

PinotFile[©]

WesMar Winery

Those of you who love good Pinot Noir and remember the unctuous Williams Selyem wines fashioned by Burt Williams and Ed Selyem should seek out Wes Mar Winery. The Pinots from this small boutique producer are like déjà vu.

Kirk **Wesley** Hubbard and Denise **Mary** Selyem left their corporate world jobs in the 90's upon the urgings of Denise's father, Ed Selyem. While working at Williams Selyem, they learned about the wine business and specifically the secrets of producing great Pinot Noir. When Ed Selyem retired and sold the winery, they embarked upon their own winery adventure.

Currently Kirk and Denise carry out all phases of winemaking at their small winery built inside a restored apple processing warehouse in Sebastopol.

I can't seem to get enough of their latest releases. They are all seamless and velvety, conjuring fields of wild strawberries, and roses. Amazing amounts of pleasure. Rama Lama Lama Ding Dong!

WesMar 2001 RRV Olivet Lane Pinot Noir 187 cases \$35

WesMar 2001 RRV Piner Ranch Pinot Noir 198 cases \$35

WesMar 2001 RRV Vine Hill Pinot Noir 173 cases \$29

WesMar 2001 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 226 cases \$29

WesMar Winery— 707-829-8824, www.wesmarwinery.com.

2004 World of Pinot Noir

Tickets are now available for the 4th Annual World of Pinot Noir, March 5-6, 2004 at The Cliffs Resort in Shell Beach, California. Over one hundred and ten Pinot Noir producers from around the world will participate in this two-day international Pinot Noir experience. The program includes tasting seminars, dinners, education, and just general carousing. Go to the event's web site for a specific schedule of activities. www.wopn.com.

If You Drink No Noir, You Pinot Noir

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There are more than 900 indigenous varieties of grapes in Italy. The modern and ancient names can be found in the *Natural History of Pliny the Elder*, one of antiquity's great proto-scientific works. The famous author who was a statesman, admiral and scholar, perished during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79.

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“Parkerisms”

Wine critics no longer use ordinary words such as “very good” or “excellent” to describe wines of exceptional quality. They often resort to superlatives that push the descriptive excitement to high levels. I call these exaggerated descriptive terms “Parkerisms”. Here are a few that I noted recently, many by Robert Parker Jr of *Wine Advocate* and John Kapon of *Vintage Tastings*.

Veritable winegasm, catnip nose, stinky wonderland, Grace Kelly of a wine, serious juice, loads of t'n a, enough t'n a to fill a chorus line, can't get enough, hedonistic, on steroids, stunning, opulent, voluptuous, blockbuster, spectacular, liquid Viagra, suave, olfactory overload, decadent, lush, succulent, thrilling effort, awesome, nose like Chanel No 5, prodigious fruit, crowd-pleasing, behemoth, hit all cylinders, flamboyant, outrageously complex, ethereal, Hulk of a wine, “Oh my God” kind of nose, hedonistic palate, liquid nobility, fruit bomb, nose you could drink, sexy nose, intoxicating nose, creamy like the most perfect thighs, outstanding breed, wowza, yawza, a fruit H-bomb, like beef stew on a bed of purple flowers, ooh la la on palate, incredibly exotic, so tasty it is almost criminal, Haystacks Calhoun in a ballerina outfit, leathery but in a \$2,000 Prada leather coat kind of way, , and energizer bunny of a wine-kept going and going and going in glass.

Great Burgundy Needs Time

Burgundy is a problem child: to make great Burgundy is the most difficult winemaking job on earth. This is why the greatest examples of Burgundy are so special. Tiny production makes them even more cherished.

A 95-point Burgundy is more notable than a 95-point Cabernet. Also, Burgundies rarely receive high scores upon release as they need to age and ripen to show their charms. Clive Coates' personal ten-year rule is that in a good vintage, you need to keep the wines at least ten years. The 1990s and the 1993s, for example, are taking their time to develop. At a March, 2003 tasting of 1993 Burgundy held in New York hosted by Clive Coates, the best of the wines, particularly Grand Crus still seemed young, with the Premier Crus probably best drunk up over the next five years.

“The ripe tannins and acidity of the 1993 vintage has allowed the wines to age properly”

Little-Known Wine Store Has the Goods

Living in Orange County in Southern California we are spoiled by the wealth of good wine merchants. The big three are Hi-Time, Wine Club, and Wine Exchange. Of the three, Wine Club offers the best selection of Burgundy, the other two a better selection of Oregon and California Pinot Noir.

There is another little-known, excellent wine store, actually located within another store, the Pacific Ranch Market at the corner of Chapman and Newport in Orange. The wine manager, Phil Hall, is a serious wine aficionado, and his connections with suppliers allows him to stock a lot of goodies that are hard to find elsewhere. How about Phelps Insignia, Caymus Special Select, Pride and Paloma Merlot, Cloudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir? Phil stocks mainly quality California wines, priced only slightly more than the Big Three mentioned above. His passion is great California Cabs. I have not been able to convert him to a PinotFile reader, but he admits to liking big Pinots. 714-639-9792.

Historic Vertical Tasting of La Tache

18 vintages spanning the years 1923-1978 were sampled (along with 1973 Dom Perignon Rose Vintage Champagne which scored 93 and 1921 Yquem which scored 98). The event was held in Los Angeles and attended by John Kapon of Acker-Merrill, the Burghound, Bibpin Desai, and others. The full tasting is reported in *Vintage Tastings* written by John Kapon (Vol 3, Fall 2003) - inquire to John Kapon at ackerbids@aol.com. Since John Maggiano, the so-called Duke of Pinot (better known to his wine colleagues as Dookie), has a well-known vertical of La Tache laying in his cellar that he will not share with his wine buddies, I can only fantasize about a vertical sampling of La Tache. A couple vintages of note.

The **1962** is “a point of reference for me and one of the greatest examples of La Tache in my experience” said John Kapon. Score 99. The **1943** was tasted and this was of great interest to me as I drank this wine (my birth-date vintage) on my birthday two years ago. The bottle I had had been cellared in France until a short time before I drank it and was a perfect example of the vintage. The cork was black and ugly but the wine inside was divine— the greatest old wine I have ever drank. Comments from John Kapon at their tasting: “Gorgeous nose— a wine I want to lick from cork to punt... ..still good enough to strike out 9 out of 10 hitters!...it was a true wartime vintage with almost no intervention of any kind, there was no sugar for chapitalization or anything else for work in the vineyards...well-stored bottles are great...I would call the ‘43 La Tache a serene wine.” Score 96. The **1923** vintage “continues to amaze me as it doesn’t ever seem to change and thus it may live forever...,,the best way I can describe it is to say that it is not a young wine but neither is it an old wine. Score 98. The **1949** vintage was scored 95+ but Bipin Desai said if the bottle is perfect, the 1949 is the best La Tache of all time. The **1959** scored 99 and the **1971** scored 98. Impressive lineup!

Enoteca Pinchiorri Wine Cellar

Enoteca Pinchiorri in Florence is Italy’s top wine restaurant. The wine list offers 4,500 wines, most of which have been purchased directly from the producer upon release. Henri Mayer, for example, has reserved one barrel of Vosne-Romanee Croxs Parantoux every year since 1983 (the 1990 is on the list for \$1,093). The cellar containing 140,000 wines includes a Methuselah of Domaine de la Romanee-Conti Romanee-Conti 1985. The restaurant received three Michelin stars in 1993. A four-glass high-end Burgundy, four-course tasting menu costs about \$520. Almost every wine on the list can be ordered by the glass.

Owner Pinchiorri buys 50,000 bottles a year to restock his wine cellar

Joseph Roty

Burgundy is a region of individualists and Joseph Roty fits in with the group just fine. He is a fascinating and complex *vigneron* who makes some of Burgundy’s best wines. He keeps his winemaker cards close to his chest. In *The Great Domaines of Burgundy*, Remington Norman writes: “Roty refuses to disclose what acreage he has— ‘no one but me knows the age of my wife or the extent of my vineyards...my importers will think that I am a millionaire and will want to know why there isn’t more wine.’” What is known is that he makes consistently spectacular red wines, drawing on vineyards that have been in his family for 300 years. His vines are among the oldest in Burgundy— his youngest Gevrey villages vines are 45 years old. Roty is also among the last to harvest each year. The domaine’s most compelling wines are the three grand crus, Mazis-, Griottes— and Charmes-Chambertin Tres Vieilles Vignes, the latter from vines mostly planted in 1881! But don’t overlook his Marsannay Ouzelay from 80-year-old vines— a hidden gem of Burgundy priced under \$30.

Vineyardoutlet.com– a web site for finding highly allocated Napa Valley wines.

Winesforauction.org–a web site where sales of wine benefit medical research.


PrinceofPinot.com

Famous Winemaker Paul Masson was quoted as saying: “Never mind what it tastes like...how’s it drink?”



Wall Street Billionaire Julian Robertson is the highest-profile American in New Zealand. In February, he reportedly paid roughly \$7 million for New Zealand’s premier cult winery, Neil McCallum’s Dry River Wines. It was a record sum that stunned New Zealand’s wine industry.

Grilled Salmon Loves Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir is a classic match for fresh salmon. The salmon’s sweetness melds with the ripe berry flavors in the wine. In the following recipe, the sweet, aromatic fennel complements the red-fruit character in Pinot Noir, mimicking the anise notes often present in the wine. The recipe comes from Anya Spence, harvest chef for Domaine Drouhin in Dundee, Oregon. For a nice presentation, use fennel stalks and fronds as a bed for the fish when it comes off the grill.

1 tablespoon fennel seeds
1 1/2 tablespoons natural sea salt
1 tablespoon coarsely ground pepper
6 salmon filets or steaks, 6-8 ounces each

Crack and grind the fennel seed in a mortar and pestle or spice grinder. Combine fennel seed, salt and pepper. Prepare the grill and make sure the grate is very hot so the salmon will not stick to it. Brush the salmon with a little olive oil, then rub the fennel spice mixture onto the fish. Grill for 7 to 10 minutes per inch of thickness. Remove fish from grill and let rest for a few minutes before serving. Complete the meal with some good fresh bread and greens from the garden or local Farmer’s Market, and a Pinot Noir with good acidity and balanced tannin levels.