



PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no
Noir, you Pinot
Noir*

Oregon's Big Table Farm and California's Big Basin Committed to Whole Cluster

Whole cluster fermentation of Pinot Noir can be a risky proposition but Big Table Farm and Big Basin Vineyards are committed to it "big time," and their results are stunning. The potential advantages of whole cluster fermentation include exotic aromatics, silky smooth tannins, and more lengthy and cooler fermentations that impart a different and enchanting flavor profile. I had the opportunity to taste current releases from these two wineries a few days apart, and although the wines from the two wineries are quite different in several ways, they do share a commonality only found in whole cluster fermented Pinot Noir.

Big Basin Vineyards, Boulder Creek, CA

Proprietor and winemaker Bradley Brown established Big Basin Vineyards in 1998 adjacent to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Wine grapes were grown here by French immigrants in the early 1900s and continued until 1954 when the property was sold by Justin Lacau to a local timber company. By the 1990s, all that remained of the vineyards were redwood stakes and scattered vines hidden by brush.

Bradley has restored this historic property and the entire vineyard and olive tree orchards are now Certified Organic by CCOF. 90% of the estate is preserved in its natural state. A winery was built on the same site as the original 1890s house structure that burned down in the 1970s, and completed in 2003. The winery building is of timber frame construction built using redwood harvested from the estate.



100% whole clusters of Pinot Noir are commonly employed. The whole berries and whole clusters are cold soaked for up to a week before being heated up to start the spontaneous indigenous yeast fermentations. The juice is pumped over and hand punched down, and the wine is gently pressed of the skins after 15 to 30 days of skin contact. The wines are only racked once to oxygen-free bottling tanks for bottling unfinned and unfiltered. The whole process is truly non-interventional resulting in truly artisanal wines.

The winery's portfolio includes over sixteen wines, and typically five different single-vineyard Pinot Noirs from special sites in the Santa Cruz and Gabilan Mountains. The Pinot Noir wines tasted here are truly impressive as a group and unlike any other wines currently produced in the Santa Cruz Mountains. They are notable for their freshness, engaging aromatics, invigorating fruit, complexity and a judicious use of new oak. Bradley notes that the wines are "still in their tight phase of youth," so I sampled them initially over a 2-hour period, then again 6 hours later, and again the following day.

Tasting is available at the winery's Saratoga Tasting Room and the Estate Vineyard and Winery Tasting Room in Boulder Creek. Visit the website at www.bigbasinvineyards.com for more information.



2017 Big Basin Dune and Mountain Monterey County Pinot Noir 12.8% alc., 440 cases, \$36. Release January 2019. Grapes were sourced from Olson Vineyard located just off Monterey Bay planted in ancient sand dunes, and Coastview Vineyard situated at 2200 feet elevation in the Gabilan Mountains overlooking Monterey Bay and planted in decomposed granite. Vine age is 18 years. Clones are Dijon 114, 115, 667, 777, and Pisoni and Swan selections. 95% whole cluster, native yeast, aged 11 months in French oak barrels and bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Conspicuous aromas of Maraschino cherry, burnt tobacco, and BBQ spice rub. Very sleek in the mouth in a mid weight style, with flavors of black cherry and tobacco and an earthy vibe. A bit of astringent tannin is apparent upon opening, but nearly resolves when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. The fruit is quite ebullient and propels a lengthy finish. This wine will be better upon release in January as the tannins enmesh.* **92.**

2016 Big Basin Old Corral Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.2% alc., 205 cases, \$65. Release March 2019. Inaugural vintage from Estate vines in three blocks budded over from Syrah to Pinot Noir in 2015. Harvest Brix about 22.6° (Mt Eden clone) and 23.0° (Swan selection). 100% whole cluster, native yeast, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. Persistent aromatic joy featuring scents of cherry, ripe cranberry, spice, fertile earth and old wood. Light to mid weight in style, offering flavors of red fruits, baking spices and tobacco. A woodiness pervades the flavor and aromatic profile. Forward and pleasing and somewhat delicate, with riveting acidity and a finish resonant with crystalline cherry.* **91.**

2016 Big Basin Alvaro Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., 155 cases, \$60. Released September 2018. Clones 667, 777 and 115. 17-year-old vines. Harvest Brix 23.3°-23.6°. Fermented 100% whole cluster, native yeast, and aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 33% new. No additions beyond SO₂ after malolactic was completed in barrel. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Engaging nose offering aromas of darker berry and cherry, exotic spices, oak sawdust and a hint of fresh leafy greens. Up-front opulent black raspberry and blackberry fruit flavors underpinned by muscular tannins. Sheer beauty of fruit with welcome uplifting acidity and a notably long finish. When tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle, the imposing tannins had mollified. This wine will benefit from more time in the cellar.* **92.**



2016 Big Basin Lester Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.3% alc., 414 cases, \$55. Release November 2018. 18-year-old vines. Clones include Mt Eden (50%), 667 and a Swan selection. Harvest Brix 22.7°-23.0° and one lot 24.5°. Fermented 100% whole cluster, native yeast, and aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose is replete with whole cluster goodness including aromas of dark cherry, exotic spices, burnt pipe tobacco and compost. Heady fruits including black cherry, boysenberry and blackberry are accented with redeeming notes of spice and tobacco, and framed by silky and supple tannins. The mouthfeel is comforting, oak is judiciously integrated, and the juicy, long finish leaves quite a gratifying impression. Even more striking when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine has personality.* **94.**





2016 Big Basin Coastview Vineyard Monterey County Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., 335 cases, \$55. Release January 2019. Vineyard located between the Chalone AVA and the Mt. Harlan AVA in the Gabilan Mountains. Dijon clones 667, 777, 114 and 115, and Swan and Pisoni selections. One lot fermented 60% whole cluster and the rest 100% whole cluster. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 42% new. Bottled unfined and unfiltered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The aromas of black cherry, purple grape, spice cabinet and mulch soar in this gifted wine. Black cherry and boysenberry fruit flavors flood the mouth with goodness. There is plenty of spice and smart oak to enhance the pleasure. The balance is spot-on with exquisitely integrated tannins, acidity and oak, the mouthfeel is sleek and polished, and the finish is uplifting and juicy. Flat-out amazing when tasted from a previously opened and re-corked bottle the following day. Both swagger and finesse in one package. 96.*

Big Table Farm, Gaston, OR

Brian Marcy and Clare Carver departed Napa in 2006 and moved to Oregon. Brian was an experienced winemaker and Clare had artistic talent and a way with animals. They bought a 70-acre property in the northern Willamette Valley, where they now produce Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris, raise farm animals and produce seasonal vegetables.

Their business model is one to envy although the couple are not trained or by nature business people. They host consumers for tasting in their more than 100-year-old farmhouse, enjoy entertaining visitors outdoors for meals at a "big table," (Brian is also an accomplished chef), vinify outstanding wines in a barn-like winery on their property, and offer hand-drawn labels by Clare with artwork that is unique to each vintage. After a label is applied by hand, each bottle is carefully wrapped in tissue to preserve the letterpress paper's texture and beauty (a product code on the bottom of each bottle allows identification of the wines without unwrapping them). The winery's website is one of adept design and concise content. Even the name, Big Table Farm, is attention-grabbing.



The biggest news of late is that a vineyard is being planted on the estate property behind the winery. This was part of their vision from the beginning.

I have visited the winery on several occasions and tasted most every bottling since the first wines from the 2006 vintage. I have never been disappointed in the quality of the wines and have touted them repeatedly in the *PinotFile*. Brian doesn't even own a de-stemmer and does not tout that his Pinot Noirs are 100% whole cluster, but he is committed to this style of Pinot Noir winemaking.

Big Table Farm wines are sold through a mailing list or directly with the winery. Call or email Clare or Laura to purchase at admin@bigtablefarm.com or call 503-662-3129. Free case shipping. Tasting is by appointment.

The wines reviewed here are from the fall 2018 release. Brian says, “These wines all have their own quirks and characteristics that make them unique and delicious in their own way,” and I agree completely.

2016 Big Table Farm Yamhill-Carlton District Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., 315 cases, \$62. Grapes sourced from Kalita and the Coats and Whitney vineyards. The Bernard’s barn is on the label. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Leading off are hi-tone aromas of black cherry, spice and pipe smoke. The dark red and black fruits are discreetly concentrated and forward, emboldened by a thread of oak in the background. Silky in the mouth, with cashmere tannins and a generous finish. Not as earthy as many wines from Yamhill-Carlton with more bright fruit as the focus. A brotherly wine that wraps its arms comfortably around the palate. 92.*

2016 Big Table Farm Cattrall Brothers Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 12.9% alc., 184 cases, \$62. Old vine organically farmed Wädenswil clone. 1947 Cattrall Brothers Vineyard truck on the label. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. The complex nose offers a range of aromas including dark cherry, spice, underbrush, and savory herbs with the cherry aroma building intensity over time in the glass. Middleweight flavors of black cherry, pomegranate, tobacco, smoke and BBQ sauce have good length in the mouth and on the silken finish. Easygoing, fine-grain tannins make for approachability and satisfying harmony drives the pleasure. 92.*

2016 Big Table Farm Wirtz Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., 203 cases, \$62. Last vintage from this vineyard since the economic realities of leasing and farming an old vineyard no longer made sense. 45-year-old vines. Coury “clone.” Wild cherries on the label. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Classy aromas of Bing cherry, cardamom spice, burnt tobacco and espresso. Generously layered tiers of ripe ollaliberry, purple grape and blackberry flavors showing significant extraction. There are underlying flavors of grilled pork and spice as well. The suave texture and silky tannins make for seductive drinking. Very charming and harmonious. 93.*



2016 Big Table Farm Sunnyside Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 326 cases, \$62. Release August 2018. Old Wädenswil vines. Owners have farmed this vineyard for over 30 years. Hen and chick at Big Table Farm on the label. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. This is a striking wine of uncommon excellence from the get-go. Perfumed with scents of black cherry, plump purple grape, fertile earth and spice. Glamorous and sexy in a light to mid weight style offering flavors of cherry and raspberry that make love to the palate. Sleek and lacy, with suave tannins, a deft touch of oak and a finish with both good tension and length. Still superb when tasted the following day from a previously opened bottle. The pick of the litter. 95.*



Unique Rusack Wines from Santa Catalina Island

William Wrigley, Jr., of Wrigley Co. chewing gum fame, bought Santa Catalina Island Co., owners of all the developable land on the island in 1919. Alison Wrigley Rusack, William's great-granddaughter, along with her husband Geoffrey Rusack, owners of Rusack Vineyards and Winery in Solvang, California, established a vineyard on the island in 2007 at El Rancho Escondido, a working Arabian horse ranch used for Wrigley's horses and founded in 1930. The initial planting included three acres of Pinot Noir, 2 acres of Chardonnay and one acre of Zinfandel (using cuttings from Santa Cruz Island in the Channel Island chain). No one had previously made wine from Santa Catalina Island, but it turned out that the cool climate and clay loam soils were ideal for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.



The inaugural harvest was from the 2009 vintage. After picking, the grapes were airlifted to the Santa Ynez Airport for processing at the Rusack winery by winemaker Steven Gerbac.

Visit the winery tasting room in Ballard Canyon that is open daily. Tasting fee is \$15. The setting is ideal for picnics. The winery website is www.rusack.com.

2015 Rusack Santa Catalina Island Vineyards California Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.758, 136 cases, \$72. Released November 2017. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 9% new. Bottled unfiltered. *Light ruby red color in the glass. Attractive aromas of dark cherry, woodland spice and cola. Charming mid weight cherry goodness in a feminine, lacy style. Juicy, with suave tannins and just a hint of sandalwood. Admirable harmony, with a very long and expansive finish. 93.*



2015 Rusack Santa Catalina Island Vineyards California Chardonnay 13.8% alc., pH 3.32, TA 0.70, 136 cases, \$60. Released November 2017. Barrel fermented 100% malolactic fermentation, lees stirring for 4 months. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 56% new. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Enticing aromas and flavors of green apple, lemon-lime, grapefruit and spice. An acid-driven style with impeccable oak integration and an acid-fueled, quenching finish. This is a vibrant and flavorful wine that will thoroughly please Chardonnay aficionados. 95.*



Brooks: Passionate About Organic and Biodynamic Farming and Natural Winemaking

I wrote an extensive article on this iconic Oregon winery in 2016: www.princeofpinot.com/article/1858/. Manager Janie Brooks Heuck and winemaker Chris Williams (since 2005) have carried on the legacy of deceased founder Jimi Brooks admirably. The winery is known for its hospitality center that features multiple venues for wine tasting as well as impressive food pairings.

For the winery's 20th anniversary in 2018, the winery is hosting a number of special events and monthly programming to celebrate those winemakers who donated their skill, time and passion after Jimi's passing in 2004. "The Legacy Series" continues October 27 with winemakers Cheryl Francis and Sam Tannahill, the people behind Rex Hill, A to Z Wineworks and Francis Tannahill. They will be pouring their wines at Brooks Winery on that date. Check out the winery's full calendar of events at www.brookswine.com.

The 2015 vintage was quite manageable in the Eola-Amity Hills where Brooks and many of its grape sources are located. The season was marked by plenty of sunshine, drought conditions, a late season heat wave and a rain-free harvest. The result was wines of richness, that is, Oregon typicality turned up a notch. Tasters have often used the words "showy" and "opulent" to describe the wines.

The 2016 vintage was similar to 2015 but had one of the earliest harvests on record. Early bud break and a short heat spell at bloom condensed the flowering period resulting in a smaller fruit set. Summer had average conditions with fewer heat spikes than the 2015 vintage. The harvested grapes showed good concentration and high natural acidity.



2017 Brooks Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Rosé 14.0% alc., pH 3.32, TA 0.58, 3,000 cases, \$20. Grapes sourced from three vineyards where grapes were farmed specifically for dry rosé looking for bright acidity and opulent aromatics. Fermented in stainless steel. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderate pink color in the glass. Lovely aromas of strawberry, guava, melon and white flower blossom. Bright and fresh on the palate, with flavors of red cherry, strawberry, cranberry edible rose and a touch of dry herbs. Soft and creamy in texture, with a thirst quenching, dry finish.* **89.** (Note:

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Brooks wants to do its part. For every bottle of this wine sold in October, Brooks will donate \$2.00 to the Susan G. Komen Foundation dedicated to ending breast cancer)

2016 Runaway Red Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.52, 2,245 cases, \$23. A blend of fruit from eleven vineyards. 100% de-stemmed, native fermentation, aged 10 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. A straightforward wine with aromas of muddled cherry, baking spice, boysenberry and toasty oak. Simple and agreeable, with mid weight flavors of black cherry and sarsaparilla, and a conspicuous oak presence. Sleek and silky in the mouth with integrated tannins and good vibrancy.* **88.**



2016 Brooks Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.53, 2,000 cases, \$28. 100% de-stemmed, aged 10 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Conservative but pleasing flavors of darker berries, sweet oak and a floral intricacy. Light to mid weighted in style, with gratifying flavors of black cherry and black raspberry. Very easygoing, with silky tannins, juicy acidity a bit of toasty oak, and a suave mouthfeel. The overall impression is one of harmony. A solid everyday Pinot Noir.* **89.**



2015 Brooks Janus Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.55, 1,200 cases, \$38. The winery's flagship Pinot Noir that is an expressive blend of multiple vineyards by winemaker Chris Williams. 100% de-stemmed, native fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A righteous perfume of cherry pie, raspberry coulis, blackberry reduction and toasty, sweet oak. Well-ripened purple and black berry fruits with an oak background. Bright and silky in the mouth with crunchy fruit appeal. Much more appealing when tasted several hours after opening. The fruit veers a little more to the ripe*

side than I prefer. **90.**

2015 Brooks Big Cheese Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., pH 3.40, TA 0.55, 100 cases, \$48. Volcanic Jory and Nekia soils. Vineyard planted in 2008 to 777 and Pommard clones. Average harvest Brix 24.0°. Aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of seasoned barrigue, mushrooms on the grill and dark berry mix. A mid weight core of spicy blueberry and boysenberry fruits satisfies as does the fruit-driven finish. Silky in texture, with smart oak compliment and appealing balance.* **91.**

2015 Brooks Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.0% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.62, 250 cases, \$48. Vines planted in 1981 in volcanic Jory and Nekia soils and farmed organically. 40% 777, 31% Pommard, 29% Wädenswil. Average harvest Brix 22.5°. Native fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Scents of cherry and oak-driven nuts and spice. The discreetly concentrated core of blueberry and boysenberry fruits have up-front appeal and length in the mouth. Good vibrancy, with sleek tannins and a juicy finish. A very balanced package from one of Oregon's most prestigious vineyards.* **92.**

2015 Brooks Old Vine Pommard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.70, TA 0.50, 300 cases, \$55. Vines planted in 1973 and 1974 in volcanic Nekia soil. Pommard clone vines biodynamically farmed. Average Harvest Brix 23.5°. Native yeast fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Aromas of earth-dusted Bing cherry, sandalwood and spice with a hint of volatile acidity upon opening. The luscious black cherry core makes an impression as does the persistent finish. The texture is silken smooth by virtue of compatible tannins. Considerably more enjoyable when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. This wine has a promising future.* **92.**

2015 Brooks La Chenaie Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.5% alc., pH 3.25, TA 0.62, 125 cases, \$48. Wädenswil clone harvested at 23.6° Brix. Native yeast fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Demure scents of purple berry, black cherry, fertile earth and ripe fruit bin lead to a mid weight plus styled wine with a bountiful core of black cherry fruit accented with nutty oak. Quite earthy, with a moderately firm tannic backbone, a satiny texture and a finish filled with well-ripened fruit. More expressive when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **91.**

2015 Brooks Crannell Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 13.50% alc., pH 3.66, TA 0.59, \$48. Vines planted in 1984 in volcanic Jory and Nekia soils. Pommard, 115, 777 and 667 clones. Average harvest Brix 24.0°. Native fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Haunting aromas of black cherry, spice and cedary oak. A savory earthiness and woodiness underlines the essence of dark cherry and blackberry fruits. The firm tannins stick out on the generously fruited finish.* **89.**

2015 Brooks Rastaban Brooks Estate Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.54, 500 cases, \$60. Vines planted from 1973 to 2001 in volcanic Nekia soil. Pommard, 115 and 777 clones. Average harvest Brix 24.2°. Native yeast fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderately light ruby red color in the glass. This wine is slow to give up its charms and was much better when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle. Really nice aromas of cherry, strawberry and spice lead to a delicate and lacy wine that is quite juicy and seductive. Mid weight flavors of black cherry, pomegranate and hazelnut are framed by gentle but supportive tannins. Forward drinking, with a lush texture, and impeccable balance.* **93.**



2015 Terue Wines York Hill Vineyard Columbia Gorge Oregon Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.81, TA 0.54, 135 cases, \$48. Cellared and bottled by Brooks Wines. Clone 667. Harvest Brix 25.3°. Native fermentation, aged 18 months in French oak barrels. Cross-flow filtered. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Appealing aromas of ripe strawberry, raspberry coulis, spice and red licorice. The mid weight core of black cherry, ripe strawberry, black currant, black tea, hazelnut and toast flavors is framed by muscular tannins that lead to an astringent finish. Aromatically pleasing, but too much nutty oak and gruff tannins as well as a lack of acidic verve on the palate. The balance is just a little out of whack. Unchanged when tasted the following day from a previously opened and re-corked bottle.* **87.**

Recently Tasted Pinot Noir & Chardonnay

Cambria Estate Winery, Santa Maria, CA

A new winemaker, Jill Russell, has taken over the reins at Cambria Estate Winery (the wines reviewed here were crafted by the previous winemaker, Denise Shurtleff). Since the winery's founding in 1986, the focus has been on single-vineyard expression from the winery's estate in the Santa Maria Valley AVA. Every wine is sustainably grown, produced and bottled at the estate. The wines pay homage to the winery's founders, Jess Jackson and Barbara Banke, who named the vineyards at Cambria after their daughters Katherine and Julia Jackson.



2015 Cambria Julia's Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir 13.7% alc., pH 3.61, TA 0.56, \$25. Vineyard named after proprietor Julia Jackson in 1988. This well-known vineyard is sustainably farmed. Soils are fossilized seashells, shale, limestone and sand. Clones are Pommard 4, 2A, 23, 667, 115, 777 and "828." Aged 8.5 months in 100% French oak barrels, 31% new. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. This wine performed much better when tasted a day after opening the bottle. Nicely perfumed with black cherry fruit and subtle oak notes of toast, tobacco and cardamom. Discreet in weight, with brandishing flavors of oak-kissed cherry, raspberry, spice and earth. Silky, with a good tannic frame, bright acidity, and a modest but pleasing finish. This wine is always a good choice in the value-price category. 89.*



2015 Cambria Katherine's Vineyard Santa Maria Valley Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.46, TA 0.59, \$22. This sustainably farmed vineyard was named after proprietor Katherine Jackson in 1986. Clones 76, 96 and Wente. Aged 6.5 months in 83% French oak barrels, 21% new. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. An appealing wine offering aromas of lemon, pineapple, peach, gravel and toasty oak. Giving in the mouth, with flavors of apple, lemon creme, white peach, pineapple and toast. Soft in texture, with agreeable acidic verve and some finishing fruit flavor. A consistently dependable wine in this price category. 89.*

Jigar Wines, Forestville, CA

A family-owned boutique winery with a tasting room in Forestville and a production facility in Healdsburg. Winemaker is Josh Bartels.

2015 Jigar Graham Family Vineyard Vintner's Reserve Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., 195 cases, \$65. Release November 2018. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Leading off are aromas of black cherry, forest floor, dark bittersweet chocolate and a hint of vanilla. Boldly flavored, with a core of dark Bing cherry fruit that saturates the palate, carrying through a persistent finish. The texture is highly soothing the oak is restrained and the tannins are toned and ripe. 91.*



2015 Jigar Peters Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.1% alc., 596 cases, \$32. Peters Vineyard is a former Gravenstein apple orchard with Goldridge sandy loam soil. Clones 4 and Dijon 76. Aged in French oak barrels, 25% new. *The aromas of citrus, lees, wax, crushed wet gravel, nutty oak and toast arrive over time in the glass. Ripely fruited and richly stated in the mouth, with flavors of grilled lemon, pineapple, honey and caramel. Still, there is enough acidity to balance the fruit load. An underlying burnt, roasted character implied by oak is evident. 89.*

Ken Brown Wines, Lompoc, CA

2015 Ken Brown Rita's Crown Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.59, TA 0.58, 336 cases, \$60. Rita's Crown is one of the highest vineyards in the region planted at the "crown" at 600 to 950 feet elevation. The combination of shallow soils ocean winds and southern slope results in in marked intensity of fruit flavor. Blocks used are planted to 667, 777, "828," and 115. 100% de-stemmed, pre-fermentation cold soak, gentle punch downs, aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 34% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. The nose offers a mix of purple and black berry fruits along with a savory oak and vegetative bent. Plenty of swaqqer in a mid weight plus style offering a charge of boysenberry and blackberry fruits that are*

kissed by spice, black olive tapenade, umami, oak and earth notes. Plenty of extract and nuance to please with juicy acidity and tame tannins. 92.

2015 Ken Brown Ranch La Viña Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.2% alc., pH 3.63, TA 0.55, \$50. This 17-acre vineyard was planted in 2005 at the far western edge of the AVA where it is exposed to cool marine winds. The block for Ken Brown Wines is planted to clone 115. 100% de-stemmed, pre-fermentation cold soak, aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Pleasant aromas of dark red berry, spice, underbrush, nutty oak and graham. Packed with red and dark red cherry and cranberry fruits aligned with a touch oak. Soft and lustrous in the mouth with a notably long and mellow finish. 92.*

2014 Ken Brown Radian Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.57, \$70. This vineyard is located at the extreme western end of the Sta. Rita Hills and is one of the coolest vineyards of the entire West Coast. The vineyard's steep southern slope exposure allows for optimized ripening. Clones 115 and 667. 100% de-stemmed, pre-fermentation cold soak, gentle punch downs, aged 18 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Very sexy nose displaying scents of dark berry, bramble, and lead pencil. Instantly appealing in a mid weight plus style, with waves of invigorating black cherry and blackberry fruits carrying through a saturating mid palate and a long finish. Everything is in place, with balanced tannins, deft oak, and a very seductive texture. This is a rich and bold expression of Pinot Noir, yet it still retains adept Pinot Noir character. 93.*

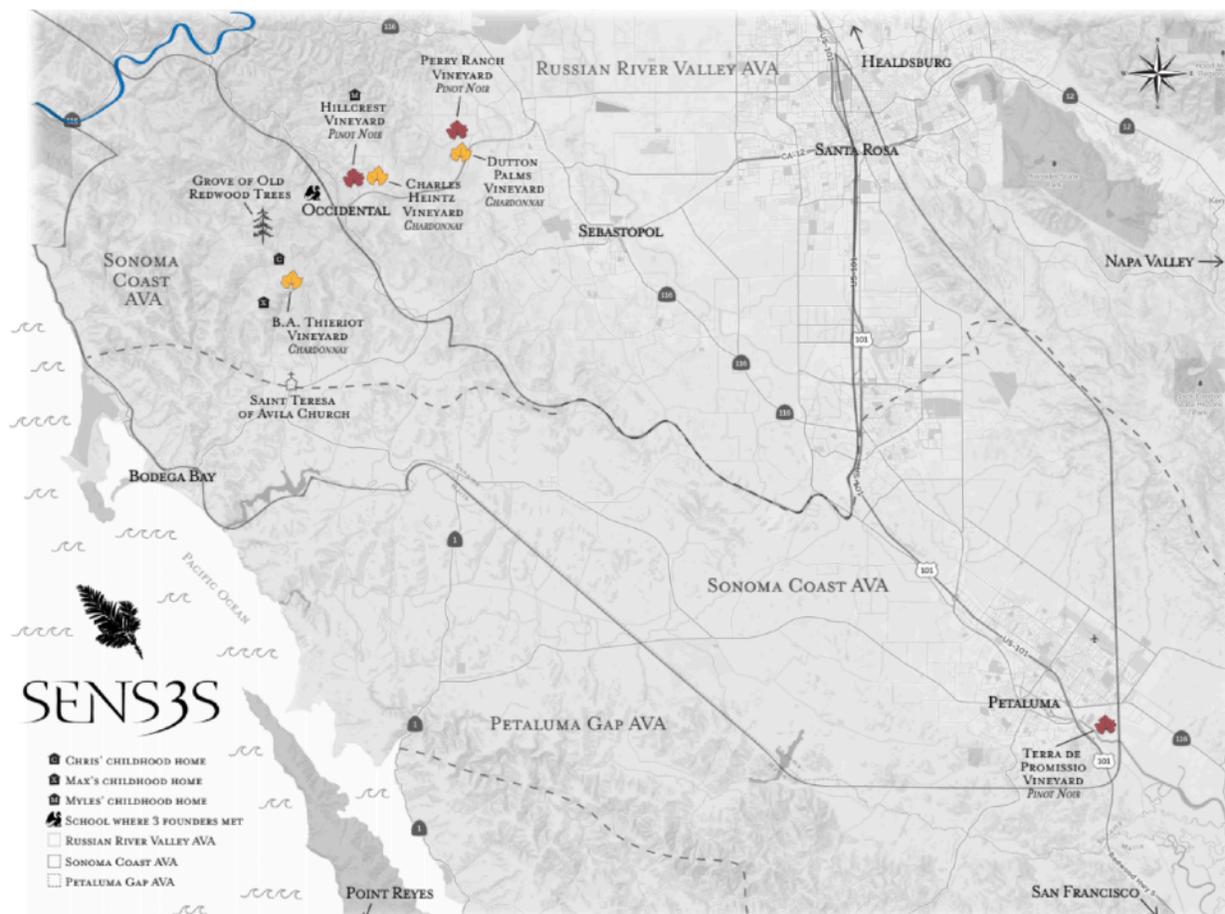


Senses Wines, Calistoga, CA



Noted winemaker Thomas Rivers Brown crafts these Pinot Noir and Chardonnay wines. If you like Rivers-Marie wines, also crafted by Thomas, you will enjoy the Senses wines.

Three childhood friends (founders Chris Streiter, Max Thieriot and Myles Lawrence-Briggs are pictured above) enlisted Thomas to craft wines from coveted vineyard sites, especially those located in the small town of Occidental where the three founders grew up. Hillcrest and B.A. Thieriot are estate vineyards. The portfolio includes single vineyard wines from seven vineyards and appellation wines from the Sonoma Coast and Russian River Valley AVAs. The vineyard locations are shown below:



Wines are offered to the currently large active mailing list twice a year in the Spring and Fall. The wines are also placed in top restaurants across the world including the French Laundry and Le Berdardin. Visit www.senseswines.com.

Pinot Noir winemaking features whole berry fermentation, and aging in once and twice-used French oak barrels for 10 months. Chardonnay undergoes 100% malolactic fermentation and is aged in French oak barrels for 12 months.

2016 Senses Day One Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 280 cases, \$75. Fruit sourced from Hillcrest Vineyard in Occidental where the winery started from Day One. This site neighbors Charles Heintz to the West. It was first planted in 1974 to Grey Riesling making it likely the first planted still-wine site along the Sonoma Coast. The vineyard was later replanted to Pinot Noir in 2005, including clones “828,” 115, and Calera and Swan selections. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Aromas of oak-infused black cherry and blackberry with an added note of grill smoke. An opulent charge of black raspberry and blackberry fruit on the attack with good length in the mouth. Silky textured with tame tannins, and a modest finish. There is a noticeable infusion of oak flavors that should ameliorate over time.* **90.**

2016 Senses MCM 88 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., 315 cases, \$85. Fruit was sourced from the famed vineyard formerly known as Keefer Ranch and now known as Perry Ranch, and the block originally farmed by Kosta Browne. MCM stands for Max, Chris and Myles and doubles for the Roman numerals of 1900, which when added to '88 marks the founders birth year of 1988. *Dark garnet color in the glass. The nose is oak-driven, with aromas of tobacco and toast, along with an added aroma of earthy flora. Robust in a mid weight plus style, featuring deep, dark and very ripe black fruits underlain with toasty oak. The fruit is stellar and holds onto the finish with intensity. The tannins are well integrated and the satiny texture pleases.* **90.**

2016 Senses Terra De Promissio Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 300 cases, \$72. Vineyard farmed by dedicated growers, Charles and Diana Karren. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. The nose offers a combination of toasty oak and boysenberry and black cherry aromas. Good vibrancy, with lifted boysenberry*

and black raspberry fruit flavors that sail along through the spirited, quenching finish. Enjoyably round mouthfeel with complimentary oak in the background and plenty of vigor to encourage another sip. **93.**

2016 Senses Tenth Step Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 13.7% alc., 200 cases, \$75. This is a wine named as an homage to Occidental where the three winery founders grew up. Occidental served as the tenth stop on the North Pacific Coast Railroad. A barrel selection of top sites, primarily Dutton Palms Vineyard (shared with Kistler and Dutton Estate). *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Very aromatic, showing aromas of apple pan dowdy, lemon, lime and pineapple. Apple flavor driven on the palate with a touch of lemon and pineapple. Creamy in texture with spirited acidity and comforting balance. This wine exudes friendliness.* **93.**

2016 Senses Charles Heintz Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.4% alc., 275 cases, \$65. Clone 4. Aged 12 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. \$. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon creme, yeast, wet parchment and nutty oak. Solid harmony and richly flavored in the mouth, with tastes of lemon, pineapple, mango and vanilla. Nicely composed, yet a bit reserved.* **91.**



2016 Senses B.A. Thieriot Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 14.1% alc., 255 cases, \$82. Vineyard owned by Cameron and Bridgit Thieriot that was first planted in 1988 by the late Warren Dutton. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Enticing aromas of lemon oil, grilled pineapple, dried seaweed and bark. Delicious blend of lemon, pineapple and caramel flavors. Sleek and silken with impressive character, palate presence and finish. Slightly oily in texture, with enough racy energy to satisfy.* **94.**



Tongue Dancer Wines, Healdsburg, CA

Winemaker James MacPhail (formerly MacPhail Wines), currently has several projects in the works. Tongue Dancer Wines has a new “Grapewagon Pied-à-Terre tasting room at the winery in Healdsburg with all tasting reservations available through the website. He is also the winemaker for Sangiacomo Family Wines (first vintage was 2016), The Calling Wines beginning with the 2016 vintage (previously Dan Goldfield), Crescere Wines (first vintage 2016) and 8 Hand (first vintage 2017). For more information, visit www.tonguedancerwines.com. These two wines are the remaining releases from the 2016 vintage.

2016 Tongue Dancer “Pinot de Ville” Putnam Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.60, TA 0.56, 99 cases, \$65. Release September 6, 2018. The third release in the “de Ville” series. The Putnam Vineyard is located 6 miles from the Pacific Ocean in the town of Annapolis and is owned and operated by Cliff and Puanani Putnam. Clones 15, 777, Pommard and a Calera selection. Harvest Brix 25.5°. Grapes sorted once in vineyard and once at winery. 100% gently de-stemmed, 5-day cold soak in open-top fermenters, native yeast primary and malolactic. Aged 17 months with weekly lees stirring for 3 months in French oak barrels, 35% new. Light polish filtration without fining at bottling. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Enticing aromas of dark fruits, forest floor and wine cave. Bold flavors of blackberry and black raspberry with weight and presence. Adept and rounded in the mouth with soft tannins, deft oak compliment, and a cleansing, finish that leaves a resonant blackberry message.* **93.**



2016 Tongue Dancer Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay 14.5% alc., pH 3.38, TA 0.65, 100 cases, \$50. Released September 6, 2018. Old Wente clone. Harvest Brix 23.2°. Whole cluster pressed, barrel fermented, native yeast primary fermentation, 100% malolactic fermentation, once weekly lees stirring during primary fermentation. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 25% new. Bottled unfiltered and lightly filtered. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Demure perfume of lemon peel, pineapple, parchment and petrol. Discrete richness of flavor, offering tastes of lemon, golden apple, pineapple and sweet oak. A bright and uplifting style with redeeming acidity that veers from many typical Russian River Valley Chardonnays that display tropical fruit lushness.* **92.**

More Wines of Interest

2016 Animist Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., pH 3.68, TA 0.58 \$20. Vinted and bottled by Winepress Vintners, Sonoma and Graton. Very nice embossed label. 100% de-stemmed, 4-day cold soak, inoculated yeast fermentation, manual punch downs, aged 9 months in neutral French oak barrels. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. A lighter, easy drinking wine, offering aromas of cherry, earthy flora and mushroom, and flavors of black cherry, raspberry, tobacco and ash. Simple, and forward drinking, with silky tannins and a short finish. 87.*



2015 Chenoweth Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.4% alc., 303 cases, pH 3.50, RS 0.6 g/L, \$75 (mailing list only). A noteworthy grower's designate wine sourced from three meticulously developed and carefully farmed vineyards (Chenoweth Ranch, Treehouse and Bootleggers) managed by Chenoweth Vineyards. The Chenoweth family has lived in the Sebastopol area for

more than a century and have farmed everything from wine grapes to apples, prunes and cherries. Charlie Chenoweth is well known as one of California's most renowned vineyard managers. Clones are 667, 777, 115, 37, 23, Pommard and a Calera selection. 8% whole cluster. Aged 16 months in French oak barrels, 30% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Energetic perfume of black cherry, raspberry and sous bois. A deeply flavored cherry core is framed by gracious tannins, spirited acidity and a welcome oak compliment. The wine is exquisitely balanced with a lingering finish that has good snap that demands another sip. Fresh as a mature barrel sample and everything you can ask for in a Pinot Noir. 94.*

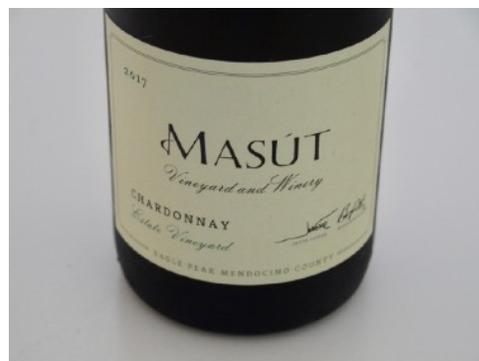


2017 Cline Sonoma County Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., pH 3.83, TA 0.60, RS 0.32%, \$20. Harvest Brix 24.3°. 100% de-stemmed, indigenous yeast to begin fermentation, cap pumped over twice a day, settled in a stainless steel tank and then aged for 7 months in primarily French oak barrels (a small amount of American and Eastern European oak), 40% new. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Notable aromas of black cherry and cinnamon upon opening. Black cherry fruit is at the core of this middleweight wine, with added tastes of earth and oak. Straightforward, with a silken texture. Firm tannins show up on the finish with some astringency. 87.*



2017 Masút Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Chardonnay 14.0% alc., pH 3.34, TA 0.61, 219 cases, \$35. Inaugural release. Dry farmed Wente clone (50%) and Dijon 96 clone (50%). Vines planted in 2014 at 1500 feet elevation at the headwaters of the Russian River Valley. Aged 10 months on the

lees in neutral French oak barrels. *Light golden yellow color in the glass. Lovely, bright aromas of fresh lemon, Golden Delicious apple, pineapple and guava. Sheer beauty of flavor in a luscious style with layers of citrus, golden apple and tropical fruits. Slightly viscous in the mouth with gracious acidity and a showy, succulent finish. A fashionable, Caliesque style that wows. 94.*



2016 Red Hills Cellars Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 14.1% alc., 60 cases, \$50. Released September 2018. Inaugural vintage composed of 63% Yamhill-Carlton, 30% Eola-Amity Hills and 7% Chehalem Mountains fruit. Winemaker is Tony Rynders. Aged 17 months in French oak barrels, 39% new. *Moderately dark garnet color in the glass. Nicely perfumed with scents of blueberry, black cherry, forest floor, and exotic spices. Generous tiers of dark red cherry and boysenberry fruits that fill the mouth with goodness and purpose. A bit of toast and spice plies the background. Envious balance with supportive tannins and a compelling fruit-driven and aromatic finish. 93.*

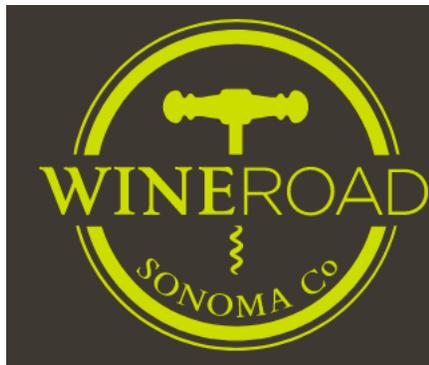


Pinot Briefs

California Producer of Elouan Cancels Oregon Grape Contracts Grape contracts with growers in southern Oregon's Rogue Valley worth \$4 million were canceled September 22 by Copper Cane Wines & Provisions in Napa. The reason is purported smoke taint but the growers feel the claim is "bogus." The Oregon Wine Industry Solidarity Mission was formed immediately by Willamette Valley Vineyards project managers Jan and Jim Bernau to help stranded winegrowers pick grapes left hanging. Lab analyses have shown that a majority of the crop is well below the threshold for the finished wines to be adversely affected. Copper Cane is already in the midst of a controversy over appellation mislabeling for Oregon wines.

2018 Vintage in Sonoma County Superb Not only is the vintage providing ideal ripeness and acidity and maturity of flavor at lower sugars, yields are generally 15-20% higher than average for Sonoma County. The region has had ideal conditions from the start of the growing season including a cooler summer. Hang time has been extended and there has been no push to harvest.

20th Annual Wine & Food Affair Wine Road, an association of 200 wineries and 54 lodgings in Northern Sonoma County has three annual events scheduled for the 2018-2019 event season. The season kicks off with the **20th Annual Wine & Food Affair**, November 3-4, 2018, featuring two days of food and wine pairings along the Wine Road. Each participating winery will offer gourmet cuisine prepared by local chefs paired with their wines. **Winter WINEland** will be held January 19-20 and the **42nd Barrel Tasting Weekends** will be March 1-3 and 8-10. For more information and tickets, visit www.wineroad.com.



Margerum Wine Company and Wine Cask Part Ways Long-time co-operators of the Wine Cask in Santa Barbara Doug Margerum and Mitchell Sjerven have departed from the iconic restaurant. No immediate changes in restaurant operations are planned. Margerum is opening a new Tasting Room in the Hotel California early in 2019. The Reserve Tasting Room at 32 El Paseo will continue to pour both Margerum and Barden wines until the new tasting room is complete. After that, the Reserve Room in El Paseo will pour exclusively Barden wines. Visit www.margerumwines.com.

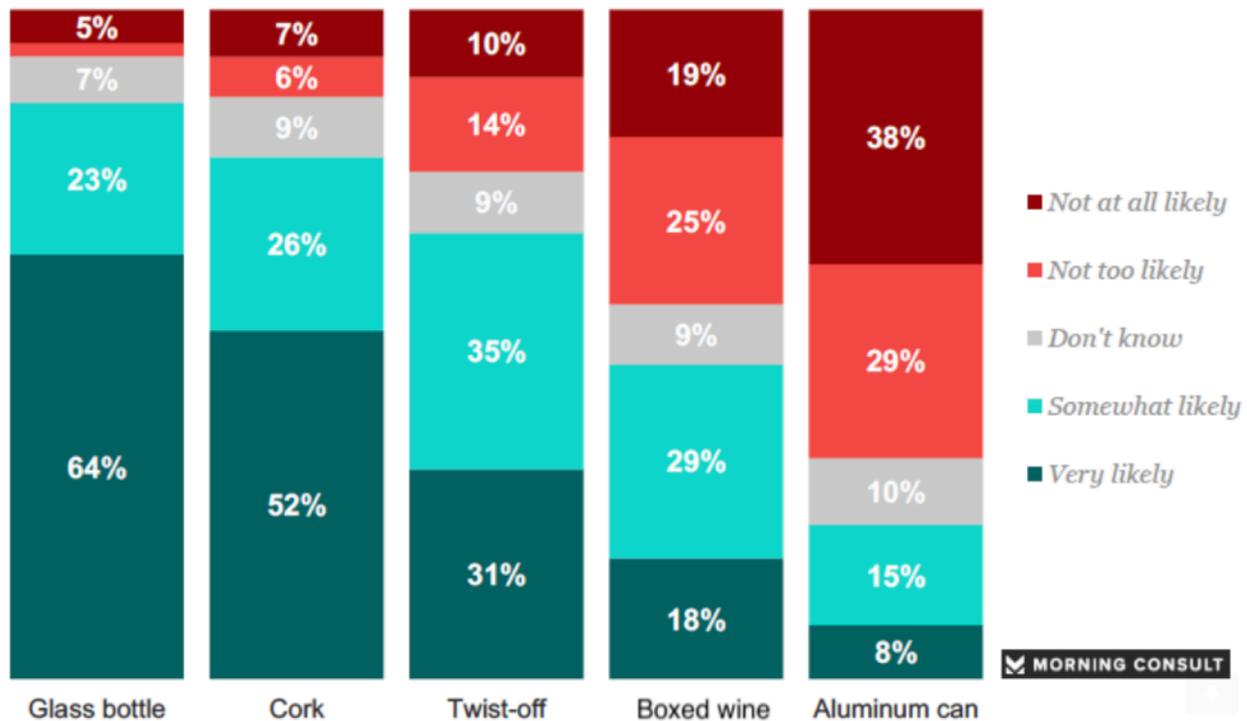
Failla Releases 2016 Oregon Wines Ehren Jordan is now crafting wines from both Oregon and Northern California with tasting rooms in both Salem, Oregon and St. Helena, California. He noted on a recent release announcement email that he is often asked, "What is the difference between Oregon and California wines?" His response was "Easy. Everything." Ehren went on to say, "Soil, climate, average rainfall, clonal material, degree days and historic geographic events are just some of the differences that I can think of off the top of my head. They couldn't be more different." The northern expansion of Failla is the result of a quest started twenty years ago to find outstanding vineyards in excellent places. 2016 was the first vintage for Failla making Oregon wines in Oregon at Carlton Winemakers Studio. The 2016 wines include a Riesling, Grüner Veltliner and Gamay along with the Bjornson Vineyard Pinot Noir and Seven Springs Vineyard Pinot Noir. The wines are sold through a mailing list at www.faillawines.com.

"Harvest on the Coast" in SLO Coast Wine Country SLO Coast Wine Country hosts its signature harvest season event on Saturday, November 3, where a Grand Tasting and Wine Auction will be held in an outdoor tent pavilion at Avila Beach Resort, and on Sunday, November 4, with Surf's Up Sunday where wineries throughout the region host a day of open houses. For more information, visit www.slowine.com.

Preference for Wine Container:

How likely would you be to consider purchasing wine if it came in each of the following types of containers?

Methodology: This poll was conducted from July 17-18, 2018, among a national sample of 2,201 adults (21+). The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of Adults based on age, race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.



Source: Morning Consult: "American Drinking Preferences"

Burgundy Vintages-A History from 1845 Allen Meadows and fellow Burgundy lover Douglas Barzelay are releasing the hard cover version of this book initially to subscribers of the Burghound.com. The limited first printing of the book is in pre-sale and the exact date of availability to all consumers is not known. An E-book version will be available in 2019. In the 600-page book, each vintage from 1845 is rated and discussed in depth. This scholarly book is full of insights on the cultural, economic and technological developments that have made Burgundies among the most sought-after wines in the world. The link for more information and sample pages: www.burghoundbooks.com/burgundy-vintages/.

SOMM 3 Premiered in Napa at Clos Du Val The third film in the SOMM series is devoted primarily to the 1976 Judgment of Paris and will be released later this year in digital platforms. It features many of the former cast members but adds Steven Spurrier, master sommelier Fred Dame and wine critic Jancis Robinson. The film is narrated by Madeline Puckette, creator of *Wine Folly*.

2018 Sonoma County Harvest Fair Wine Competition This competition involves only wines made with grapes grown in Sonoma County and have a Sonoma County designated AVA as the only region listed on the bottle. Judging was held September 18-20. Competing Pinot Noir wines are classified by the following price categories: up to \$29.99, \$30.00-39.99, \$40.00-\$49.99, \$50.00-\$59.99, and \$60 and over. Most of the premium Sonoma County Pinot Noir and Chardonnay producers reviewed in the *PinotFile* are not entered.

Red Sweepstakes Award: 2016 Buena Vista Bela's Selection Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$50

Best of Pinot Noir Class Awards:

- 2016 Laurier Carneros Pinot Noir \$20
- 2016 Davis Bynum Jane's vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$35
- 2016 Bowman Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$42
- 2016 Buena Vista Bela's Selection Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$50
- 2016 Russian River Valley Vineyards Bella Luna Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$65

Double Gold Pinot Noir Awards:

- 2017 Valley of the Moon Carneros Pinot Noir \$30
- 2015 Woodenhead Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$47
- 2014 Woodenhead Wet Kiss" Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$52
- 2014 Sanglier Cellars Old Camp Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$60
- 2016 Tiny House Vineyard W.E. Bottoms Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$60
- 2016 Russian River Valley Vineyards Horseridge Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$65

Best of Chardonnay Class Awards:

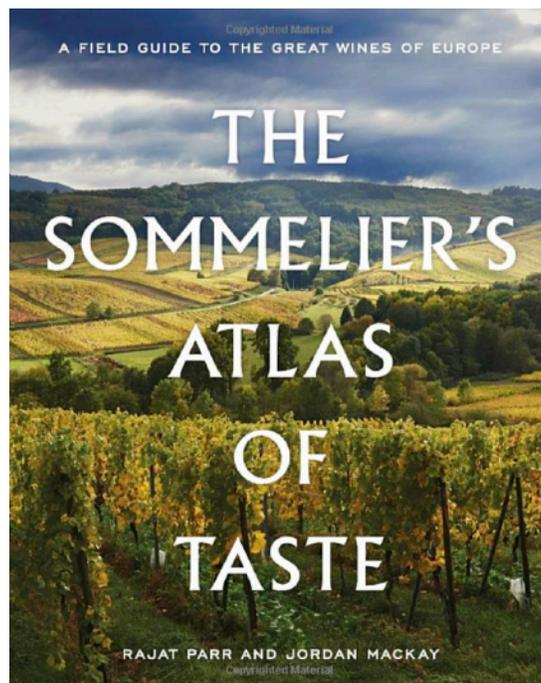
- 2015 D&L Carinalli Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$20
- 2016 Selby Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$33
- 2017 ZO Wines Dry Creek Valley Chardonnay \$35

Double Gold Chardonnay Awards:

- 2017 Folie A Deux Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$18
- 2015 Picket Fence Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$18
- 2016 Frei Bros Reserve Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$20
- 2015 D&L Carinalli Vineyards Estate Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$20
- 2017 Davis Family vineyards Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$38
- 2017 Dutcher Crossing Winemaker's Cellar Dry Creek Valley Chardonnay \$38
- 2017 ZO Wines Dry Creek Valley Chardonnay \$38

The Sommelier's Atlas of Taste: A Field Guide to the Great Wines of Europe

Authors Rajat Parr and Jordan Mackay focus on the subject of blind tasting and the nuances evident in wines from various subregions and appellations of Europe. Release date is October 23, 2018, \$25.47 on Amazon.



Summary of Wines Reviewed in This Issue

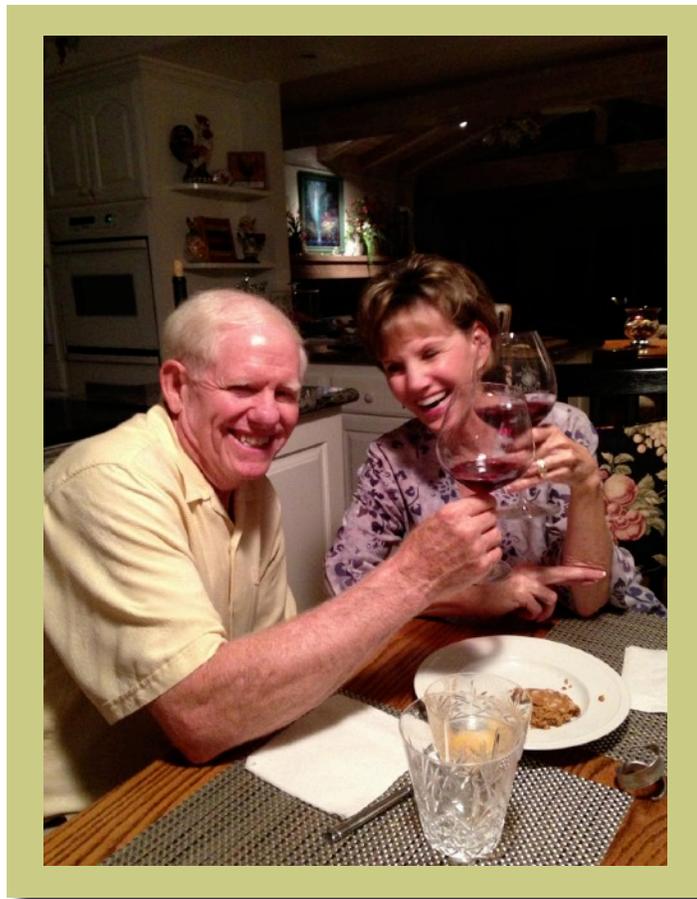
Readers have asked for a quick overview of scores and prices of reviewed wines in each issue since they may not have the time or inclination to read the entire issue upon publication. Here are the top scoring wines. Let me know if you find this valuable.

Pinot Noir

- 96** 2016 Big Basin Coastview Vineyard Monterey County Pinot Noir \$55
- 95** 2016 Big Table Farm Sunnyside Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$62
- 94** 2016 Big Basin Lester Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$55
- 94** 2015 Chenoweth Green Valley of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir \$75
- 93** 2016 Big Table Farm Wirtz Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$62
- 93** 2015 Brooks Rastaban Brooks Estate Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$60
- 93** 2014 Ken Brown Radian Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$70
- 93** 2016 Red Hills Cellars Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$50
- 93** 2015 Rusack Santa Catalina Island Vineyards California Pinot Noir \$72
- 93** 2016 Senses Terra De Promissio Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$72
- 93** 2016 Tongue Dancer "Pinot de Ville" Putnam Vineyard Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir \$75
- 92** 2017 Big Basin Dune and Mountain Monterey County Pinot Noir \$36
- 92** 2016 Big Basin Alfaro Family Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir \$65
- 92** 2016 Big Table Farm Catrall Brothers Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$62
- 92** 2016 Big Table Farm Yamhill-Carlton District Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$62
- 92** 2015 Brooks Temperance Hill Vineyard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$48
- 92** 2015 Brooks Old Vine Pommard Eola-Amity Hills Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$55
- 92** 2015 Ken Brown Ranch La Viña Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$50
- 92** 2015 Ken Brown Rita's Crown Vineyard Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir \$60

Chardonnay

- 95** 2015 Rusack Santa Catalina Island Vineyards California Chardonnay \$60
- 94** 2017 Masút Estate Vineyard Eagle Peak Mendocino County Chardonnay \$35
- 94** 2016 Senses B.A. Thieriot Vineyard Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$82
- 93** 2016 Senses Tenth Step Sonoma Coast Chardonnay \$75
- 92** 2016 Tongue Dancer Bacigalupi Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay \$50



Pinot Noir Bliss in Marriage

If the man in a marriage has a Pinot Noir buying habit, it may be prudent for him to get his wife hooked on Pinot Noir as well. As the cases of Pinot Noir accumulate in the house or garage after allocations are delivered, the wife will certainly take notice. Her ears will perk up when the UPS delivery person knows the husband by his first name. Pretty soon you may see an equal number of shoe boxes arrive by UPS from Nordstrom. She may feel the husband is spending a larger share of the household's booty.

If you find yourself in this predicament, there are subterfuges that can be utilized. One can employ any one of a number of excuses for the wine boxes arriving at the house such as, "It's not all my wine. I bought some for my friends who are sharing my allocation." Or, "I bought the wine for a special wine dinner for my wine club and I will be reimbursed." Or, "I am selling some of my wine at auction to pay for this." Or, in desperation, "The wine was on sale." The latter puts you on shaky ground, because although your wife can relate to this, desirable Pinot Noir is never on sale. Never, ever tell your spouse the price you paid for the Pinot Noir. Do not leave a copy of the *PinotFile* lying around where it can be easily perused.

Other options include having your Pinot Noir sent to your place of business although this will raise eyebrows among other employees unless you share the wine with them. More costly, but certainly advantageous, you can rent a wine locker and have your wine sent there without your spouses' knowledge.

The best solution is to get your spouse interested in Pinot Noir. Wean her off Chardonnay. Good things happen when you drink Pinot Noir. Pour nice examples into proper stemware, and turn on some good music. Make it an event. After you have piqued her palate, she will want to move up to the "best" examples of Pinot Noir. Once she is hooked on really sumptuous Pinot Noir, there is no turning back. You will have achieved marital bliss and become a lucky man.