

PinotFile[®]

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinot Noir

Pinot Dreams

In 1805, Lewis & Clark had endured every hardship possible when they arrived at the mouth of the Columbia River in close proximity to the Willamette Valley. In their canoes they were thrashed by the worst storms imaginable. Explorers to this region eighty years earlier had named it Cape Disappointment. Why would any sane person want to plant Pinot Noir in an area named Cape Disappointment?

It was the hippie generation that spawned the modern Pinot Noir era in the Willamette Valley. The mindset of the pioneers who first planted Pinot Noir here grew out of the idealistic belief of the time that anything was possible with a passion and a desire. The first plantings of post-prohibition Oregon Pinot Noir were by David Lett (Eyrle Vineyard) and Charles Coury (Charles Coury Vineyards near Forest Grove) in 1966. Neither of them had much practical vineyard management and winemaking experience. Charles Coury remains an unsung hero of Oregon Pinot Noir. At UC Davis he wrote his master thesis titled, "Cold Limit Amerlioration Hypothesis" in which he theorized that vinifera varieties produce their best quality wines when they ripen just at the limit of their growing season. Along with Lett, Coury chose Oregon as the closest climatic match to Burgundy. Lett and Coury were soon joined by Dick Erath and Dick Ponzi. As the sky eventually cleared for Lewis & Clark, these early vinous trailblazers found Pinot paradise near Cape Disappointment.

1985 was the year that people really began to open their eyes to the potential for Pinot Noir in Oregon. National acclaim for the 1985 vintage was followed by the purchase of land in the Dundee Hills of the Willamette Valley in 1987 by the respected Burgundy house, Domaine Drouhin. That same year, the First International Pinot Noir Celebration was held in McMinnville, Oregon. The original intent of the Celebration was to introduce Pinot Noir to the American public and assist the thirsty consumer in appreciating Pinot Noir and inducing them to drink it. The event has progressed way beyond these early intentions to become a festival to celebrate Pinot dreams come true. Like early America's pilgrims who celebrated their bounty with a holiday, this Celebration has become a "Pinot Noir Thanksgiving."

Four decades later, Oregon may still have a lingering reputation as "leftover hippies" because it remains a tolerant and laid-back place. Lifestyle is still more treasured here than money. Andrea Immer-Robinson may be speaking for the Oregon Pinot family when she said, "Pinot Noir is like a Grateful Dead show, "When it's great it is so unbelievably great."

**International
Pinot Noir
Celebration
Issue, Pt 2**

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The IPNC, true to its name, brings Pinot Noir producers together from all over the world. "There's a camaraderie between Pinot Noir producers," says David Adelsheim. "No one thinks that there are any secrets and everyone is willing to share their knowledge, expertise and experience. As a result the quality of Pinot Noir has gone up not only in America but around the world because there is this tremendous energy focused on making better wine."

Pinots of Interest at the Recent IPNC

Have you ever had that yearning to go back to college? How about returning to a small, manicured campus just to study Pinot Noir? No homework, no written tastes, just practical Pinot Noir tastings where you can study and compare the myriad of styles of this wine from producers all over the world. And to top it off, gourmet meals unlike anything you ever ate at college.

Pinot Noir has come a very long way. David Lett reminisces about his first harvest in 1970 where he did everything wrong. He harvested unripe grapes, fermented too cold, and aged the wine too long. At \$2.65 at bottle, this “Oregon Spring Wine” was probably way overpriced. Today, the consistent high quality of Pinot Noir is a testament to the progress that has been made here in America in only 35 years. There is a lot of great Pinot now and something for everyone’s palate. I attended the IPNC with a friend, Art “Fruit Bomb” Fries who is a Pinot drinker-in-training. Although we enjoyed many of the same Pinot Noirs, Art kept drifting to the dark side. I pushed for elegance, he demanded fruit. I looked at the alcohol levels, he laughed it off. I spoke of acid and balance, he drifted off into a deep purple haze. I rhapsodized about terroir, he mispronounced it “the rear”.

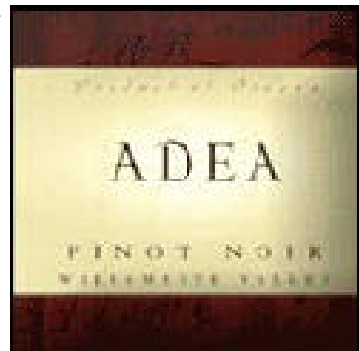
Art and I were not alone in our differences. A panel of wine critics could not agree on several of the Pinot Noirs presented to them. A New Zealand wine to some had lovely sweet fruit, good cut (acidity), but a short finish that was less impressive than the start. Others took the exact opposite track, claiming the finish was quite compelling and long. A California Pinot Noir was said to be the worst wine of the five presented by one critic, others felt the rustic notes of the wine were appealing and some in the audience actually voted it the best wine in the lineup. The point is, BYOP (Bring Your Own Palate) and enjoy the Pinot Noir in front of you regardless of what a wine critic might pontificate.

The recent International Pinot Noir Celebration, July 29-31, 2005, offered multiple Pinot delights that made my heart throb. Many of them were tasted alfresco in a warm, walk-around setting, not the best for seriously evaluating wine. Nevertheless, some wines stood out and are worth mentioning here.

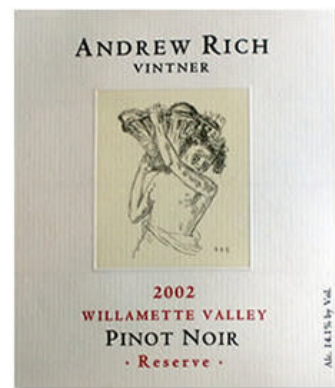


Oregon

ADEA Wine Company 2003 Reserve Pinot Noir This is a full-throttle Pinot Noir from a warm vintage sporting 15.3% alcohol. Although this big style of Pinot Noir is frequently not appealing to me, I enjoyed this immensely with the mesquite-roasted Oregon Country beef sirloin served at the Grand Dinner. Owner Dean Fisher's interest in Oregon wine grew out of his skill for designing and building useful winery equipment in a shop on the Fisher Family Farm two miles south of Gaston and nine miles north of Carlton in Yamhill County. He struck up a friendship with Michael Etzel at Beaux Freres and his first winery contract was to design and build the sorting table at Beaux Freres. He subsequently built equipment for multiple other Oregon wineries and along the way learned the fundamentals of winegrowing and winemaking in Oregon. He planted his estate vineyard in 1990 with the help of Michael Etzel and made long-term contracts with selected growers including Coleman Vineyard, Laural Vineyard, Shea Vineyard, and Yamhill Valley Vineyards. After making his wines early on at Medici and Lemelson, he opened his own winery and custom-crush winery facility in 2002 in a beautiful setting on the old Fisher Family Farm property in Gaston. The first wines Fisher made were bottled under the Fisher Family Cellars label but a copyright conflict led to a change to ADEA in 1998. The name is an acronym for members of the Fisher family (Ann, Dean, Erica and Adam). Production is now about 2,500 cases. The **2003 ADEA Wine Company Pommard Clone Pinot Noir** is also a sensual wine of great promise. Both 2003 Pinot Noirs will be released in October, 2005. The winery is at 26421 NW Highway 47 in Gaston. 503-662-4509, www.adeawine.com.



Andrew Rich 2002 and 2003 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$26) The wines are made in a very drinkable style, elegant and balanced. Equally at home before dinner or with dinner, they are sensibly priced. Rich is a soft-spoken New England transplant who became interested in wine in the 1980s and received his training at Bonny Doon Vineyard. It was here that his interest in Rhone varietals developed. Rich is quite an enigma: he is known as one of the few Rhone Rangers in Oregon (sourcing grapes from Washington as well as Oregon), his signature wine is Gewurtztraminer ice wine, and he makes excellent Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. Andrew Rich Wines was founded in 1995 and since 2002 has settled in at the Carlton Winemaker Studio at 801 N Scott St, Carlton, Oregon. 503-284-6622, www.andrewrichwines.com.



Carabella Vineyard 2002 Estate Pinot Noir (\$35) A terrific Oregon Pinot Noir that is superbly perfumed and offers plenty of cherry fruit, spice and rounded tannins. Winemaker and geologist Mike Hallock is finicky about where his grapes come from. He spent twelve years searching to find the perfect hillside vineyard. He chose a 49-acre site in Wilsonville, located in the Northern Willamette Valley. Gravelly volcanic soils here are perfect for dry farming the low yielding vines. The vineyard is now in its 7th harvest. The Pinot Noir features five clonal blocks fermented separately, then blended to show off the vineyard, focusing on purity of fruit and elegance of style. The first release from the estate vineyard was in 1998. Carabella's grapes are also featured in vineyard designate wines made by Rex Hill, Daedalus, Owen Roa and Zelko. John P. Hammerstad, M.D., Professor Emeritus in the Department of Neurology at Oregon Health & Science University is a partner in this project. The business address is 17085 Chapin Way, Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034. 503-699-1829, www.carabellawine.com.



Domaine Drouhin 2002 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$40) This lovely Pinot is a classic blend of Oregon fruit and Burgundian sensibility. It has a noble verve, with a roundness and silkiness that draws you in and makes you shut your eyes. I defy you to pick this out as Oregon from a lineup of Burgundies. Domaine Drouhin Oregon (DDO) is a 225 acre estate in the Red Hills of Dundee with 90 acres planted to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Veronique Drouhin-Boss lives in Beaune but directs the winemaking and her brother, Phillippe, is in charge of the Drouhin vineyards both in Oregon and Burgundy. This is a landmark winery that still remains the only significant Burgundy investment in Oregon. The first vines were planted in 1988 but within a short time several viticultural innovations were begun. DDO was the first in Oregon to plant high-density vines (1 meter x 1.3 meters), the first to plant on Phylloxera-resistant rootstock, and the first to plant Dijon clones. The eight story winery on the property is built into the slopes of the Red Hills, allowing four working levels that move all fruit and wine by gravity. Recently the winery has opened its doors to the public with tours by appointment and a tasting room. Production is 12,000 cases of Pinot Noir and 2,000 cases of Chardonnay. The Chardonnay, labeled "Arthur", is made from Dijon clones that have shown considerable promise for Chardonnay in Oregon and is my favorite Chardonnay from the Valley. Also, the **2002 Domaine Drouhin Cuvee Louise** (\$85) was released on May 28, but with only 200 cases produced it is unlikely to still be available. Still to be released are the **2002 Domaine Drouhin Cuvee Laurene** and **2002 Domaine Drouhin Classsique**. To be assured of receiving DDO limited Cuvees, you must join DDO Direct at 503-864-2700.



EIEIO 2003 Wind Hill Pinot Noir (\$45) The attack is seductive with generous red fruits including raspberries and red cherries. The palate is all velvet and the finish exhibits a long persistence with refreshing acidity. The vines at Wind Hill were planted in 1972 and are Pommard clone. EiEIO & Company was started in 1995 when several of the wineries that Jay "Old" MacDonald featured at his Tasting Room in Carlton asked him about having his own wine. He started with 200 cases and it has grown from a negociant pursuit to a full bonded winery with the 2003 vintage. Jay is a bit of a maverick and character, but he is dead serious about Pinot Noir. Vineyard sources are leased on a per-acre basis and farming is determined by contract. The vineyards include Broadley Vineyard, Canary Hill Vineyard, Carlton Hill Vineyard, Lemelson-Stermer Vineyard, Meredith Mitchell Vineyard, and Wind Hill Vineyard. All but two vineyards are either organically farmed or in transition beyond organic and into Bio-Dynamic certification. Winemaking is natural with "no tomfoolery" as Jay puts it. The **2003 EIEIO Broadley Vineyard Pinot Noir** (\$65) is a HUGE Pinot Noir that is as dark as the ace of spades. The label says 15% alcohol but Jay said it was closer to 17% so who knows. Art "Deep Fruit" Fries absolutely adored this Pinot Noir. Jay also makes three lower-priced blends labeled "E", "I", and "O". The total production at EIEIO is around 1,500 cases. The phone number for EIEIO is 503-852-6733 and website is www.OnHisFarm.com (under construction). The Tasting Room in Carlton is located in an old bank building at the corner of Main and Pine in historic Carlton (see photo of Jay's wheels parked next to The Tasting Room. 503-538-9878.

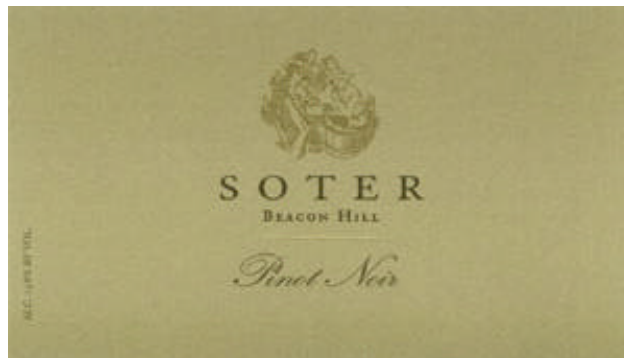


Hamacher Wines 2002 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (\$35) Complex aromas of black cherries and roses, rich red and black fruits, nicely toasted and complimented by soft tannins. Like so many Pinot Noirs from the 2002 vintage in Oregon, it is a showcase wine that fulfills the long-proven potential of Oregon as a serious rival for Burgundy. Still a baby, this wine won't be released until October, 2005. Owner/winemaker, Eric Hamacher, believes in that old Gallo tune, "No wine before its time." Hamacher has had a diverse winemaking background. He came to Oregon after working fifteen harvests all over the world including a stint at Etude in California. He was the first winemaker at Lemelson where he helped design a gravity-flow winery there.

The Hamacher label was established in 1995. He is the brains behind Oregon's first co-operative winery at the Carlton Winemakers Studio which opened in 2002 and where he currently crafts his wines (photo to right). This facility is the nation's first "green" LEED certified winery. Hamacher sources his Pinot Noir from numerous Willamette Valley sites, believing that blending of grapes from several different soils and climates produces the most complexity in his wine. Carlton Winemaker Studio is at 801 N Scott St, Carlton, 97111, 503-852-9519. The tasting room here features all of the brands made at the Studio and is a very comfortable and "tasteful" spot to sample Pinot Noir. The website for Hamacher Wines is www.hamacherwines.com.



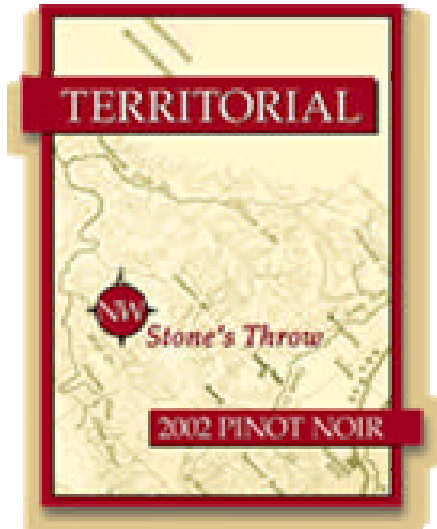
Soter Vineyards 2003 Beacon Hill Pinot Noir (\$45) A superb offering and maybe my favorite Pinot Noir at the event. This Pinot Noir jumps out of the glass with violets, black raspberries and chocolate dust. Tastes exactly like a great Chambolle-Musigny. A privilege to drink! I have been a fan of winemaker Tony Soter for many years. His resume is impressive and dotted with Cabernet superstar wineries like Spottswoode, Araujo, and Dalla Valle. Soter founded Etude in the Carneros region of California in 1982 and made a string of exceptionally well-made wines from Pinot Gris, to Pinot Noir to Cabernet Sauvignon. Etude



was sold recently to Beringer Blass but Soter continues on there as a consultant. In the 1997 he purchased the Beacon Hill Vineyard, a 20-acre hillside on the north fork of the Chahalem Valley, located above Willakenzie in the Yamhill-Carlton District. The site is named for a lighthouse-like structure at the top of the hill. The Pomard-clone vines had been initially planted in 1988 on their own rootstock. Additional plantings were undertaken in 1998, 1999, and 2004 including some "heirloom" clones Soter is famous for. Today there are 16 acres of ecologically-managed Pinot Noir from which an estate Pinot Noir, a sparkling Brut Rosé (\$40), and a Rosé of Pinot Noir (first release 2004, \$20) are produced. The inaugural Soter Vineyards releases were the 1998 Beacon Hill Pinot Noir and the 1997 Brut Rose. A Blanc de Blanc style sparkling wine will be released in 2007-2008 and a very limited amount of Cabernet Franc is made under the Soter Vineyards label from Cabernet Franc and Malbec grown adjacent to the Soter home in the Napa Valley. The Pinot Noirs have improved every year. Plans have been made to build a winery in an old barn on the property. Soter is assisted at Beacon Hill by James Cahill, associate winemaker, and Vinetenders Vineyard Management, operated by Joel and Louise Myers of Dayton, Oregon. 503-662-5600, www.sotervineyards.com.

Territorial Vineyards 2002 Stone's Throw Pinot Noir (\$27, 250 cases).

This is a cuddly food wine that shined with the six-hour braised pork belly with herb salad served at an alfresco lunch. An elegant offering that has a whole pantry shelf of spices. Territorial Vineyards & Wine Company was founded by two Lane County wine grape growing families. Estate-owned and estate-managed vineyards lie west of Eugene in the foothills of the coast range. The 11 acres at Equinox Vineyard were planted in 1993 to Dijon clones of Pinot Noir and the 15-acre Bellpine Vineyard, which bears the name of the soil type, was planted in 1999. Owners Jeff and Victoria Wilson-Charles and Alan and April Mitchell have been growing grapes for a combined total of over thirty years. Sustainable agricultural methods are combined with aggressive canopy and yield management. The state-of-the-art winery facility is located in urban Eugene. Fashioned from a old coffee warehouse, a new tasting room is part of the facility. A reserve Pinot Noir, the **2002 Territorial Capital T Reserve** (\$38, 150 cases) is a bolder wine made from six of the best barrels of the 2002 growing season. I found this rich, deep offering less appealing at this point than the Stone's Throw but time in the cellar may bring everything together. 907 West Third Avenue, Eugene, 97402. The phone is 541-684-9463 and the website is www.territorialvineyards.com.



Other Oregon wines of interest: **2002 JC Carrie Pinot Noir**, **2003 Bryce Vineyard Ribbon Ridge Pinot Noir**, **2002 Domaine Serene Evenstad Reserve**, **2002 Willakenzie Estate Pierre Leon Pinot Noir**, **2004 Iris Hill Pinot Gris**, **2004 Andrew Rich Craft Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc**, and **2003 Ponzi Rosato Pinot Noir Rosé**.

New Zealand

Escarpment Vineyard 2003 Martinborough Pinot Noir A bolt of lightning in the bottle with a ton of ripe black cherry fruit and a delicate overlay of earth, herbs, and spice. Not overblown and very Burgundian in style. The finish is slightly green and some cellar time will polish this. Escarpment Vineyard was established in 1999 as a joint business venture between Robert and Mem Kirby (of Australia's village Roadshow Productions) and Larry and Sue McKenna. McKenna had grown and made fine Pinot Noir from Martinborough Vineyards for years and knows the area well. McKenna has been described as "The Prince of Pinot" by top international wine writer James Halliday who must not have known that the title was already taken by the author. After speaking to Larry about this dual title, he graciously agreed to share it. The perfect site for Escarpment was selected in the Te Muna River Valley. This is a booming area for new plantings, including much talked about Craggy Range. It was Robert's brother-in-law, David Glass, who while walking the property one evening was inspired by the expansive escarpment dropping down to the river. The label's logo features the great Polynesian voyager - Kupe. The inaugural vintage was 2001. Since then McKenna has "set new directions for Pinot Noir creating wines of complexity, texture and structure." He has worked "to make wines that are different, full of surprise and perhaps even unconventional." The flagship Escarpment Pinot Noir should reach its peak in about 10 years. A second reserve bottling, **Kupe**, was also poured at the IPNC at a luncheon but I missed out. There is limited distribution to retail stores in the United States. +64 6 306 9301, www.escarpment.co.nz.



2003 Felton Road Pinot Noir (\$36) and **2003 Felton Road Block 3 Pinot Noir** The Felton Road Pinot Noir is a refined wine that offers beautiful Central Otago sweet fruit and spiciness on a silky frame. New World in style, it avoids the over-extraction found in many New Zealand Pinot Noirs. The Block 3 Pinot Noir has a little more interest with a mild herbaceous (thyme was widely planted here years ago) character that adds, rather than detracts, from the wine. The cherry nose is hi-tone and very varietal. A thoroughly enjoyable drink from an iconic brand. All of the Felton Road Pinot Noirs (there is also a Block 5 bottling) are strictly 100% estate grown in Bannockburn, Central Otago. Thirty-two hectares are divided over three sites. Winemaking emphasizes a traditional approach, preferring wild yeasts and minimal intervention at all stages of winemaking. The wines are all hand harvested, whole bunch pressed, and barrel fermented with weekly stirring of the lees for complexity. The winemaker is Blair Walter. Matthew Jukes, writing at Expertwine.com, echoes the accolades of many: "I can confirm that this is the single most impressive estate in NZ. And nobody at the moment is closing the gap on their lead. Each and every wine is fantastic." The wine is exported to the United States by Wilson Daniels and to more than 20 other countries. The website is www.feltonroad.com.



Burgundy

Domaine Fougery de Beauclair 2003 Bonnes Mares Normally trying to drink a new release of Bonnes Mares would take the enamel off your teeth. However, the 2003 vintage in Burgundy was hotter than Hades and the very ripe fruit and lower acids the vintage provided has made for some early drinking opportunities. The aromas suggest the inside of an old church augmented by crushed cherries. Extravagant spiciness and astonishingly soft tannins for such a young wine make for a special treat. Typical of a Grand Cru, the finish follows you around like a new puppy dog. In 1972, Jean-Louis Fougery created Domaine Jean-Louis Fougery from a vineyard passed down from his grandfather. Over the years, the Domaine grew to 25 acres of vineyards, from Marsannay to Savigny-les-Beaunes. In 1986, Jean-Louis partnered with Bernard Clair, to form Domaine Fougery de Beauclair. Now the estate owns over 54 acres of vines and bottles the only Bonnes Mares in monopole originating from the Morey-St.-Denis side of this Grand Cru (a pearl only for the most serious Burgnuts). Patrice Olliver, the winemaker at the Domaine since 1999, was at the IPNC pouring his wine.



Maison Camille Giroud 2002 Beaune 1er Cru Les Avaux A sexy little wine that is all charm and beauty. It offers luscious mature fruit (40 year-old vines) that is very classy and everything comes together perfectly. Makes you want to shout. It demonstrates what can be done with great fruit and no new oak. The 2003 New Zealand Pinot Noir and 2001 Oregon Pinot Noir that were tasted along with this Burgundy as a basis for discussion of terroir didn't stand a chance. This wine will only get better over the next 5-10 years when the terroir will show its stuff. Camille Giroud is a small and respected negociant firm located a few blocks from Bouchard in Beaune. Founded in 1865, the firm has specialized in wines of structure and power that will age. The cellars are among the coldest in all of Burgundy and 300,000 bottles of Burgundy dating back to 1937 are resting comfortably there. After Lucien Giroud's death, who ran the firm since 1942, the firm floundered under the direction of his sons and in 2002 a group of American investors (including Californian Ann Colgin) purchased the company and retained American wine merchants, (Becky) Wasserman-Hone, to run it. Colgin hired 25-year-old David Croix to return the wines to their previous exalted status. He combines modern and traditional methods, using a wooden press, open wooden vats for fermentation, and no new oak barrels. Talking with him at the IPNC, he seemed knowledgeable far beyond his years and very sure of himself. For a full in-depth report on Maison Camille Giroud, consult www.burgundy-report.com (Summer, 2004 Issue).



California

Cuvaision 2002 Estate Selection Carneros Pinot Noir (\$48) A deeply colored wine with rich aromas of red fruits and smoky oak. Smooth, spicy and a wonderful mouthful. I was surprised to learn that Cuvaision Wine Estates has had a Pinot Noir program since 1987 since I rarely have had an opportunity to sample the wines. Now the 400 acre estate in the Carneros district has a newly constructed state-of-the-art winery and they are seriously committed to gravity-flow processing, open top tanks tailored to their blocks, and carefully-controlled temperature and humidity in their barrel aging rooms. Talented winemaker Steven Rogstad brings years of experience working in the Carneros region. They currently bottle 4,500 cases of Pinot Noir each year, divided among three estate-grown bottlings: Carneros, Mariafeld, and Estate Selection. 4550 Silverado Trail North, Calistoga, California 94515. The phone number is 707-942-6266 and the website is www.cuvaision.com.



Ortman Family Vineyards 2003 Santa Rita Hills Pinot Noir (\$29, 700 cases). A graceful Pinot Noir that avoids the suppersripe intensity of many wines derived from this appellation. This wine satisfies more than it startles. It is a combination of grapes from Fiddlestix and Rancho Santa Rosa Vineyards. This producer is a relative newcomer that I have written about in past issues of the *PinotFile*. The winemaking team and owners are Chuck (of Meridian fame) and son Matt Ortman. Based in San Luis Obispo, they specialize in small amounts of Pinot Noir from the Santa Rita Hills and the Willamette Valley. A **2001 Ortman Family Vineyards Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir** served at lunch was equally satisfying. 1360 Marsh St, San Luis Obispo California 93401. 805-787-0810, www.ortmanvineyards.com.



Stephen Ross Wine Cellars 2003 Estate Stone Corral Vineyard Pinot Noir A medium-bodied and ruby colored Pinot Noir that grabs your interest. There is great purity of Pinot fruit complemented by tea and flower characteristics. The moderate tannins are well-integrated and the refreshing finish is moderately long. An impressive debut from a new estate vineyard in the Edna Valley called Stone Corral Vineyard. The world premier of this wine was at this year's IPNC. Stephen Ross Dooley founded Stephen Ross Wine Cellars in 1994 after 17 years of winemaking at Louis Martini Winery and Edna Valley Vineyard. I recently wrote about his innovative "Adopt-A-Barrel" program. 4910 Edna Road, San Luis Obispo, California 93401. 805-594-1318, www.stephenrosswine.com

There were a number of other Pinot Noirs poured at the IPNC that were quite unusual. These included such esoteric bottlings as a **1999 Gruet Cuvee Gilbert Pinot Noir** in magnum from Gruet, a New Mexico winery at 3,000 feet that specializes in sparkling wine (the wine did not undergo malolactic fermentation), an Alsatian Pinot Noir **2002 Rene Mure Clos St Landelin Pinot Noir**, and a uniquely tasting Pinot Noir from Michigan, **2002 Bel Lago Vineyards & Winery Leelanau Peninsula Estate Bottled Pinot Noir**. It was a wild and crazy and very memorable weekend.

If all this talk about Pinot Noir and the Oregon life style that goes along with it appeals to you, there is plenty of current opportunity to buy into the fun. For a little more than \$20,000, prospective grape growers can purchase an acre of prime irrigated growing land in the Dundee Hills planted with densely spaced vines on Phylloxera-resistant rootstock. Other vineyards with lesser pedigree go for \$8,000-10,000 an acre. For high-rollers, the Montinore Estate Winery near Forest Grove is on the block for only \$5 million. As reported by Dana Tims in *The Oregonian*, the sale includes a 10,000-square-foot mansion built in the early 1900s, a tasting room and winery which produces 35,000 cases annually, and 100 acres of the estate's 585 acres (the remainder of the planted acreage, 230 acres, is negotiable). The price is really a steal considering the estate has the capacity to produce considerably more wine, and the Oregon wine glut of a few years ago is a thing of the past. The demand for Pinot Noir continues to skyrocket with some producers doubling their sales post-*Sideways*. According to the latest statistics at www.oregonwine.org, there are 314 wineries and 519 vineyards in Oregon. Oregon is second behind California in the number of wineries and fourth in total production in the United States. Oregon now has about a third as many acres of Pinot Noir planted as Burgundy. The region has been blessed with six great vintages in a row and they have used those years to great advantage. An Oregonian, Bill Hatcher, has even stolen (and trademarked) the name "Sideways" and plans to use it on a label for a future bottling of Oregon Pinot Noir. All Pinot trails lead to the Beaver State.