

**Pinot Noir
makes for an
elusive kind of
romance**

PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Devoted to Pinotaficionados

Volume 5, Issue 39

June 12, 2006

Inside this issue:

Marin County Pinot Noir Celebration	3
Wine Closure Dichotomy	6
Rivers-Marie	7
MacMurray Ranch	8
Monterey Winemakers' Celebration	9
Gina Da Pinot	9

Kalin Cellars: Wines with the Fifth Taste

Microbiologists Dr. Terrence (Terry) Leighton and Dr. Frances Leighton founded Kalin Cellars in Marin County in 1977. Through the ensuing years they have labored in obscurity to produce some of the greatest California wines that only wine critics and wine geeks have heard of. The eccentric couple avoid publicity and photos at all cost. I have been intrigued by their wines for years because of their unique character, age ability and individuality.

The origin of the name Kalin is a mystery, but some pertinent background information is available. Terry Leighton was a distinguished microbiology professor at the University of California Berkeley until retiring in 2000. He was the original winemaker at Domaine Laurier in the 1970s prior to starting his own label.

The wines at Kalin Cellars are all single vintage, single vineyard distinctive wines. The Leightons own no vineyards but source grapes from long standing agreements with top growers outside of Marin County. An exception was the use of Pinot Noir grapes from Devil's Gulch Vineyard (farmed by Mark Pasternak) in Marin in 1987 and 1988. The Leightons produced sparkling rosés in those two vintages that are legendary among wine enthusiasts. The Leightons do farm portions of two vineyards in Burgundy, where they make a small amount of "Kalin Bourgogne" which I believe has not yet been sold commercially.

Winemaking here combines the Leighton's grounded modern knowledge of the science of vinification with very traditional European methods. All work is done by the husband and wife team by hand. Basket presses are still employed and the wines are fermented in either oak 'cuves' (reds) or oak barrels (whites). Aging is in French oak. The Leightons pioneered *sur lies* aged white wines in California. They have done considerable yeast research through the years and now choose to use yeasts that are very slow fermenters (fermentation can take 8 months in barrel). They believe this is key for the evolution of flavors in wine, particularly the fifth taste, *unami*.

Unami is described as savory, pungent and meaty and is secondary to glutamates which are common in aged cheeses, meats and wine. The Leightons firmly believe that most wines are not capable of acquiring *unami* because they are made quickly and sold long before the fifth flavor is attained. This is the basis of the Kalin Cellars credo: "Produce no wine with less character than yourself."

For more background information on Kalin Cellars, consult the website and the fine article, 'Yquem, Yeasts and Yesteryear,' in *The World of Fine Wine*, Issue 1, May/June, 2004.

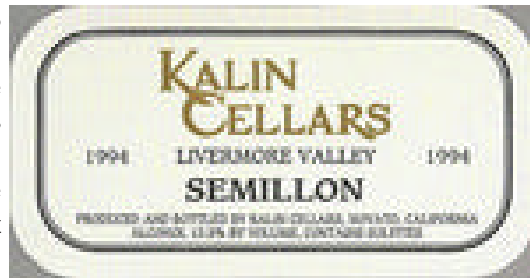
Because of the style of winemaking here, the wines are not ready to drink for at least five years. Unheard of in the modern business model of wine sales, the Leightons age their wines before release. Wasn't it Orson Wells that several years ago sat in a comfy chair holding a glass of wine and proclaimed, "Paul Masson will sell no wine before its time?" Kalin Cellars white wines are released 5-10 years after the vintage and red wines 6-10 years after the vintage. The current Pinot Noir release is the 1996 Kalin Cellars Cuvée DD Sonoma County Pinot Noir. In essence, then, every wine that is released is a library wine!

7,000 cases of wine are produced annually consisting of a heterogeneous mix including a Rose Sparkling Wine (Cuvée Rosé), Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, and a late-harvest dessert wine (Cuvée d'Or). Many of the wines are designated by letters which are shorthand for identifying specific vineyard locations and signifying cuvées. Prices are absurdly reasonable considering the wines have been cellared for years, generally in the forty dollar range. The quirky website lists currently available wines for sale, but no prices are given. You simply respond with your order. The idea here is that if you know the wines and realize that prices are very fair, you won't quibble over the charges. The wines are primarily sold through an announcement of releases (sign up on the website) and a few select retail outlets. Wine-savvy restaurants also offer the wines.

Robert J Parker, Jr. has said several years ago that "Kalin wines are the wines of a genius. These wines are worth every effort to find in the marketplace. Among the most distinctive and original expressions of American-made Pinot Noir I have ever tasted." I would agree, although only one of the three past vintages of Pinot Noir I tasted would deserve such lofty accolades.

1993 Kalin Cellars Cuvée LD Sonoma County Chardonnay 13.2% alc.. Released March, 2001. The grapes are Wente clone sourced from Long Vineyards in the West Dry Creek area of Sonoma County. Fermentation lasted ten months in 50% new French oak barrels. The wine was racked, clarified by bentonite fining, and bottled without filtration in August, 1995. Straw yellow in color. The nose is bright and fresh with hints of toffee, caramel and coconut. The flavors of caramel, pears and roasted nuts are presented on a lively acid platform. Beautifully balanced. Tasted blind, there is no way you would identify this as being 16 years old. Flat-out terrific.

1994 Kalin Cellars Livermore Valley Semillon 13.5% alc.. Released March, 2003. The grape source is the Wente Estate Vineyard located near Livermore. The vines were planted in the 1880s from Chateau d'Yquem cuttings brought to Livermore by Charles Wetmore. Wente gave up trying to sell Semillon to the American public, but the Leightons were happy to use the grapes, believing that "Semillon can produce wines which are fully comparable to the highest levels of quality realized in dry white wines



regardless of the grape variety involved." 20-25% Sauvignon Blanc is added. The juice was fermented in French oak barrels for ten months. Bottled with fining, but no filtration, in August, 1997. Golden yellow in color. The wine has appealing aromas of buttered toast, pear and butterscotch. The rich flavors of ripe tropical fruits, roasted nuts and even a touch of wax are delicious. There is a sensuous viscous mouthfeel here and the oak is perfectly integrated. A seamless wine of great distinction that can age another ten years at least. I tried this one with Sichuan orange shrimp lettuce wraps and it was a perfect match.

1990 Kalin Cellars Cuvée DD Sonoma County Pinot Noir 13.6% alc. Pinot Noir grapes for this cuvée are from the Demostene Ranch in the Alexander Valley. The vineyard is the oldest Pinot Noir planting in the appellation and the clone (? Type) produces small berries and low yields. The vineyard is located within a mile of the Russian River and is dry farmed. The must was fermented on the

skins in wooden cives for three weeks. The cap was punched down by hand three to four times each day. The must was pressed, settled and transferred to 50% new French oak barrels. The wine was bottled without racking, fining or filtration. The wine has a slight brickish rim. The nose is earthy with features of dried herbs, cherries and sherry. There is plenty of mature fruit, earth, leather and soy on the palate. Plenty of racy acidity in this wine demands food.

1994 Kalin Cellars Cuvee DD Sonoma County Pinot Noir 13.7% alc. Released October, 2003. This wine appears young with a beautiful dark violet color. A deep, dark cherry nose makes you want to stick your nose into the wine and grovel a bit. I think it is the musk also present. This beauty defies adequate flavor descriptives (my notes say “just terrific,” and “incredible,” and “very appealing”). Perhaps it is the unami. Rich, round and mature, alive and impeccably balanced. This is one of the best aged California Pinot Noirs I have experienced in a long time. A wine that makes you want to go straight to bed and shag someone. If you can find it, buy it.



1995 Kalin Cellars Cuvee DD Sonoma County Pinot Noir 13.7% alc. Released September, 2001. This wine did not live up to the quality of the others. It shows a slight brickish color. The nose was flat with damp leaf, mushroom and forest floor dominating. The fruit was subdued and the acid was really puckering. I just could not get past the searing acid. ? Corked.

Marin County Pinot Noir Celebration: From the Front Lines

I had fully intended to attend this event on June 9-10 but unfortunate circumstances prevented the trip. I asked my roving correspondents (part of the Prince’s kingdom) to file their impressions and photos. The event was held at the historic Escalle Winery in Larkspur and sponsored by the Marin County Grape Growers Association.

Western Marin County has tremendous potential for Pinot Noir. When nature cooperates, the Pinot Noir grapes can be magical with plentiful acid, lower alcohol, and very small berries yielding wild and exciting flavors. Pictured below are the astonishingly small Pinot Noir berries that Pey-Marin’s Jonathan and Susan Pey harvest.



Currently, there are at least 125 acres of vineyards in Marin County with 80 acres planted to Pinot Noir. That amount is miniscule compared to Sonoma County which has over 6,500 acres of vineyards, but there is excitement building for this region.

There seems to be two contrasting styles of Pinot Noir emerging from Marin County. On the one hand are the more elegant cool climate Pinot Noirs with delicate nuances (for example, Pey-Marin, Corda and Point Reyes). In contrast are the riper, richer styles which are fruit-driven with more oak and alcohol evident (for example, Dutton-Goldfield and Sean Thackrey).

The major Pinot Noir vineyards in Marin County include **Devil's Gulch Ranch** (18 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in Nicasio, fruit sold to Dutton-Goldfield and Sean Thackrey), **McNeil Vineyard** (leased by Chalone and farmed by Mark Pasternak of Devil's Gulch, the yields here have been miniscule), **Stubbs Vineyard** (planted in 1998, farmed by Mark Pasternak and owner Tom Stubbs, winemaker Dan Goldfield), **Corda Vineyard** (11 acres of Pinot Noir planted in 1990-1991 as part of the Chileno Valley Ranch, grapes are sold to Pey-Marin and Vision Cellars), **Skywalker Ranch** (a secretive joint project of Niebaum-Coppola and George Lucas), **Point Reyes Vineyard** (a winery and B&B owned by the Doughty family and known for their terrific sparkling wines, they operate the only tasting room in Marin County on Highway 1) and **Kendrick Johnson Vineyard** (winegrower Stewart Johnson).

Here are some general impressions of the Pinot Noirs offered at the Celebration.

2001 and 2002 Corda Marin County Pinot Noir 13.9% alc.. Cool climate style with soft texture, nuances of pomegranate and cranberries, excellent balance and length. The 2001 may be a slight step up in harmony and priced at less than \$20, this is an absolute steal. Note, the grapes for these two vintages came from Devil's Gulch Ranch but future vintages will be from other sources. The new winemaker is Jason Baker, a young graduate of U.C. Davis (pictured). The Corda family is the largest grape grower in Marin County, with 50 acres of vineyards. Most of the grapes have been sold to wineries such as Schug in Carneros, but this should change with a new commitment to their own label. To purchase, visit the website at www.cordawinery.com or phone 707-781-9310.



2002 Point Reyes Vineyards Marin County Pinot Noir 13.6% alc.. This small producer has 7 acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay north of Pt Reyes Station, but this wine is from Stubbs Vineyard. A soft, seductive wine with character and balance. Food-friendly.

2002 Point Reyes Vineyards Estate Marin County Pinot Noir 13.7% alc.. Pretty red rose nose. Soft and elegant palate feel with good balance and harmonious finish. Contact Point Reyes Vineyards through their website at www.ptreyesvineyardinn.com.

2004 Stubbs Vineyard Estate Marin County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc.. A nice quaffer with a cherry pie nose to one taster, but closed down according to another. Contact at www.stubbsvineyard.com or phone 707-773-3288.



For the following producers you can check my tasting notes using the search function at www.princeofpinot.com. There is an entire issue of the *PinotFile* (Volume 4, Issue 34, April 18, 2005) devoted to Marin County Pinot Noir.



2004 Pey-Marin Trois Filles Marin County Pinot Noir 14.1% alc.. Still young, but gorgeous nose of seductive Pinot fruits. Notes of cherry, cranberry and red rose petals. Great concentration and length. Maybe the star of the tasting. Just released. The wine may be purchased through the website, www.marinwines.com. Limited quantities are available at \$36. I highly recommend you join the mailing list. Owners Jonathan and Susan Pey are pictured at the event.

2002 Sean Thackrey Andromeda Devil's Gulch Ranch Marin County Pinot Noir (?16% alc..). A masculine style of Pinot Noir with very ripe dark fruit and mouth coating finish.

2003 Sean Thackrey Andromeda Devil's Gulch Ranch Marin County Pinot Noir 15.1% alc.. Similar to the 2002, heavy and thickly layered dark fruit. Larger than life style.

Sean Thackrey (right in photo) is an eccentric winemaker who crafts his popular wines in his home winery in Bolinas, Marin County. The Pinot Noirs have decent retail distribution and are expensive (around \$60).



You MUST visit the Sean Thackrey website at www.wine-maker.net. It is beautifully composed with historic photos and a comprehensive review of the history of the making and understanding of wine. It represents a love of history and is a prodigious undertaking that reads beautifully. You will have to look elsewhere if you want to find out about his wines! There is a mailing list for direct sales.

2001 Dutton-Goldfield Devil's Gulch Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc.. A funky tone to the nose and flavors that seems very Burgundian. The wine has room for continued improvement.

2003 Dutton-Goldfield Devil's Gulch Vineyard Marin County Pinot Noir 13.4% alc., 392 cases, \$48. The current release from the winery. Medium-bodied with silky texture. The fruit is sweet, ripe and elegant. Violets highlight the attractive floral nose.

Dutton-Goldfield wines are available from the website at www.duttongoldfield.com. The phone number is 707-823-3887. A new tasting room is open daily on Occidental Road in Santa Rosa.

2004 Vision Cellars Chileno Valley (Corda Vineyard) Marin County Pinot Noir 14.2% alc.. This winery has been receiving high accolades recently in the wine press. This was a favorite of one of the tasters. Medium-bodied, spicy elegant cherry and raspberry fruit.

Vision Cellars wines are available at www.visioncellars.com. There is reasonably good retail distribution. This producer is probably more known for it's Santa Lucia Highlands vineyard designates.



In summary, there is considerable interest here for the dedicated pinotophile. Quantities are miniscule so searching out the wines is often a challenge, much like good Burgundy. Columnist Gerald Boyd said it best: "For Pinotphiles seeking the holy grail of red winemaking, Marin County is a fertile hunting ground."

Check out the feature, "Marin Uncorked," written by Jill Kramer in the *Pacific Sun*, Marin's weekly newspaper (June 9, 2005, www.pacificsun.com). The article includes an interview with Mark Pasternak, Dan Goldfield, the Stubbses and the Prince.

Old World-New World Wine Closure Dichotomy

New Zealand, Australia and South Africa are gradually phasing out cork closure and turning to screwcaps (also known as Stelvin caps). Even some wineries in California, the most visible being Bonny Doon, are committing to screwcaps and some producers, like Inman Family Wines in the Russian River Valley are offering a choice of either traditional cork or screwcap closure (for Pinot Noir). Research in Australia has shown that oxygen is unnecessary for wines to age and many producers believe a wine will age perfectly fine under a screwcap. A recent Global Wine Closure Survey by Jalli & Rein indicates that Old World countries including France, Italy and Spain, prefer cork closure and are reluctant to switch. Although this survey found the consumer prefers a closure that is simple (easy to open), secure (proper sealing), and TCA-free, there is an entrenched perception by many that wines sealed with a screwcap are cheap plonk. Hugh Johnson ("*A Life Uncorked*") says, "The only problem with screwcaps is the lack of mystique: they spoil the theatre."

A reader from Australia sent me an informative observation recently. He noted that in Australia and New Zealand, Stelvin closure is really taking over. He is a pinotophile but cannot recall the last Pinot he saw locally without a screwcap. All of the top names in Semillon, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay are under Stelvin. Three of the top producers of Cabernet Sauvignon from Western Australia have switched and he recently purchased one of the top end old vine Shiraz wines from the Clare Valley and it also under Stelvin. Consumer surveys in Australia have shown an 80% preference for Stelvin and those producers who offer a choice of either option sell out of Stelvin much faster than cork. He personally has had some Rieslings from the 1970s that Yalumba bottled under screwcap and "they are nothing short of amazing."

Synthetic and plastic corks have not been widely accepted as they can leak and are difficult to remove. There is another option that has great potential: a glass-on-glass stopper called the Vino-Lok or VinTegra closure made in Germany. It does not leak, can easily be opened without a tool, is completely inert, and can be reused on the same bottle and even recycled. Rod Smith (*Wine & Spirits*, April, 2006) says, "To me, the glass stopper not only preserves the theater, it enhances it."

Rivers-Marie Pinot Noir

Thomas Rivers Brown and Genevieve Marie Welsh are Pinot Noir enthusiasts who wanted to start a small wine project. A friendship with Summa Vineyard proprietors Scott and Joan Zeller gave them a credible source for Pinot Noir grapes and they were off and running. The Zellers acquainted them with Richard and Daria Radcliffe at Occidental Ridge Vineyard (a slightly warmer site than Summa, planted in 1999 to Dijon clones 115, 667 and 777) and Patricia Wilson-Juckett at Willow Creek Vineyard (a small Occidental site similar to Summa in climate and exposure, planted to Dijon clone 777).

Thomas Rivers Brown hails from Sumter, South Carolina and graduated from the University of Virginia in 1994. He moved out west in January of 1996 to work in the wine business. Hired by Turley in 1997, he worked there for four years. Still young at 33, he is the winemaker at several small wineries including Outpost Wines (Angwin, Zinfandel, Cabernet, Petite Sirah, Grenache), Schrader Cellars (Calistoga, Cabernet, Zinfandel), Tamber Bay Vineyards (Yountville, Cabernet, Chardonnay, Merlot), and Nicholson Ranch (Sonoma, Pinot Noir, Syrah, Merlot, Chardonnay).

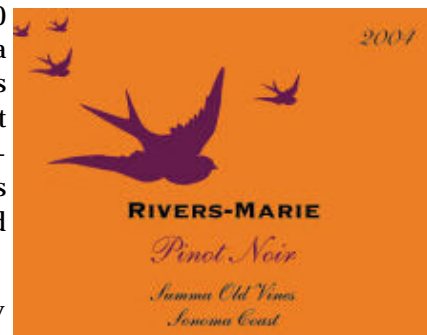
Rivers-Marie is committed to cool climate fruit, but this can present quite a challenge. Brown released a Summa Vineyard Pinot Noir beginning in 2002. The 2004 vintage was very successful, with a warm weather harvest leading to wines that are very concentrated. In 2005, however, much of the fruit at Summa Vineyard did not ripen due to poor coastal growing conditions. In his cellar, Brown has a single barrel of old vines and two barrels of younger vines juice. The Occidental Ridge Vineyard gave a little more and he now has six barrels of wine from the 2005 vintage aging. Come bottling time, there will be less than 200 cases to go around. No wonder he has several winemaking positions.

It is a fact of life when farming Pinot Noir on the edge in cool climates that yields in some vintages can be mercifully low. In her latest newsletter, Affairs of the Vine (affairsofthevine.com), Barbara Drady, who lives in Forestville and with her husband John operates Sonoma Coast Vineyards, writes about the current 2006 vintage: "By the beginning of April, I was either going to move to Seattle for some sunny weather or find a good carpenter, lots of wood and nails, and build an ark. It rained 26 out of 31 days in March and the storms were cold and windy. By the first of May, most of Northern California had record or near record rainfalls - 65 inches in the Russian River Valley and 110 inches along the Sonoma Coast (winegrowing regions in the Central Coast had normal rainfall)." The result of this weather along the true Sonoma Coast will be a shorter growing season, smaller clusters, and delayed or inadequate ripening may be an issue, much like 2005.

Is it worth the trouble? Well, when you taste the 2004 Rivers-Marie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir you understand why winegrowers are so insistent on farming the extreme Sonoma Coast.

2004 Rivers-Marie Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 180 cases, \$50. The grapes were sourced from Summa and Joya Vineyards. Aged in 50% new French oak. This Pinot has a gorgeous nose of crushed plums, cherries and baking spices. An elegant Pinot lover's wine that is beautifully composed, it has a silky mouthfeel and a lively kick of acid on the pleasing finish which features cherries, mushrooms, and a hint of oak. An extremely well-bred Saturday or Sunday wine.

The website is www.riversmarie.com. The wines are sold primarily through a mailing list. I found the wine at hitimewine.net. There is a newsletter available also.



MacMurray Ranch: History & Hollywood in Healdsburg

Many Pinot lovers are always searching for a really good daily drinker - a reasonably priced wine that compliments a dinner and is true to its Pinot Noir roots. It is a lot easier finding really good Pinot Noir in the \$30-\$50 category. I do try to feature good values when I find them so read on.

The history of MacMurray Ranch dates to 1846 when Colonel Hugh Porter homesteaded the land. He had been a heroic soldier in the war with Mexico. Almost a hundred years later, in 1941, actor Fred MacMurray purchased the ranch from the Porters and named it Twin Valley Ranch. MacMurray was married to actress June Haver and raised his family which included two twin daughters, Kate and Laurie, on the ranch. John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart, among others, were known to frequent the ranch. Fred MacMurray was an avid fly fisherman, farmer and cook, and raised cattle on the ranch. He believed in sustainability and tried to live off his land as much as possible.

The Gallo family purchased the property in 1996. The ranch's main gate opens onto Westside Road in the heart of the Russian River Valley. The Gallos have invested heavily in the property, planting about 500 acres with Pinot Gris on the flatter areas and Pinot Noir on the hillsides. Gallo intends to make the MacMurray Ranch label their premier Pinot Noir label. Kate MacMurray lives on the ranch today in a cabin built by her father and is a public relations representative for the label.

Gallo chose as winemaker, Susan Doyle, an Australian whose family originated from Tasmania. She obtained degrees in Viticulture and Winemaking from Canterbury University and in Environmental Geography from the University of Tasmania. She gained experience in cool climate viticulture at New Zealand's Lincoln University and made wine in the Yarra Valley of Australia. Her passion for Pinot Noir led her to the United States in 1994 where she worked at Hartford Court in the Russian River Valley. In 2003 she joined Gallo and became the winemaker at MacMurray Ranch.

Doyle is a humble winemaker with a love for Burgundy and a respect for the concept of terroir. They say that you can always tell who the best winemakers are by the number of bottles of Burgundy they have in their cellars. With the tremendous resources of Gallo and Doyle's passion for Pinot Noir and Burgundy, the MacMurray label can become a benchmark for the Russian River Valley.

"When Pinot Noir is great, it's unlike any other wine you've ever tasted."

Susan Doyle



2004 MacMurray Ranch Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 40,000 cases (approx), \$13. An old world styled Pinot. The aromatics are terrific featuring hi-tone cherries and more cherries, blueberries, and vanilla. There is an appealing earthiness and minerality highlighted by flavors of dark cherries, herbs, and a touch of oak. The wine finishes with lively acidity and dusty tannins. Not a terribly complex Pinot Noir, but thoroughly enjoyable at the dinner table.

The MacMurray website is www.macmurrayranch.com. The wine is widely available retail. Other Pinot Noirs currently offered include: 2004 MacMurray Ranch Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, 2003 MacMurray Ranch Winemaker's Block Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, and 2003 MacMurray Ranch River Cuvee Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (a Burgundian-styled wine for aging, 400 cases, \$60).



PrinceofPinot.com

Check out the Prince on graperadio.com

Pinot Noir makes for an elusive kind of romance

© 2006
PinotFile is a Registered
Trademark

The Monterey County Vintners and Growers Association (MCVGA) is sponsoring Monterey County's Annual Winemakers' Celebration, Saturday, August 12, 2006, from 12-4 PM at the Historic Custom House Plaza in downtown Monterey. Over 45 Monterey County wineries will be pouring their wines. Several new wineries will be participating including Cima Collina (previously reviewed in the PinotFile), Michaud Vineyard, and Miura Vineyards. A one-of-a-kind auction will include a stocked wine refrigerator of Monterey County wines. Food and wine integration will be a featured component of the event and attendees will have a wide selection of food to choose from in the expanded food pavilion. Tickets are \$35 in advance and are available online at www.montereywines.org.

New Pinots with Notable Backgrounds

Don Sebastiani & Sons is a wine negociant firm that is headquartered in Sonoma Valley and has a winery in Napa Valley. They have two portfolios of moderately priced upscale varietal wines: Three Loose Screws Wine Company and The Other Guys. Don Sebastiani & Sons was recently named American Winery of the Year for 2005 by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine (caveat: Don Sebastiani & Sons run full page ads in the magazine). The Other Guys division has announced the addition of two new brands, "The White Knight" (a Clarksburg Viognier) and "Gino Da Pinot" as part of their appellation-driven wine program. Gino Da Pinot is a 2005 Pinot Noir from Monterey. The wine is said to be versatile, fruit-forward and expressive with a heady mix of Monterey earth and ripe berry flavors. "There are several areas of usual suspect that come to mind when you're talking about California Pinot Noir," says Sebastiani, "Sometimes we like to get off the beaten track, and we love the character of Monterey Pinot Noir." The wine will retail at about \$16 and join the other TOG wines: le bon vin de la Napa Valley, Plungerhead, and Hey Mambo.

John and Lane Giguere founded R.H. Phillips in 1984 in the Dunnigan Hills of Yolo County in California. They developed two other successful brands, EXP and Toasted Head. The wildly popular labels were sold to Canada's largest wine company, Vincor International Inc., in 2000. The Giguieres retained 73 acres of vines in the Dunnigan Hills and, after only six years of retirement, have re-entered the wine business with new brands, Matchbook (Chardonnay, Tempranillo, Syrah and a red blend called Blockhouse), Mossback (Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley), Sawbuck (Chardonnay and Cabernet from Mendocino County), and Chasing Venus (Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand). The new winemaker is Dan Cederquist, who had been at DeLoach Vineyards in the Russian River Valley for 12 years. He is making the wines at Sonoma Wine Company, a custom-crush facility that formerly was the DeLoach winery.