

# PinotFile<sup>©</sup>

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## Beaux Freres Vertical Tasting

A complete vertical tasting of Beaux Freres Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir 1991-2001 was held at The Pacific Club of Newport Beach on February 12, 2004. Fourteen members of Le Grand Crew wine club and Master Sommelier and noted food and wine expert Rene Chazottes were in attendance. All wines were cellared by me since release. They were all decanted 20 minutes before tasting and were tasted in flights from young to old. The accompanying menu was unique in that duck was incorporated in some form for every course from the amuse-bouche to the dessert.

There was a great diversity of style from the bold, extracted he-man 1994 and 1998 to the elegant and feminine 1992, 1993, and 2001. The group's comments are summarized below.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Flight: 2001 – 1998:

The 2001 was the best of the flight. Fresh with good acid, a lot of finesse, potentially a great wine. The 2000 was the best with the food. By itself, the finish was a little alcoholic and the oak did not seem fully integrated. The 1999 was very enjoyable if not a bit oaky. The 1998 was a concentrated wine with a lot of sweet black fruit. Best nose of the flight. A great wine to drink and ponder by itself without food. This wine will easily go another 10 years.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Flight: 1997-1995:

Aromas of all of these wines were very enjoyable but the fruit was thin and flavors lacking. The 1995 was the best of the three. The 1997 was the least favorite wine of the night – an acetate taste and high alcohol made this wine unpleasant. The 1996 was flat. All three wines tasted much better with the food course.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Flight: 1994-1991:

The most enjoyable and interesting flight of wines. The 1994 was the best wine of the evening for several tasters. Very rich, quite different from all other wines. Will be even better with more age. The 1993 was very complex and elegant. A Burgundian style that pleased most everyone. The 1992 was my personal favorite. A great funky, barnyard nose. The wine really sang with the food. The 1991 was still surprisingly fresh but a bit lean and thin with the thinness exaggerated by the food.

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

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The menu for the Beaux Freres wine dinner included smoked duck gougiers with pinot-quince glaze, duck confit, duck prosciutto, seared Muscovy duck breast with butternut squash puree, roasted wild duck with Madeira braised turnips and onions, and duck egg and Valrhona chocolate soufflé.

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## Lust and Pinot Noir

Valentine's Day always brings men and women closer together. But Pinot Noir can get men and women together every day. The pheromones in certain grape varieties, particularly Pinot Noir, are very similar to some human pheromones. Pheromones travel in air and fluids like wine and are the external equivalent of hormones which course in the bloodstream. The smells of the Pinot Noir grape—spices, earth, musk, and barnyard— are very similar to those associated with the principal male smell, androstenone. Truffles, vanilla, and oaky smells of Pinot Noir aged in oak barrels are also androstenone-like. These smells can unlock powerful memories and open the door to lust and desire. With both the olfactory system and our emotional center located in the frontal lobes, is it any wonder that a great Burgundy gets you a sure thing?



## Penfolds Pinot Noir

A good friend of mine recently traveled to the wine country of Australia and brought back a bottle of **1998 Penfolds Cellar Reserve Pinot Noir**. Available only at the winery, this was the first Pinot Noir made by Penfolds. The fruit came from Adelaide Hills and Eden Valley and traditional Burgundian techniques were employed in the production of this wine. It was made in open-fermenters at Magill Estate, handcrafted, and neither fined or filtered. 245 cases were produced. Unlike many Australian Pinot Noirs which I find over-extracted and awkward, this example did capture the elegance and power of Pinot Noir. Multilayered Pinot flavors, velvety tannins, silky mouthfeel, with a nice long finish. An Aussie rip snorter.

## Riedel Stemless Stemware

In January, Riedel introduced the O collection, a series of six wineglasses based on the shapes of the Vinum collection without the stem. The idea for the O collection was inspired by the space required to store the many wine glasses that executive vice president Maximilian Riedel had in his small New York apartment.

The O wine tumbler is made from machine-blown lead-free crystal, which is dishwasher safe. The tumbler comes in six designs specific to wine varieties, including a Pinot Noir style. When tipped over, the tumblers wobble back into an upright position. This feature comes in handy on boats, limousines, airplanes, poolside, and at picnics. The tumblers will not replace stemmed glassware for serious drinkers. They like to hold and swirl via the stem to minimize greasy fingerprints and prevent the wine from warming above its target temperature.



The Syrah/Shiraz (left) and Chardonnay tumblers are two of the O collection's six bowl shapes.

## Heintz Family Vineyard

Not to be confused with the Heinz family of foods, the Heintz family has farmed a forest-perimetered hilltop in Occidental, Sonoma Coastal County for well over 100 years. Over the last decade, Charlie Heintz has meticulously improved the property and now many of California's finest Pinot Noir producers are fighting for an allocation of the yearly harvest. Littorai, Williams Selyem, DuMol, and Destino are just a few of the producers who gladly designate "Heintz Vineyard" on their labels.



Now Charlie Heintz is making his own 100% Heintz Vineyard Pinot Noir. Instead of putting his name on the label, he chose "Dutch Bill" after Dutch Bill Howard, one of the founding fathers of the timber industry in Occidental. The **2002 Dutch Bill Heintz Ranch Pinot Noir** is a steal at \$27 (373 cases). It is a big, extracted style of Pinot Noir with black cherry, blackberry jam, and cassis flavors. The finish is complex and lasts forever. This wine matches up well with any of the other producers using fruit from this vineyard at twice the price. Available at [RootsCellar.com](http://RootsCellar.com) (Healdsburg).

## New Pinot Releases

This is the time of year when your daily mail is filled with offerings for allocated Pinot Noir. Some producers require you to buy their other varietals in addition to Pinot Noir (Martinelli), some require you to purchase in blocks of 3, 6, or 12 bottles (Littorai), and still others allow you to order just 1 or 2 bottles (Brogan, WesMar).

### Martinelli Winery

2001 Three Sisters Vineyard Pinot Noir (205 cases), 2002 Moonshine Ranch Pinot Noir (515 cases), 2002 Bondi Home Ranch Pinot Noir (750 cases), all \$50. Big, extracted style. 707-525-0570

### Brogan Cellars

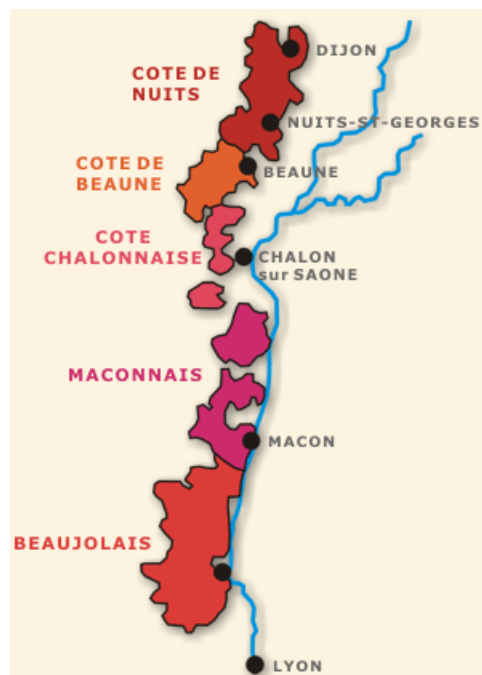
2002 Lone Redwood Pinot Noir (\$48), 2002 Summa Vineyard Pinot Noir (\$75), 2002 Buena Tierra "Hello Doro" Pinot Noir (\$75), 2002 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, a Gold Medal Winner at Sonoma Harvest Fair (\$45). Medium to high extracted style. 707-473-0211 or 707-744-8760

### Littorai

2002 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (392 cases), 2002 One Acre Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (135 cases), 2002 Hirsch Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (640 cases), 2002 Savoy Vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (310 cases), 2002 Thierot Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (205 cases), 2002 Summa Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (110 cases), 2002 Cerise vineyard Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (45 cases), and 2002 Mays Canyon Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (45 cases). Prices range from \$38 for the Sonoma Coast to \$60 for the Summa. Burgundian style. No phone or e-mail orders. FAX 707-963-7332. Sign up for mailing list by FAX or web site.

### WesMar

2002 Piner Ranch Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (247 cases), 2002 Olivet Lane Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (185 cases), 2002 Oehlman Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (81 cases), 2002 Gilbraith Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (67 cases), and 2002 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (from Piner Ranch, Olivet Lane, and Oehlman Vineyards) (445 cases). All wines are sensibly priced at \$35 except the Russian River blend which is \$29. Best vintage to date. 707-829-8824



**Burgundy Wine Company newsletter reports on a tasting of just bottled or about to be bottled 2002 vintage. “The wines were positively heady with aroma, flavor, and texture. All indications suggest this is a vintage that will be scrumptious throughout its various stages of development. The fruit is concentrated and luxurious. With few exceptions, the reds have no obvious tannins. There is a fine balance of acidity that lifts the plump fruit, bringing freshness, length, and the distinction of Burgundy. Generally speaking, this is not a long haul vintage, but one where the wines will evolve with moderate term aging within the expectations of their hierarchy.”**

## 2001 DRC

Of all the glorious wines from Vosne-Romanee, those of Domaine de la Romanee-Conti (DRC) are the most legendary. I remember attending a sit-down tasting of all of the wines of the 1999 vintage of DRC. It was truly a religious experience, and like church, no talking was allowed during the tasting.

A sit down tasting of 2001 DRC was held recently at Carnegie Hall in New York. Not surprisingly, I was not invited, but the word is that the wines provided an incredible sensory experience. The Romanee-Conti was pure rapture— like layers upon layers of red silk in a multitude of hues. Like love, almost impossible to describe, and can only be experienced. There was much ado about the Romanee St Vivant and owner Aubert de Villaine feels this maturing vineyard has gained in stature and should be elevated to a tasting position above Richebourg and just before LaTache. And, of course, the tasting was concluded (as is the tradition in many Burgundian domains) with a white Burgundy, Montrachet. (Photo below is of Vosne-Romanee)

