



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

Rogstad: Wines of Place

Veteran winemaker Steve Rogstad is known for his tenure at Cuvaision Estate Wines. A graduate of the University of California at Davis, he has drug hoses at La Crema, Saintsbury, Spring Mountain Vineyards, Clos Pegase and Rombauer where he consulted on custom clients including Viader, Duckhorn, Spottswoode and Dominus. He has worked along side noted winemakers including Dick Ward, David Graves, Tony Soter, Craig Williams, Ted Lemon, byron Kosuge and Craig MacLean. Steve's work since joining Cuvaision in 2002, focused on Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, led to Cuvaision being named *Wine & Spirits* 2012 Winery of the Year.

At Cuvaision, Steve crafts about 4,500 cases of Pinot Noir annually divided into three estate grown bottlings along with other varietals making up the annual 48,000 case production. He oversaw the construction of the newest winery at Cuvaision and manages the winery's certified sustainable vineyards.

Rogstad Wines is Steve's eponymous label, allowing him to expand his zest for Pinot Noir and explore a few other varietals such as Nebbiolo and Pinot Gris through single vineyard offerings. Appropriately, his family name, Rogstad, incorporates the Old Norse word, "stad," meaning place, and lends itself to Steve's tagline, "Wines of Place." The wines are produced in Napa and sold on the website at www.rogstadwines.com.



These three wines are not surprisingly superb for they reflect the skill of a winemaker with 20 years of experience and three stellar vineyards known for their excellence and unique terroir.

2013 Rogstad Van der Kamp Vineyard Sonoma Mountain Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 66 cases, \$42. This 30-acre vineyard is located at 1,400 feet elevation just below the summit of Sonoma Mountain. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Lovely fusion of black cherry fruit aromas and savory aromas of game and earth. A middleweight styled wine with a core of black cherry, dark raspberry, plum, savory spice, black tea and iron flavors supported by very fine-grain tannins. Excellent vibrancy and an uplifting finish that leaves the drinker reaching for more.* **92.**

2013 Rogstad Thornton Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 142 cases, \$48. Produced from a single 1-acre block of this vineyard located on a flank of Sonoma Mountain over the crest from Gap's Crown Vineyard at 1,800 feet elevation. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Deep perfume of dark cherry, black berry, baking spice and nutty oak. Eager to please and very accommodating mid weight plus flavors of black cherry and darker berry with a gritty earthiness. A deft touch of oak is complimentary, the mouthfeel is lush and lifted, the balance is spot-on, and the juicy finish is dreamy.* **93.**



2013 Rogstad Walala Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

13.5% alc., 111 cases, \$55. This vineyard is located on the West Sonoma Coast at 1,200 feet elevation near Annapolis just two miles from the Pacific Ocean. The 25-acre vineyard sits on a lonely ridge in a 19,000 forest above the fog line. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of black fruits, mulch and roasted almonds lead to a full-bodied and delicious display of gorgeous purple and black fruit goodness attacking with intent and saturating the mid palate. Astonishing depth of flavor, with firm, matching tannins, a thread of toasty, spicy oak in the background, and a finish with eye-opening persistence. You won't be able to keep your hands off this one.* **94.**



Sips of Recently Tasted Wines

Longboard Vineyards, Healdsburg, CA

Owner, winegrower, winemaker and surfer, Oded Shakked, offers Pinot Noir from purchased grapes in the Russian River Valley. He is an Israel native who and lived, worked and surfed on four continents, but fell in love with northern Sonoma County in the late 1980s. The label was established in 1998, but the first Pinot Noir was released in 2006. That said, he has made Pinot Noir in California every year but once since 1986 (he was in Bordeaux in 1987). Multiple other varietals are offered, including Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, sparkling, and Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon and several Syrahs.

The winery's tasting room, named the Surf lounge, is a two minute walk from Healdsburg Plaza, and is open daily. Visit www.longboardvineyards.com.

2014 Longboard Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.64, 581 cases, \$39. Clones 115, 667, 777 and Pommard. 3-day cold soak, open-top fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Elevating aromas of Bing cherry, blueberry and oak spice lead to a mid weight styled wine with a core of fresh red cherry and berry fruits offering good vibrancy. The silky tannins make for forward drinking. A thread of citrus plies the background and shows up on the slightly tart finish.* **89.**

2015 Longboard Vineyards Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.61, 714 cases, \$39. Clones 115, 667, 777 and Pommard. 3-day cold soak, open-top fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Dark reddish purple color in the glass. Aromas of blackberry, cassis, vanilla and root beer lead off. Rather lush and intensely fruity, featuring flavors of very ripe dark raspberry, boysenberry and blackberry complimented with oak-driven notes of vanilla and nuts. Energetic, but supportive tannins, with a consuming, fruit-driven finish. Quite a contrast from the 2014 vintage of this wine that has considerably more ripeness, sap and grip and less Russian River Valley in character.* **88.**

2014 Longboard Vineyards Mystos Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.65, TA 0.62, 108 cases, \$55. The owners of the vineyard do not want their name on the bottle but the grapes are from a Russian River Valley hillside vineyard. Mystos is the name of a popular surf spot on the Sonoma Coast known only to locals. Rochioli selection. 3-day cold soak, open-top fermentation, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Enticing marriage of Bing cherry and blackberry fruit aromas with barrel input. Eye-opening, mid weight core of earth-kissed boysenberry and blackberry flavors. The silky and polished mouthfeel is tres Pinot, the tannins are integrated, and the juicy and lengthy purple berry driven finish is glorious. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the fruit seemed noticeably more ripe, but otherwise this wine was a stellar offering.* **92.**



Sante Arcangeli Family Wines, Aromas, CA

Owner and winemaker John Beneditti has been turning out notable wines over the past few years. John learned winemaking from Ryan Beauregard, the Brassfield family and James MacPhail. He says, "It started out as a hobby and soon became a hobby gone haywire." The name derives from the person, Sante Arcangeli, John's great grandfather

Sante Arcangeli Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines are produced primarily from vineyards located in the Corralitos region of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A tasting room is located in historic Pescadero, CA, on Highway 1, in a 130-year-old building . Visit the very informative website at www.santewinery.com.



2016 Sante Arcangeli Santa Cruz Mountains Rosé of Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 75 cases, \$25. A combination of direct pressed grapes (Dalardi Vineyard) and saignée (McConnell Vineyard, Lester Family Vineyard and Saveria Vineyard). Harvest Brix 23.0°-24.5°. Swan, "828," 115, 777, 2A and 667 clones. Native and M83 yeast fermented. Aged 4 months on the lees in stainless steel. *Pale pink color in the glass. Aromas of cherry, strawberry and dried herbs lead to a clean and crisp tasting wine with flavors of cherry, strawberry, peach, melon and savory herbs. Very satisfying with a good cut of acidity and a burst of fruit on the finish.* **89.**

2015 Sante Arcangeli Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.59, 225 cases, \$39. The second release of this "Corralitos Cuvée," a blend from Hall Vineyard (40%), Lester Family Vineyard (35%) and Saveria Vineyard (25%). Harvest Brix 23.0°-25.5°. Pommard 4, Mt. Eden, 2A, 115 and 667 clones. Native and proprietary yeast fermentation. 95% de-stemmed. Aged 10 months on lees in French oak barrels, 25% new. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the glass. Inviting aromas of cherry, blueberry, toast and smoke. Relatively light in weight and elegant, with a core of oak-kissed black cherry, cranberry, tobacco and even apple flavors. Uplifting juicy acidity with a modest finish that leaves a trail of oak.* **88.**

2015 Sante Arcangeli Hall Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., pH 3.61, 75 cases, \$45. Vineyard is located at 2,000 feet elevation in the Summit region. Harvest Brix 23.3°. Pommard 4 clone. 100% de-stemmed. Native and proprietary yeast fermented. Aged 10 months on lees in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is primarily oak-driven, offering aromas of cigar, toast and tundra along with some black cherry fruit. Discretely concentrated flavors of black cherry, black raspberry, and purple grape fruits are accented with baking spices. Plush in the mouth, with an appealing finish flush with oak-imbued cherry goodness.* **89.**

2015 Sante Arcangeli "Selezione Susie" Family Reserve Toulouse Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.62, TA 0.58, 125 cases, \$65. Harvest Brix 25.5°. Clones are 667, 777, 115 and Pommard. 20% whole cluster. Native and proprietary yeast fermented. 6-day cold soak, Aged 11 months on lees with stirring every 2 weeks for 3 months in French oak barrels, 20% new. Bottled unfiltered. *Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The fruit in this wine pushes ripeness but never enters the compote realm. Aromas of spice, black fruits and a hint of oak lead to a richly appointed charge of black cherry, black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors. This wine has serious sap with a supporting backbone of brawny tannins. Much more appealing the following day when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle with inviting harmony and glorious fruit exuberance. This is meant to be an age worthy wine and more time in the cellar will fulfill that promise.* **92.**

Looking back - review of an older release of "Selezione Susie" Pinot Noir

2012 Santa Arcangeli "Selezione Susie" Family Reserve Split Rail Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., pH 3.65, 50 cases. David Bruce selection and Roederer clone 32. Harvest Brix 23.5°. 20% whole cluster. Aged 10 months on lees in French oak barrels, 60% new. *Moderate reddish purple color with slight rim bricking in the glass. A full flight of aromas build in intensity over time in the glass showing off black cherry, dried rose petal, raspberry, spice, burnt tobacco and nutty oak. The cherry fruit is still showy without dryness, and the earthy, underground tone gives the wine character. The tannins are nicely integrated. A bit of oak intercedes on the slightly tart but refreshing finish. Drink now to 2000.* **91** (Reviewed October 2013, score 90).



2015 Sante Arcangeli Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay 13.2% alc., pH 3.31, TA 0.72, 175 cases, \$30. 60% Bald Mountain Vineyard (Bonny Doon) and 40% Split Rail Vineyard (Corralitos). Harvest Brix 21.5°-24.0°. Native and proprietary yeast fermented. Aged in French oak barrels, 14% new. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Enticing aromas of lemon, hazelnut, bread dough and yeast. Sleek and*

mouthwatering on the palate, with flavors of citrus, honey, poached pear, caramel and brioche. Beautifully composed in a bright and lip-smacking style, that finishes with good cut and plenty of citrus goodness. This wine confirms my conviction that the Santa Cruz Mountains is one of the best wine regions in California for Chardonnay. **93.**



Sarah's Vineyard, Gilroy, CA

Before the Santa Clara Valley became known as "Silicon Valley," it boasted a 175-year history of winegrowing and wine production. Sarah's Vineyard is located in the foothills of Mount Madonna in the Santa Clara Valley and carries on that tradition. Here the Hecker Pass gives the cool site a perfect balance between warm and sunny days and cooling winds and fog from the Pacific Ocean. The 28-acre property (17.5 planted acres) is a labor of love for winegrower Tim Slater, a former DJ, musician and successful engineer with many patents to his name. At Sarah's Vineyard, he channels both his inner "mad scientist" and artistic side to grow and produce Pinot Noir and Chardonnay as well as Rhone varietals. The Sarah's Vineyard home estate is made up of three vineyards: the original plantings and the newer Timcat and Dwarf Oak blocks. He also partners with top growers for limited Sarah's Vineyard releases from neighboring Santa Cruz Mountains and Santa Lucia Highlands appellations.

The Sarah's Vineyard Tasting room is open daily on Hecker Pass Road, just outside Gilroy. Sarah's Vineyard online home is www.SarahsVineyard.com.



2014 Sarah's Vineyard Santa Clara Valley Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., 1,211 cases, \$25. Sourced from the Dwarf Oak Block of Sarah's Vineyard, clones 667, 777, 115 and a "DRC" selection. 100% de-stemmed, native and inoculated yeast whole berry fermentation, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 10% new. Formerly the winery's "Central Coast Series" Pinot Noir. *Moderately light reddish purple color in the*

glass. Lovely aromas of cherry, rose petal, hazelnut, sandalwood and earthy flora lead to a very charming mid palate display of unctuous cherry and baking spice flavors. The wine's elegant tannins and a polished mouthfeel attract attention in this forward drinking offering with plenty of Pinot talking. Like cherry pie day at baking school: cherries, spices, and very interesting results. Still charming when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. 92.



More Wines



2015 Alma de Cattleya Sonoma County Chardonnay 14.1% alc., \$24. Cellared and bottled by Cattleya Wines. A value-priced offering from Bibiana Gonzalez Rave, the winemaker for Wayfarer, Pahlmeyer and Cattleya. A low malolactic, lightly oaked style. *Light golden yellow color and clear in the glass. Aromas of lemon, pear, flint, petrol and buttered toast lead off. Light in style, with flavors of lemon, pineapple, golden apple and crusty bread. A polished, clean mouthfeel adds to the appeal.* **89.**

2015 Blank Canvas California Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., \$12.84. Vinted and bottled by American Vines Cellars, Napa (this label term means the bottler made less than 10% of the wine and possibly did not make any of the wine). Gold Medal, 2016 Orange County Fair Wine Competition. *Light reddish purple color in the glass. Very woody and off putting nose that fails to come around with swirling. Better on the palate, with light-weight flavors of black cherry and boysenberry and noticeable oak overlay. Silky tannins make for easy drinking and some fruit rises up on the finish, but the oak treatment ruins the experience.* **80.**

2014 Black Kite Angel Hawk Anderson Valley Pinot Noir 14.8% alc., pH 3.45, TA 0.61, 152 cases, \$85. Released February 2017. A reserve bottling comprised of the vintage's best and most age worthy barrels from each block of the Kite's Rest Vineyard. Clones 114, 115 and Pommard. Aged 22 months in French oak barrels. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is filled with spices such as clove, cardamom and turmeric in harmony with well-ripened dark cherry fruit. Potent and sappy on the palate, with well-spiced dark fruit flavors flooding the mouth, yet light on its feet, with integrated firm tannins and skillful use of oak. Not really a terroir-driven wine, but offers an unrivaled hedonistic drinking experience.* **93.**

2015 Knudsen Vineyards Dundee Hills Willamette Valley Chardonnay 14.0% alc., pH 3.33, TA 0.71, 320 cases, \$45, screwcap. Vineyard still Knudsen family owned since 1971, Salmon Safe and LIVE certified sustainable. This wine debuted February 25, 2017, at 2017 Oregon Chardonnay Celebration. Release April 4, 2017. Harvest Brix 22.6°. Dijon clones 95 and 76 planted in 1995 in Jory soils at an elevation of 655-760 feet. Aged 20 months in French oak barrels, 27% new. *Very light platinum color in the glass. Demure aromas of apple, citrus, almond biscotti and buttery brioche excite the senses. Serene and sophisticated on the palate, with flavors of apple, pear and coconut. Impeccably balanced, with a sleek mouthfeel and a lip smacking, dry finish. Very classy juice.* **93.**



2014 MacMurray Estate Vineyards Central Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.60, \$18.56. Primarily sourced from Olson Ranch Vineyard in the Santa Lucia Highlands. Clones 777, 2A, 459, 667 and 23. Aged in 40% used French oak barrels and 60% in stainless steel. Best of Class at the 2017 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. *Moderate reddish purple color in the glass. Pleasant nose offering streaming aromas of dark fruits and hints of vanilla and dark chocolate. Modest in weight, featuring a charge of blackberry and blackberry flavors with a bit of black cherry and spice as well as oak chiming in. Rather typical of Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir, with ample mid palate presence, a pleasant mouthfeel, and some finishing length. This wine is in wide distribution and is a good value.* **88.**

Pinot Briefs

New Website for Calera Wine Company Calera has launched a new website at www.calerawine.com that incorporates an interactive map of the winery's Mt. Harlan vineyards, clearer navigation, photo montage, and a new "Events" section. The winery's tasting room is open daily at 11300 Cienega Road outside Hollister, CA.

2017 Willamette Valley's Second Annual Barrel Auction **Willamette: The Pinot Noir Barrel Auction** returns for its second year on March 31 and April 1, 2017. This is a wine trade affair, orchestrated by the Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA). Unique Pinot Noir wines from 69 producers will be available to trade buyers in five, ten and twenty case lots. Bidders must be licensed members of the wine trade, so the only way for a consumer to acquire one of these rare wines is through the retailer or restaurant with the highest bid. All wines in the 2017 auction are from the highly-touted 2015 vintage. On Friday, March 31, Adelsheim Vineyard, Alexana Estate and Penner-Ash Wine Cellars will host welcome events featuring wine from auction wineries paired with favorite local cuisine. The following day, the main event will take place at The Allison Inn in Newberg. The event raised over \$600,000 in total in 2016, with the proceeds benefiting the marketing and branding efforts of the 220-member Willamette Valley Wineries Association. For more information, visit www.willametewines.com.

Guy Fieri's Russian River Valley Pinot Noir Virginie Boone recently penned an article on noted chef and television personality Guy Fieri's Sonoma wine venture: <http://www.winemag.com/2017/02/28/guy-fieri-wine-connoisseur/>. I previously wrote about the project in the *PinotFile* in November, 2015. Fieri released his first wines under the Hunt & Ryde label in 2016 made in conjunction with Davis Family Vineyards. He chose not to use his name as he wanted the wine to stand on its own and instead named it after sons Hunter and Ryder Fieri. The wines are made from grapes sourced from North Sonoma Coast vineyards including Fieri's own organically-farmed, estate Hunt & Ryde Vineyard located in the Russian River Valley. The 2013 and 2014 estate grown Pinot Noirs are currently available on the website at www.huntrydewinery.com.



Costco Reveals Purchasing Decisions Costco is notoriously secretive about how their twelve buyers select brands for their stores. Some information was forthcoming at a recent Wine Conversations event in Santa Rosa, CA. Costco did \$116 billion in sales in fiscal year 2016 and sold \$3.9 billion in wine, beer and spirits during the same period. The typical Costco store carries 235 labels with an emphasis on locally produced brands and little emphasis on wines scoring 90-plus. Sales of sparkling wines including Prosecco, 3-liter boxes of premium wine, and still Rosé are the leading sellers. Costco's private brand, Kirkland Signature, offers wines with savings of about 20%, and the wines are considered dependable by consumers. I find the Pinot Noir selection at my local Costco very limited with no premium choices that pique my interest.

Garagiste Wine Festival: Southern Exposure The fifth Garagiste Wine Festival: Southern Exposure features a tasting of California's best micro production wines. Over 40 artisan "garagiste wineries, from Santa Barbara County and California will be pouring hard-to-find wines in Solvang on April 1, 2017. The

event kicks off on Friday night, March 31, with a “Rare & Reserve Kick-Off Party” with tastings of limited club only, verticals, library and pre-release bottles. Seminars on Saturday April 1 include “An Exploration of Grenache: Not Just for Blending Anymore” and “What’s Wrong with this Picture? Most Common Wine Flaws.” The Grand Tasting will be held in the afternoon on April 1, following the morning seminars. You may recognize these participating wineries whose wines have been reviewed in the *PinotFile*: Ryan Cochrane Wines, Seagrape Wine Co., and Weatherborne. Tickets are very limited and the event always sells out. For tickets and information, visit www.garagistefestival.com.

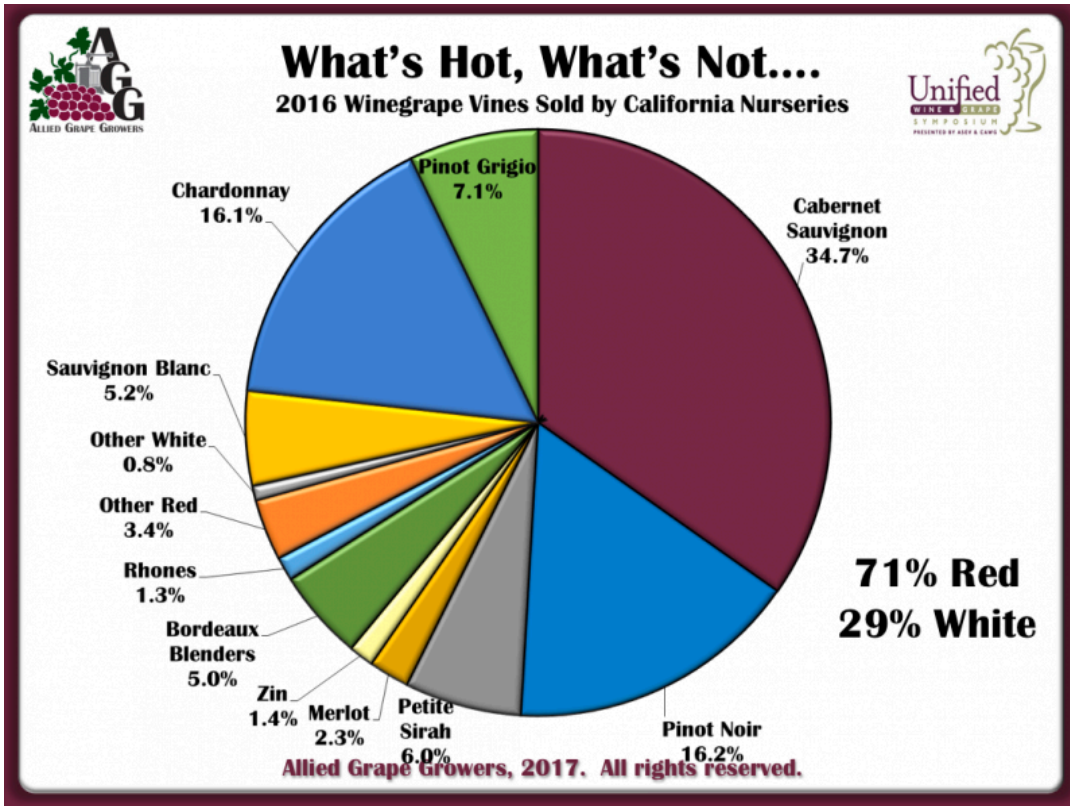


Wine Closures: The Facts If you are least bit curious about the different wine closures, this article is recommended for its thorough review of the subject: <https://www.thedrinksbusiness.com/2017/02/wine-closures-the-facts/2/>.

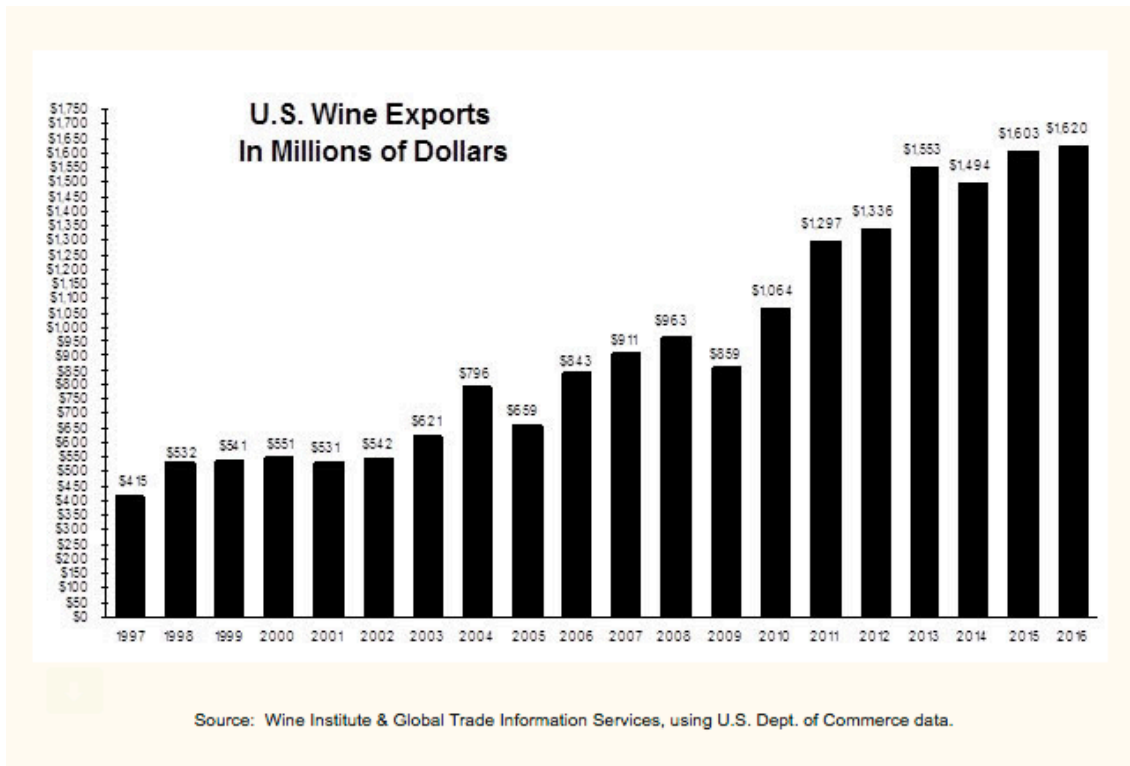


Serving Pinot Noir for Optimum Enjoyment The most enjoyable temperature for Pinot Noir is in the low 60s although lighter Pinot Noir and Pinot Noir Rosé show nicely at temperatures in the mid to high 50s. When drinking a young Pinot Noir, particularly one that is unfinned and unfiltered, it is best to stand the bottles up for a day or two before drinking. Decant the wine for 2-6 hours prior to serving. Some winemakers believe that every hour in the decanter hypothetically equals a half a year of bottle aging.

Gauging Variety Popularity by Winegrape Vines Sold Allied Grape Growers indicated that 71% of winegrape vines sold in 2016 were red and 29% white. Cabernet Sauvignon was the most popular with about a third of the vines sold, with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in second place.



U.S. Wine Exports Continue to Increase



Scientific Truths about Imbibing Wine



1. Food does not absorb alcohol, but food in the stomach does slow absorption. Fatty foods are especially effective in slowing down alcohol absorption as they are more difficult to digest.
2. Higher alcohol wines overwhelm the ADH enzymes in the stomach causing more rapid absorption of alcohol. For example a 15% alcohol wine will be absorbed more quickly than a 12% alcohol wine.
3. 75%-80% of ingested alcohol is absorbed by the small intestine because of its very large surface area, and 20%-25% is absorbed from the stomach in a fasting individual.
4. Women reach higher blood alcohol concentrations (BAC's) faster because they have less water in their bodies, more adipose tissue (fat) that is not easily penetrated by alcohol, and less muscle tissue and thus less blood to dilute the alcohol. A man and woman, with all other factors being equal, both drinking the same amount of wine will have different BAC levels with hers being higher. Women experience their highest BAC's pre-menstruation.
5. Experienced drinkers develop tolerance to alcohol since regular drinking causes the liver to break down alcohol more efficiently.
6. Drinking coffee, exercising, and cold showers do not influence the amount of impairment caused by alcohol. Time is the only way to sober up. Alcohol is removed from the bloodstream by the liver at a relatively constant rate of about 1 drink per hour. A person with a BAC of 0.08% takes more than 5 hours to become completely sober.
7. More than 90% of ingested alcohol is oxidized in the liver by the enzyme ADH to acetic acid, a normal nontoxic metabolite, with small amounts oxidized in stomach. The rest is excreted unchanged in the sweat, urine or breath.
8. A full bottle of wine contains 5 to 7 drinks depending on the wine's ABV. To determine the number of drinks in a particular bottle of wine, multiple 750 ml by the alcohol percentage divided by 17.7. For example, a bottle of 13.0% wine will contain 5.5 drinks while a bottle of 16% alcohol will contain 6.8 drinks.