MacRostie Goldrock Ridge Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 428 cases, \$56, screwcap. This vineyard is located a few miles from the Pacific Ocean near the town of Annapolis in the far western Sonoma Coast. Clones 777 and "828" are planted in Goldridge sandy loam soils at an elevation of 780 feet above the fog layer. 100% de-stemmed, 3-day cold soak, inoculated yeast strains, aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. This wine is nicely endowed with aromas and flavors of red cherry, strawberry, baking spices, blonde caramel and roasted nuts. Light to mid weighted, with gentle tannins, admirable elegance and plenty of Pinot personality. 91.*

2013 MacRostie Wildcat Mountain Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 887 cases, \$50, screwcap. This is an estate vineyard owned by Steve MacRostie and his partners Nancy and Tony Lilly located on a fog-shrouded mountaintop. Clones 115 and Pommard. 100% de-stemmed into small open-top fermenters, 3-day cold soak, inoculated yeast strains, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 43% new. *Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. The aromas of red cherry, baking spice and sandalwood draw you into the glass. This wine delivers more flavor than the light color would suggest. There is a earthy and feral side to the black cherry fruit, herb and mushroom flavors. The mid palate fullness is pleasant, the tannins are well-matched, and the wine finishes in classy style with panache. 92.*

Migration, Philo

Duckhorn Wine Company's Migration brand debuted in vintage 2001 with an Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. In 2008, Migration produced its first Chardonnay in Duckhorn Wine Company's 30-year history. Beginning in 2011, Migration also began making a Russian River Valley Pinot Noir and more recently added a Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, a Bien Nacido Vineyards Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir and a Goldrock Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. The winemaker is cool climate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay specialist Bo Felton. The wines are widely distribution in retail establishments (see website). Visit www.migrationwines.com.

2013 Migration Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.78, TA 0.46, 300 cases, \$68. Harvest Brix 24.5°. Sourced from Dutton-Manzana and Dutton-Thomas Road vineyards located in the cool Green Valley of Russian River Valley. A mix of clones. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of crushed red cherries, cake spice and nutty oak lead off. Suave and inviting, with a middleweight charge of cherry fruit accented with a deft note of oak. Forward-drinking, with silky tannins, and a noticeable acidity-fueled freshness. My only nit is a bit of alcoholic warmth shows up on the finish. 90.*

2013 Migration Goldrock Ridge Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.67, TA 0.52, 300 cases, \$68. Harvest Brix 25.0°. This vineyard is a few miles from the Pacific Ocean at an elevation of about 600 feet. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of blackberry, woodland and nutty oak. Engaging flavors of blueberry, black raspberry and blackberry in a mid weight style that sports noticeable but not weighty tannins. The overall impression is one of great harmony and polish and a memorable spiced berry and plum flavored finish. Tasted eight hours later from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the wine had come together even more beautifully and offered an arsenal of Pinot joy.* **93.**



Patz & Hall, Sonoma

The big news at this winery is that it was bought by Ste. Michelle Wine Estates in mid-April 2016. The sale included the inventory of wines and interests in the winemaking facility and visitor's center in Sonoma. The wines will still be made from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir vineyards in the Russian River Valley, Sonoma Coast and Carneros. All four of the founding partners including winemaker James Hall will remain with the winery to ensure continuity. The wines are largely sold through the website, a mailing list and the visitor center ("Sonoma House") which is open daily for drop-ins and appointments. The single vineyard Pinot Noirs reviewed here from the 2014 vintage are extracted, structured and brooding and will benefit from more time in bottle. Visit www.patzandhall.com.

2014 Patz & Hall Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., \$46. A consistent performer in each vintage sourced from several vineyards including Dutton Ranch, Martinelli Family, and Chenoweth Vineyard. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The initial aromas of underbrush, earthy flora and smoke give way to dark fruit scents over time in the glass. Silky on the palate, with a discreetly concentrated core of earthy black cherry and blueberry-pomegranate flavors sprinkled with complimentary oak. The wine is endowed with juicy acidity and a sweet cherry finish that has a slight sense of alcoholic warmth.* **89.**

2014 Patz & Hall Jenkins Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,342 cases, \$60. This 18-acre vineyard source is located in Sebastopol. Clones 667 and 777 are planted in Goldridge sandy loam. Aged in about 60% new French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black raspberry, spice, game and nutty barrel lead off. Aggressive attack of black raspberry and allaliberry fruit flavors with an infusion of oak. Ripe, firm tannins, with a finish fueled with black grape aromatic essence. A slight sense of alcohol heat shows up at the end. A young wine that was unchanged the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **89-90**

2014 Patz & Hall Gap's Crown Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 1,075 cases, \$70. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Oak is at the forefront of this wine with very little fruit showing up on the nose. The mid weight core of black cherry and black raspberry fruit is buried in aggressive tannins and oak char. The barrel treatment has created a drying taste and the finish leaves you thinking of nothing but oak.* **86.**

2013 Patz & Hall Sonoma County Barrel Auction Lot #47 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 20 cases. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas and flavors of black cherry, black raspberry and pie spices are encased in muscular tannins that create an astringent finish. A full mouthful of engaging fruit that is somewhat negated by daunting fruit tannins. This wine will undoubtedly benefit from further time in the cellar.* **89.**

Reuling Vineyard, Forestville

A special vineyard site that is farmed using organic practices and biodynamic principles. Winemaker Matt Taylor, formerly winemaker and vineyard manager at Araujo Estate Wines, first developed his love for Pinot Noir working at Joseph Swan Vineyards in 2000. The vineyard was acquired by the Reulings in 1998 and initially supplied grapes to Mark Aubert and Peter Michael. The first vintage under the Reuling Vineyard label

was 2011 and in 2014 a Chardonnay was added. The 12.2 acres contain three Pinot Noir clones: Calera and two different “suitcase” clones from Vosne-Romanee. There are also 2.2 acres of Chardonnay from Montrachet selections. Tasting is available by appointment to visit the Reuling’s home and vineyard. Visit www.reulingvineyard.com. A Pinot Noir clonal collection (only 200 produced) was offered from the 2013 vintage. The wines are sold primarily through a mailing list.

2014 Reuling Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.85, 475 cases, TA 0.56, \$70. Harvest Brix 23.9°-24.9°. Reuling clone ‘L’ 60% whole cluster, Calera clone 30% whole cluster and Reuling clone ‘R’ 10% whole cluster. Native yeasts. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 30% new and 70% used. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. This wine was evaluated over a day’s time, requiring the additional time to achieve expression. Welcoming aromas of black cherry, dried rose petal, spice, toasted hazelnuts, and sandalwood. Impressive attack and finishing intensity of black cherry cola flavor with hints of spice and toast. A sophisticated wine with well-managed fine grain tannins and the structure and balance to satisfy for years to come. The finish is striking in length. This wine is only hinting at its full potential now and deserves more time in bottle. 92-93.*



More Sonoma County Wines

2013 Anaba Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.59, 1,705 cases, \$36. Sourced from multiple vineyards. Clones 114, 115, Pommard, 667, 777 and Swan. Harvest Brix 23.9°. 100% de-stemmed, 6-day cold soak, basket pressed, aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 36% new. *Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Clean aromas of cherry, rhubarb, spice and seasoned oak lead to a middleweight core of earthy black cherry and black raspberry fruit flavors with a cola accent. The silky mouthfeel appeals and the tannins are tucked in, in this simple but pleasant wine. 88.*

2013 Anaba Las Brisas Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.60, 249 cases, \$38. Swan clone. Harvest brix 24.2°. 100% de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak, basket pressed, aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. I like this wine for its vibrancy and infusion of fresh cherry aromas and flavors. There is a complimentary overlay of oak, the tannins are balanced, and the finish is noticeably generous with cherry goodness. 89.*

2013 Anaba Dutton Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.60, 262 cases, \$46. Clones 115 and Pommard. Harvest Brix 24.1°. 15% whole cluster, 6-day cold soak, native fermentation, basket pressed, aged 11 months on the lees in French oak barrels, 40% new. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Clearly a step up in quality, with enticing aromas of black cherry, rose petal and cake spices and a mid weight plus nucleus of perfectly ripened black cherry and blackberry fruits nicely highlighted by spice. Silky and polished, with admirable balance and welcome length on the expansive finish. 91.*

2014 Anthill Farms Campbell Ranch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.1% alc., \$52. Sourced from a vineyard near Annapolis situated above the Pacific Coast at the fog line at 750 feet elevation farmed with owner Steve Campbell. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is both savory and fruity, offering a mix of earthy flora, stem and rose petal aromas, as well as aromas of blue and black berries. A bit closed at this stage, but giving enough flavors of blueberry, pomegranate and black raspberry to satisfy. Elegant, with frisky acidity, like able polish and balance, and an appealing feral quality. 91.*

2013 Attune Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 330 cases, \$48. Sourced from an estate sustainably farmed 8.5-acre vineyard in Sonoma Carneros. The vineyard is planted with two Burgundian selections and Dijon clones 667 and 777. The winemaker is Kenneth Juhasz. Aged 15 months in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry jam, cassis, bittersweet chocolate, vanilla and prune. A husky, mid weight plus wine with a core of very ripe black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors with a hint of prune. Notes of oak-driven dark cocoa and malt are contributory. The mouthfeel is very plush and velvety and the ruddy tannins are slightly drying. A wine fashioned in the popular “Meiomi style.” 87.*



2015 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Rosé of Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.44, TA 0.64, \$18.100% Pommard clone from Sangiacomo Vineyard in Los Carneros. A saignée, fermented in neutral oak barrels. *Moderate pinkish orange color in the glass. A well composed wine with aromas of orange water, cranberry and dried herbs. Flavorful, with tastes of blood orange, strawberry, watermelon and herbs in a seamless style with integrated, bright acidity and trace tannins. The juicy finish has some length which is unusual for a rosé.* **89.**



2014 Cosa Obra Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.9, TA 0.54, \$29. Fruit sourced from Sangiacomo Vineyard in southern Sonoma (Los Carneros). 100% Pommard clone. 100% de-stemmed, 5 to 7-day cold soak extended maceration from 3 to 4 weeks. Aged 9 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass.*

Seductive scents of ripe Bing cherries, forest path and clove. Forward drinking and enticing with mid weight flavors of black cherry, blackberry, cola, spice and tobacco. The tannins are harmoniously supportive and the silky texture is tres Pinot. **91.**



2014 Gehricke Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 948 cases, \$45. Produced and bottled by The Other Guys in Sonoma. August Sebastiano is the proprietor and Kendrick Coakley is the winemaker. Aged 9 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with aromas of Bing cherry, cranberry relish and sandalwood. A mid-weight styled wine with an oak-kissed cherry core that has a confected tone. True to its Russian River Valley roots with caressing tannins and a sweet cherry finish.* **88.**

2014 Gehricke Los Carneros Sonoma Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 1,556 cases, \$39. Small lot fermentations, aged 9 months in French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose exudes aromas of earth, mushroom, cigar, cherry, raspberry and cake spice. Modest in weight, with a black cherry and blackberry fruits theme overlain with generous tarry oak. The modest tannins make for easy drinking, but the oak is unduly intrusive, at least at this early stage.* **86.**

2014 Gracianna Estate Mercedes River Block Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.4% alc., 191 cases, \$64. The winery's estate vineyard, Mercedes Motherblock, is planted to clone 115. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of darkest cherry, blackberry syrup and a hint of volatile acidity. Mid weight plus flavors of blackberry, cassis, sauvage, char and brine in a rich, sappy and ultra ripe style with tucked-in alcohol, but noticeable tannins and oak overlay.* **85.**

2014 Gracianna Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 15.2% alc., 437 cases, \$52. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Welcoming aromas of Bing cherry, pomegranate and sandalwood. Mid weight flavors of muddled cherry and black raspberry coulis with anise-laced oak in the background. Easy to cozy up to, with fine-grain tannins and a generous charge of aromatic cherry on the finish.* **88.**

2014 Lombardi Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.573, 125 cases, \$42. Sourced from Sonoma Stage, Spring Hill and Terra de Promissio vineyards. Clones are Calera, Pommard, 667 and 777. Barrel fermented in neutral French oak and aged 16 months in French oak barrels. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The brooding nose offers very ripe fruits including black cherry with a note of wine cave and a hint of volatile acidity. Mid weight in style, with sweet black cherry and blackberry fruit flavors accented with spice and lacy oak. The wine finishes with a puckering, sweet and sour finish indicating possible acidulation.* **86.**



2013 O'Connor Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 352 cases, \$35. Newly designed label, new vineyard manager, and new winemaker Ron Johnson. Pommard and 115 from 3.5-acre vineyard in Sebastopol. Harvest Brix 24.9°.

Moderately light cherry red color in the glass. Lovely aromas of Bing cherry, baking and wood spices and sandalwood. The cherry cola essence charges out of the bottle initially in a light to mid weight style wine that is fresh and juicy. There is noticeable but not imposing oak infusion and the gentle tannins in the background provide adequate structure. This wine has a classic Russian River Valley profile in a more feminine style. 90.



2014 Valerie's Vineyard One Acre Carneros Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 62 cases, \$40. 12th vintage crafted by winemaker Jeff McBride. Vineyard farming is guided by Phil Coturri. Produced and bottled at Benziger Family Winery. Aged 18 months in new and 2-year-old French oak barrels. *Light cherry red color in the glass. Aromas of darker cherry, dried herbs and floral bouquet lead to a middleweight core of confected cherry and raspberry fruits accented with cola and brioche notes. Sleek, with harmonious tannins and inviting cherry fruit intensity on the finish. 88.*

2013 Wild Ridge Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.57, 3,153 cases, \$50. This offering is part of the Jackson Family Wines' West Burgundy Wine Collective that is a small estate-based portfolio of site-driven Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from top West Coast appellations. Vineyard is located very close to Annapolis at 900 feet elevation. Goldridge soils, marine air influence and surrounding forest. This wine is 100% estate grown at the Annapolis vineyard located in the extreme western reaches of the Sonoma Coast AVA. 700 to 900 foot elevation, three miles from Pacific Ocean on top of the third ridge inland surrounded by coastal Redwoods, with Goldridge sand loam soils. Clones are Pommard 5, 115, 667 and 777. 100% de-stemmed, 3 to 4-day cold soak, inoculated with cultured yeast, fermented in open-top tanks, free-run wine aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose reminds of a walk along a forest trail in the morning, with added aromas of blackberry and black cherry. A mid weight plus styled wine with plenty of blueberry-pomegranate and spice flavors to satisfy. The angular tannins are nicely balanced, oak provides a complimentary touch, and the wine finishes with some persistent blueberry goodness. The wine is a bit rustic and wild, but that adds to its appeal. 90.*



Pinot Briefs

“Roll Out the Barrels” Celebration The summer launches in San Luis Obispo wine country with the 26th annual “Roll Out the Barrels” Celebration with a variety of events happening June 23-26 on California’s Central Coast. The celebration is best known for its outdoor Barrels in the Plaza food and wine event on Thursday, June 23, on the grounds of Mission San Luis Obispo in downtown San Luis Obispo. The weekend unfolds with the Taste the Coast Collaborative Winemaker Dinner on Friday, June 24 at Claiborne & Churchill Winery. Finally, attendees embark on Adventures in SLO Wine Country on Friday, June 24 through Sunday, June 26 offering a chance to walk the vineyards, try barrel samples and enjoy tasting room open houses. Anyone booking a two-night stay in San Luis Obispo will receive a 20 percent discount on tickets to Barrels in the Plaza at www.slovacations.com/rotb. Complete event details and tickets are at www.slowine.com.

Wine and Fire 2016 The Sta. Rita Hills Winegrowers Alliance is holding their annual weekend Wine and Fire event August 5-6, 2016. The weekend kicks off Friday night with a Kick Off Barn Party at the beautiful Hilliard Bruce Winery barn. Winemakers will share library wines, large format bottles and small production bottlings. Array of Central Coast inspired foods will be available for noshing. Tours of the new Hilliard Bruce Winery will be offered during this event. The Saturday morning seminar is titled “Hwy 246 Vineyards B to Z” and will be held also at Hilliard Bruce Winery barn. A fire-grilled lunch follows the seminar.



On Saturday evening, there is the Wine and Fire Grand Tasting at La Purisima Mission in Lompoc where forty plus wineries will be pouring and many local chefs and farmers will provide an amazing selection of local food favorites. For tickets and more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-wine-and-fire-tickets-25588566090>. Early bird pricing is in effect.

In Pursuit of Balance will cease operations at end of 2016 In Pursuit of Balance (IPOB) co-founders Jasmine Hirsch and Rajat Parr have announced that their organization will end operations at the conclusion of 2016. IPOB was created to change the dialogue around the meaning and importance of balance in California wine and was formed as a nonprofit organization in 2011. 36 wineries, many of which are at the leading edge of California winemaking, are currently members, chosen by an IPOB panel after tasting submitted wines. The organization’s score to include an international itinerary of tastings in San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, London and Tokyo. The organization will conclude with a final IPOB tasting in San Francisco in early November 2016. IPOB 2016 Membership:

Au Bon Climat Winery
Big Basin Vineyards
Calera Wine Company
Ceritas
Chanin Wine Company

Cobb Wines
Copain Wines
Domaine de la Côte
Drew Family Cellars
Failla
Hanzell Vineyards
Hirsch Vineyards
Knez Winery
Kutch Wines
LaRue Wines
LIOCO
Liquid Farm
Littorai Wines
LUTUM Wines
Matthiasson Family Vineyards
Mignanelli Winery
Mindogo Ridge
Mount Eden Vineyards
Native9 Wines
Ojai Vineyard
Poe Wines
Presqu'île Winery
Red Car
Sandhi Wines
Small Vines Wines
Thomas Fogarty Winery
Twomey Cellars
Tyler Winery
Varner
Wenzlau Vineyard
Wind Gap Wines

Russian River Valley Experience & Somm Challenge On June 24, the Russian River Valley Winegrowers will host a Russian River Valley Somm challenge at Sonoma-Cutrer involving 3 somms, 5 chefs and 12 wines. The attendees will judge and decide which somm picked the best wine for each course. Noted Pinot Noir producers Benovia Winery, Bucher Wines, Davis Bynum, Dutton-Goldfield, J Vineyards & Winery, Matrix Winery and Trione Vineyards & Winery will participate. Tickets are \$195 through <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/russian-river-valley-experience-weekend-somm-challenge-dinner-tickets-24855452327?ref=ebtn>. The Russian River Experience will be held June 25-26. Shuttles will move attendees visiting five Russian River Valley neighborhoods where several wineries will gather at each hub to share wine and food. Tickets are \$65 and shuttle is \$25 at the same link.

Amorim First Cork Producer with Non-Detectable TCA Guarantee Amorim, the world's leading cork producer, has achieved a major technological breakthrough known as NDtech that allows them to become the world's first cork producer to produce and deliver natural cork stoppers to winemakers with a non-detectable TCA guarantee. Individual cork stoppers are screened on the production line to eliminate the risk of corks contaminated with TCA. Batch testing has been the rule until now, but the super-fast NDtech allows screening of individual corks with incredibly high precision.

Changes in Alcohol and Effects on Risk of Breast Cancer and Heart Disease A large well-done study from Denmark looked at 20,000 postmenopausal women. For the risk of breast cancer, the baseline alcohol consumption reported by the women showed that higher alcohol intake was associated with a greater risk of developing breast cancer during follow up, but a lower risk of developing coronary heart disease and for total mortality. For relating changes in alcohol intake in the 5 years between two alcohol intake assessments, those women who increased their reported alcohol intake showed an increased risk of subsequent breast cancer, while those who decreased their intake also had a tendency for greater breast cancer. With regard to coronary heart disease and mortality, the data were consistent with an increase in consumption lower risk, while there was a tendency for a decrease in consumption to increase risk. The

authors concluded that alcohol intake is associated with increased risk of breast cancer and decreased risk of coronary heart disease.

Tending to Pinot Noir's Appetite The Amalie Robert Estate FLOG has an excellent discussion of vineyard soils and what needs to be done to grow world-class Pinot Noir. Visit www.amalierobert.blogspot.com and the April 30, 2016 entry.

Copain Wines Partners with Jackson Family Wines Proprietor and winemaker Wells Guthrie of Copain Wines announced that the winery has partnered with Jackson Family Wines. Guthrie began his career as a wine tasting coordinator at Wine Spectator magazine and quickly fell in love with the portfolio of northern Rhône wines from Kermit Lynch Wine Merchants. Following this inspiration, he worked for Maison Chapoutier in the Rhône region and this experience led him to found Copain Wines in 1999. He proceeded to hone into areas of Anderson Valley that he believed made the best wines and incorporated Pinot Noir as well into his portfolio.

Patz & Hall Sold to Ste. Michelle Wine Estates Sonoma's Patz & Hall, founded in 1988 as a producer of Sonoma County Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, has sold the inventory of wines and interest in the winemaking facility and the visitor center known as the Sonoma House. The four founding partners, including winemaker James Hall will remain with the winery to ensure continuity.

Greenwood Ridge Winery Sold to Wilson Artisan Wineries Greenwood Ridge Winery in Anderson Valley has sold its tasting room, brand and inventory to Wilson Artisan Wineries. Greenwood Ridge was started by Allan Green in 1980 and built a reputation for excellent small lot varietal wines. Wilson Artisan Wineries now consists of 10 wineries spread across the North Coast and owns more than 600 acres of vineyards.

Penner-Ash Wine Cellars Sold to Jackson Family Wines Lynn and Ron Penner-Ash have announced the sale of their winery in the Yamhill-Carlton District of Oregon's Willamette Valley to Jackson Family Wines. Lynn Penner-Ash will continue as winemaker and retain an interest in the brand. Jackson Family Wines will acquire essentially all of Penner-Ash Wine Cellars assets including the winery and 15 acres of estate vineyards. Jackson Family Wines have made significant acquisitions in Oregon and owned about 1,400 acres before the Penner-Ash purchase. Acquisitions include Gran Moraine Winery (formerly Solena Estate Winery) and Maple Grove Vineyard. Jackson Family Wines plans to build a wine production facility at the former site of Evergreen International Airlines corporate headquarters in McMinnville that was bought for \$4.6 million.

Winemaker Chris Figgins Developing Oregon Project Noted winemaker of Leonetti Cellars in Washington bought 42 acres of land in the Chehalem Mountains to develop his Toil Oregon project. His first release was a 2012 Pinot Noir from Ridgecrest Vineyard in Ribbon Ridge and Schindler Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills vineyards. The plan is to make Toil Oregon an estate winery and wants to plant about 25 acres of Pinot Noir on his new property over the next five years. Toil Oregon wines are sold through a mailing list. Visit www.toiloregon.com.



Winemaker Mike Etzel Releases First Wine from New Oregon Project Mike Etzel has been the co-owner and winemaker at Beaux Frères for 25 years and has now has launched a new project with partner Carey Critchlow. The inaugural Pinot Noir under the Sequitur label from the 2014 vintage was released at \$100 a bottle. This new wine is blended from fifteen clones of Pinot Noir (including Coury, Calera, Mt. Eden, and Martin Ray selections) grown biodynamically on never-farmed soil (vineyard is pictured below) and is styled differently than Etzel's previous wines. The wine was produced from a 12-acre estate vineyard planted adjacent Beaux Frères Upper Terrace Vineyard in the Ribbon Ridge AVA. Fermentations are done in a variety of vessels with indigenous yeast and aging is done in a moderate use of new French oak barrels sourced from a wide range of tonnellers. The wine is available now through www.oregonpinotnoir.com.



Inaugural Willamette: The Pinot Noir Barrel Auction Hosted by the Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA), the Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction was held in April 2016 and raised \$476,000. 400 members of the wine trade were invited and bid on 2014 Pinot Noirs donated by 66 wineries in the Willamette Valley. Special lots included Adelsheim Vineyard's first single-block wine in its 40-year history from Quarter Mile Lane Vineyard planted in 1972 (winning bid \$15,000) and 10 cases of Founder's Block Pinot Noir from Sokol Blosser Winery's Old Vineyard Block planted by the winery's founders in 1971. The money was raised to support marketing efforts of the WVWA and increase awareness of Oregon wine.

BACtrack Skyn™: Best Wearable Alcohol Biosensor The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) issued the Wearable Alcohol Biosensor Challenge in March of 2015. The goal was to create a device that would provide real-time alcohol blood level monitoring, but also had an inconspicuous design that would be appealing to the public. The winner was the BACtrack Skyn™. This is a low cost, wearable, alcohol monitoring device that sends transdermal alcohol content (TAC) results via Bluetooth to an iOS device. TAC results are then converted to an estimate of a user's historical BAC. Samples can be taken in real-time as frequently as every second and sent from the wrist device to a smartphone or even a cloud server. The device eliminates the need to take a breath alcohol test. Once synced with a smartphone or smartwatch, the phone could vibrate to notify you that your approaching 0.04% BAC or in the case of sobriety monitoring, a family member could receive a notification when a person's BAC has gone above 0.00% BAC. Visit www.bactrack.com/pages/bactrack-skyn-wearable-alcohol-monitor to join the waiting list and be notified when the BACtrack Skyn™ is available for pre-order.



‘Sideways’ Play Gets Poor Reviews ‘Sideways,’ the play, opened last month at London’s St. James Theater, but reviews in London newspapers have not been favorable, claiming the storyline was true to the original book but the performances did not recapture the essence of the story as well as the movie version. I saw the play in Santa Monica a couple of years ago and felt the same way. I don’t think the play will be featured on Broadway.

Et Fille Opens Tasting Room After 13 years of being open only by appointment and holiday weekends, Et Fille, a Pinot Noir focused winery in the Willamette Valley, has opened a new tasting room that is open Wednesday through Sunday from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.. More in-depth tastings are still available with Jessica or Howard by appointment. Special tasting events will also be held at the tasting room. The address is 718 E. 1st Street in Newberg. 503-538-2900. Visit www.etfillewines.com.