

PinotFile[©]

New Releases Everywhere

Blackjack Ranch 2001 Arroyo Grande Pinot Noir "Alix de Vergy" (\$29) Proprietor Roger Wisted and winemaker Christian Roguenaut (a graduate of Dijon University and a native of Burgundy) have collaborated to make this terrific Pinot Noir. The Pinot Noir "Alix de Vergy" is named after the Duchess of Burgundy who lived during the 13th century. The fruit is sourced from the La Colline Vineyard in Arroyo Grande that is owned by Laetitia Vineyards. The wine is reminiscent of a 1er Cru Chambolle Musigny. Wine Club Santa Ana

Adrian Fog Two Sisters Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 2002 (\$75) The Two Sisters Vineyard was planted in 1955 and is separated into two small North and South sections. The age of the vines produces timeless flavors of blueberries, bing cherries and spice nuances. A sip or two will remind you why we are so infatuated with this varietal. A terminator. 75 cases. www.adrianfog.com.

Holdredge Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 2001 A small family owned and operated winery in Healdsburg, CA. The winery produces only small lots from vineyards that reflect the quality of Sonoma County. Gold Medal at Sonoma County Harvest Fair and San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. www.holdredge.com

Pisoni Estate Pinot Noir 2001 (\$60) From own-rooted vines of the Elias block in the Pisoni Estate Vineyard whose grapes are reserved exclusively for the Pisoni Estate label. Extremely limited production of 548 cases of this distinctive, premium Pinot Noir. A seriously intense wine with ageworthiness. 800-2702525 3-packs and 6-packs only.

Sineann "Oregon" Pinot Noir 2002 (\$30) A blend of grapes from Reid & Reynolds, Wadenswil, Phelps Creek, and Whistling Ridge vineyards. A dense, unusually complex wine. A real honey. www.avalonwine.com.

Peter Michael Le Moulin Rouge 2001 Pinot Noir (\$65) Grapes from Pisoni Vineyard in Santa Lucia Highlands. Hugely sweet and concentrated in a masculine style. Flavors reminiscent of Vosne-Romanee. 2001 vintage the most successful yet for this winery's Pinot Noir program. Mailing list only. 800-354-4459, www.petermichaelwinery.com.

**If You Drink
No Noir, You
Pinot Noir**

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You can tell the difference between a Premier cru and a Grand cru Burgundy just by looking at the the label. Premier cru wines list the name of the commune plus the vineyard name on the label. If the vineyard name is in smaller lettering than the commune name, the wine is not a Premier cru but a wine from a single vineyard site in that commune. Grands cru carry only the name of the vineyard on the label (for example -Le Corton).



Fred Scherrer

Dehlinger Estate in the Russian River Valley was one of the true pioneers of Pinot Noir in California. The vinous jewels that came from the winery in the 90's and earned the winery's "cult" status were for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the winemaker during this time in which the Dehlinger Estate rose from near obscurity to become a high profile player in the international Pinot Noir wars. That winemaker was Fred Scherrer, a humble and soft spoken man who possesses the uncanny ability to somehow fine tune his wines into superb examples of the varietal expression. Fred left Dehlinger in 1998 to focus on his own family label, Scherrer Wines. With the lack of restraints and the artistic freedom that accompanies tiny production wineries, Scherrer has moved on to craft his own reputation as one of California's most coveted producers.

Scherrer Winery Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 2001 (\$30) The grape source is Hirsch Vineyard. Fred employs old world techniques such as the use of open top fermentation, manual punch down, minimal racking and zero fining and filtration. This is both time consuming and costly, but the result is a wine of amazing depth, character, and longevity. A Dr Pepper framed by vanilla infused oak. 360 cases.

Scherrer Winery Fort Ross Vineyard Pinot Noir 2001 (\$35) First planted in the late 1990's, this coastal vineyard is on a western sea-facing ridge at 1500 sq ft above the fog. Mainly from Dijon clones, it is a sleek, silky Pinot unlike some of the chunkier, wilder Pinots from this area. 300 cases. www.scherrerwinery.com

Winemaker David O'Reilly

O'Reilly, 37, one of 12 children born in Belfast, Ireland, is a dapper man, meticulous in appearance and in his work. Everything he touches has to be the best, from huge, gorgeous wines to hand-numbered bottles and objects of art gracing his labels. Growing up he witnessed a depressing amount of death and injury due to sectarian violence. His family saved enough money to move to British Columbia during his teen years. While attending college in Santa Paula, CA, he worked at a small winery and developed a love of land and soil. Later he worked at Elk Cove Winery doing marketing tasks. He met Peter Rosback, an amateur winemaker and with Irish heritage and love of good wine in common, they struck a partnership and created Sineann. They left Elk Cove in 1998 to produce wines in small quantities. Sineann wines are produced at Medici Winery and are unusually concentrated and intense.

Sineann Pinot Noirs come from the best growers in Oregon. Yields are severely limited to produce intense wines. Quantities are low. The **Sineann Pinot Noir**

"Resonance 2002 (\$42) is 100% Pommard clone from Reed & Reynolds Vineyard in Willamette Valley of Oregon. A winner that can benefit from a few years of aging. The 2001 received 93 points from *Wine Spectator*.

Owen Roe A partnership between Jerry Owen and David O'Reilly who makes and sells the wine. Grapes are sourced from premium Oregon and Washington vineyards. The wines and the labels are works of art. The labels are original engravings by Working Theory Press of photographs by David Brunn. Many of the images are related to David's Irish roots. The **Owen Roe Pinot Noir 2002 (\$36)** is a dynamic Pinot that will hold up well with cool cellaring. 2001 rated 92 points by *Wine Spectator*.

O'Reilly's This is David O'Reilly's value oriented wine, made from grapes that don't make the cut for his Owen Roe wines but producing lovely wines at great prices. A hand-drawn Irish wolfhound adorns the label. The wines are drinkable on release.

www.avalonwine.com or Wine Exchange in Orange.

" I like to tell people that I got involved in the business to follow an Irishman's dreams— imagine making a living by drinking."

Sapphire Hill Vineyards

The history of this Estate can be traced to the El Molino Ranchero belonging to General Mariano Vallejo, the last Mexican Governor of California before the overthrow during the 1846 Bear Flag Revolt. General Vallejo granted the Ranchero in 1834 to his brother-in-law, Captain John Cooper and he, in turn, sold 120 acres in 1969 to a relative, Lucy Sullivan and her husband, Levi Grant Grove. Sapphire Hill is located on the original homestead of Lucy and Levi Grove. All that remains today is the original homestead chimney made from rocks from the nearby Russian River. The house burned down in 1916.

In 1989 several friends and winery partners found the site to be perfect for growing cool-climate varieties like Pinot Noir. The Winery was named for the sapphire-blue nights of the area. The latest technology was employed in planting 32 acres to Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Syrah. The neighboring vineyards of Sonoma-Cutrer, Saralee's Vineyard, and Dutton Ranch have all preceded Sapphire Hill in producing outstanding wines from the area's soils. Consulting winemaker Greg La Follette recently joined Sapphire Hill after gaining fame at Hartford Court, Flowers, and La Crema.

Sapphire Hill Russian River Valley Sapphire Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir 2001 (\$38) 478 cases. Made from three Dijon clones all from estate fruit of Sapphire Hill. Gold Medal Sonoma County Harvest Fair. www.sapphirehill.com and Wine Exchange.

Londer Vineyards Update

The 2001 Pinot Noir lineup was released in June: Anderson Valley Pinot Noir, Van der Kamp Vineyard Pinot Noir, and a reserve named Paraboll Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. Owner Larry Londer M.D, has retired completely from his ophthalmology practice in Santa Rosa and is devoting himself full-time to marketing and managing this boutique winery in Philo.

The **2001 Paraboll Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (\$42)** won a Gold Medal at the Mendocino County Fair and was one vote short of receiving the Grand Sweepstakes award. Only 110 cases were made and only a few remain.

Larry has bottled his 2002 Pinot Noirs (and Chardonnay which is also excellent). His wines are winning many accolades and showing up in the better wine shops and restaurants of Northern California. Contact Larry at 707-8953900.

***“Small lots,
handcrafted,
made by non-
compromising
wine lovers.”***

“Estate” Wines

When you see the word “estate” on a bottle of wine you usually think big and are impressed. In most people's minds an estate is a big house and spread somewhere we'll never get to live. However, in reality, an estate can be a shack in an industrial area.

The only use of “estate” on a label that has any legal standing is “estate bottled.” This means the winemaker can look out the window and see the grapes growing. Close enough. It means that the whole process, from harvesting, punching down, and pumping over to bottling is under the direct control of the winery.

If you see “estate reserve” it means that the producer of this wine believes this particular wine is not like the everyday wine he produces, but should wear the “reserve” label. The grapes in this wine could be from anywhere, unless there are further qualifiers.

Burgundy has over 400 Premier Cru, but only 32 Grand cru vineyards. And of those 32 Grand crus:

9 are white, 23 are red

8 are from Cote de Beaune

24 are from Cote de Nuits

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PrinceofPinot.com

Yields were excessive in Burgundy in 2000 and 2001. The grapes were often harvested before peak ripeness leading to wines that are hard, and tannic. Producers who tried to make highly extracted red wines failed because the grapes simply did not have the ripeness and depth of fruit to allow this. As Robert Parker said, "You cannot draw blood from a stone." As in any vintage there were a handful of producers who succeeded in making excellent wines, but you have to be a sleuth to find them. 2002 looks to be a totally different story and are wines of great promise. Pay attention to any futures offerings from top producers from the 2002 vintage.

Dr Seuss Wine Review

Chuck Devlin, winemaker at Ste. Chapelle in Idaho's Snake river Valley, was waiting for his grapes to ripen last week when he wrote this clever wine review that Dr Seuss might write:

Could I, should I cheer this wine?
Could I, should I find it fine?
Should I say it has the hue of flax?
Should I say it has the taste of wax?
Should you drink it when you dine?
Would I enjoy it with a trout?
Would I prefer a pint of stout?
Would you drink it at the feast?
Would it match the roast beast?
Would you quaff it with a quail?
Would you share it with a snail?
Would I want to buy a stack?
Would I pack it in a rack?
Should I keep it in a vault?
Could I, should I, find its fault?
Could I, should I, name its price?
Could I, should I, just be nice?
Should I put it in a book?
Should I give it one last look?
Could I, should I, pour some more?
Could I, should I, give it 84?