

**Santa Cruz
Mountains
Part 2**

PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Devoted to Pinotaficionados

Volume 5, Issue 30

April 2, 2006

Paradise for Pinot

Many people believe God loves Pinot Noir. At least 950 people who attended last weekend's Pinot Paradise event in the Santa Cruz Mountains can attest to that. The weather had been pretty dreary leading up to the event (close to the wettest March ever), but the sun came out just in time and everyone's prayers were answered.

The 2nd annual Pinot Paradise was held at The Mountain Winery, the former Paul Masson facility, in Saratoga. The Winery has been restored for events and the surrounding vineyards rehabilitated. With its scenic views of the Santa Clara Valley, it makes a perfect setting for this Pinot Noir festival. The location, which now includes 580 acres, was purchased by Paul Masson in 1901. After the Bay Area earthquake struck in 1906, Masson recovered the Front Portal of St. Patrick's Cathedral in San Jose which had severely destroyed. This architectural treasure, dating to the 12th Century, became the façade of the Paul Masson stone winery and is preserved today.

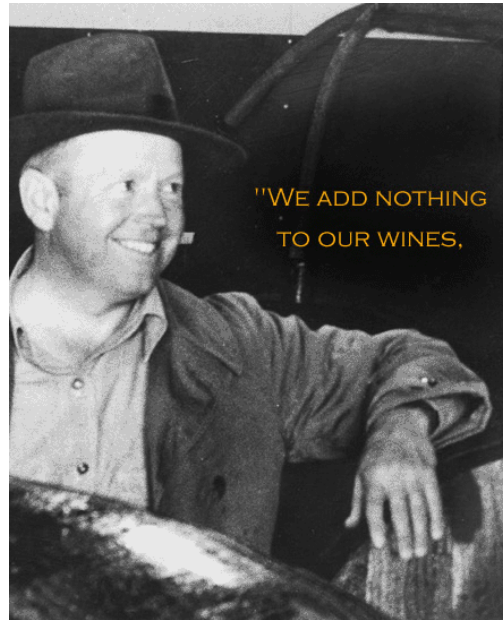
Over 30 wineries poured Santa Cruz Mountain Pinot Noirs and food was provided by 20 of the best local restaurants, cheese shops, and artisan food suppliers. Individual magnums of Pinot Noir from each of the wineries was auctioned along with a Grand Cuvee Jeroboam which contained some Pinot Noir from each winery blended into one bottle. Of the wineries pouring, Mount Eden, Burrell School and Soquel Vineyards were reviewed in Part 1 of this 2 part series (Issue 29) and Beauregard Vineyards, Clos Tita, Hallcrest Vineyards, Silver Mountain Vineyards, Sonnet Wine Cellars, and Windy Oaks Estate Vineyard & Winery will be featured in this issue, Part 2. Below is the view from the terrace at The Mountain Winery.



Photo Courtesy Laura Ness

After last week's issue on the Santa Cruz Mountains, Don Baumhefner of Copeland Creek Vineyards, wrote me about some relevant important historical information which I want to share now.

It is rumored that Paul Masson made a midnight vine cutting raid on Romanee-Conti to bring the cuttings back to Saratoga and through Martin Ray, these became the original block at Mount Eden. Joe Swan's original plantings were from cuttings taken from two particular vines at Mount Eden. When Martin Ray left Masson, he needed capital to fund Mount Eden. He formed an exclusive club of local money people to build the winery and like a true bon vivant, had lavish parties with ladies in Champagne baths and the like. He grew tired of the idea, however, and after spending all of the money and homesteading the property, he discontinued the club. After years and years of legal wrangling, during which time the local Sheriff could not serve him with a summons because he had bulldozed away the road, the investors got Mount Eden as part of the settlement. "Crazy Dr. Ed" from Chicago was the leader of the group that took over and later the Graffs and Merry Edwards came on board. There was some wine from the 1971 vintage made from the Mount Eden grapes. It was sent to Sutter Home, of all places, and the wine was sold for about \$4 a bottle. (Don says he enjoyed many bottles of both the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir).



Martin Ray was pretty crazy. He did not use sulfur dioxide after adding some to the must, hence his bottlings were very inconsistent. Don relates that he opened many bottles of his wines, but enjoyed only few. But those few were absolutely fantastic. Don thought Joe Swan was the first to use whole clusters (I had reported that Martin Ray was the first according to Jeffrey Patterson), but Martin was the first to barrel ferment Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in the New World. Don drank his last magnum of 1972 Mount Eden Pinot Noir with winemakers Merry Edwards and Kathleen Inman a few years ago and it was dark, very fruity, and absolutely fabulous (all agreed).

By the way, the current Martin Ray Winery is located in the Sebastopol area and sources grapes from multiple California appellations including the Santa Cruz Mountains. The name "Martin Ray Winery" was purchased from the Ray family. The winery's second label is Angeline.



Silver Mountain Vineyards



As winegrower Jerold O'Brien and I walked around his mountain top estate on a brisk and foggy March morning, I marveled at the tenacity he has shown in his lifetime in overcoming considerable adversity to achieve his dream of making fine wine. Jerold first learned about wine as a 19 year-old in 1959, when after enlisting in the Air Force, quickly learned that "adult beverages were mandatory." He soon developed an appreciation for wine over beer and spirits. After becoming a fighter pilot, he traveled extensively and driven by his curiosity, sought out vineyards and wineries in many locations in an attempt to figure out the reasons that

wines from disparate locations tasted differently.

Upon his discharge from the Air Force, he continued to fly commercially and relocated in 1970 to the Bay Area. He felt this was "the center of wine in the Western Hemisphere," and it was here that he volunteered to work at multiple wineries and took classes in viticulture. Using profits he made from trading silver commodities, he bought the Silver Mountain property in 1973. High in the Santa Cruz mountains at 2,000 feet, the views of the Monterey Bay are spectacular from here. Jerold saw potential here, despite the fact that it was a run-down and abandoned orchard with no road or well.

He built a road, drilled a well, and built a barn on the property which he planned to convert to a winery in the future. His initial goal was to grow grapes. His wife and young son camped out in the barn for over a year. Without insulation, living here was truly roughing it. Eventually he completed a house, but his wife did not share his commitment to this venture and departed. Jerold has been single ever since.



In the mid 1970s, Jerold decided to start a winery. He obtained Pinot Noir cuttings from Joseph Swan and Chardonnay from Mount Eden and planted a nursery initially. He converted the barn on the property to a winery and became bonded in 1979. That first year he made 350 cases of Zinfandel from

purchased grapes with the aid of Jerold's chief mentor, Joseph Swan. Meanwhile, he also apprenticed with Richard Graff and Charly Meyers (Harbor Vineyard near Sacramento). In 1980, Richard Graff introduced him to John Meter, the vintner at Ventana who was a former Navy pilot. Because of their similar backgrounds, they developed a friendship, and Meter supplied him with Chardonnay grapes. The first ten years, wines at Silver Mountain were made primarily from purchased Chardonnay and Zinfandel grapes with some experimentation with Merlot and Pinot Noir.

From 1980 to 1982, Jerold planted an estate vineyard using cuttings from his own nursery. He decided to plant Chardonnay. Although Pinot Noir had shown potential in the mountains, he felt he lacked enough familiarity with it to be successful. As it turns out, five or six of the vines he transplanted from his nursery were Pinot Noir vines from Joseph Swan, and these are now being used to plant a small Pinot Noir vineyard on the property. This is a work in progress as gophers are proving to be a major challenge. Jerold thinks that his property, 2100 feet above the fog, may be too warm for Pinot Noir, but he is going to try anyway. All of the Silver Mountain estate vineyards are certified organic.

Originally, Jerold did not have enough money for a deer fence so he struggled to get his Chardonnay vineyard established. In 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake was centered two miles away which destroyed the original winery and house. All of the stored wine was lost. Five months later, he decided to rebuild. "It took me five years, but this time I built everything the way it should have been done the first time." The new winery is semi-underground and has been utilized since 1995.



(in the photo below the driveway leads to the winery under the cement pad - Monterey Bay is in the cloudy distance).

In the mid 1990s, Jerold had some luck with a meritage wine using purchased Cabernet and Merlot. Labeled Alloy, the addition of Petit Verdot beginning with the 2004 vintage has made this wine even better. He also has made excellent sparkling wine from Pinot Noir (the last vintage was 1996), which he only sells at the winery. He keeps talking about making some again, but the time involved makes it "a pain in the butt."

The Pinot Noir program at Silver Mountain made a huge leap forward with the addition of consulting winemaker, Tony



Craig (formerly winemaker at David Bruce - see feature on Sonnet). Jerold calls himself a "half-ass winemaker who has a lot of common sense and experience." The combination of Tony's superb palate for Pinot Noir and Jerold's years of know-how around a winery has produced remarkably good Santa Cruz Mountain Pinot Noirs in the 2003 vintage. Tony works with Greg Stokes, the former vineyard manager at David Bruce for 20 years. Together they source all of the fruit and direct the farming.

Jerold's friendship with David Bruce dates back to 1972. Bruce was very helpful and encouraging, but he told Jerold, "You're a fool to get into the wine business, there is no money in it." After all of these years, Jerold just smiles and shakes his head, "If you succeed once in a while, it is worth it."

2003 Silver Mountain Vineyards Tondre's Vineyard Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$36. This vineyard was formerly an old sheep pasture. Tondre's son, Joe, farms the vineyard which has several different Burgundy clones planted. The nose is complex with red and black fruits, licorice, and a hint of oak. There is a beautiful palate of Pinot fruits which are enhanced by some earthiness. A balanced wine that finishes clean and fresh. Double Gold San Francisco Chronicle 2006 Wine Competition.



2003 Silver Mountain Vineyards Amber Ridge Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$36. The aromatics feature cherries, raspberries and toast. The wine has attractive finesse with flavors of red fruits and mocha. It does not feature quite the punch or crisp acidity of the Tondre Vineyard wine, but it will start you smiling with any good food. Gold San Francisco Chronicle 2006 Wine Competition.

2003 Silver Mountain Miller Hill Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$36. Two gentleman from Europe organically and meticulously farm this vineyard at 1750 feet. It is less than a mile from Silver Mountain. Medium bodied with a gorgeous garnet robe. The nose is plush with red fruits and a brambly character. A wine of great elegance that finishes with a peek-a-boo dose of sexy fruit and spice that lingers and leaves you staring at the glass. Beautifully composed, balanced, and sleek. Two hours later it was still solid. Wowiee! Demure and curvaceous.

The winery's website is silvermtn.com. The phone is 408-353-2278. The wines may be purchased from the Tasting Room at Cannery Row in Monterey which is open daily (831-644-9609). The winery will be open for Santa Cruz Mountains Passport Weekend, April 15.

Sonnet: Wines of Poetry

Over the years, Shakespeare's plays have been turned into musicals, comedies, spoofs and contemporary dramas. But the Sonnet label is the first to use the work of the Stratford-on-Avon playwright on a bottle of wine. A sonnet is a poem of 14 lines using any number of rhyme schemes. Typically one finds character in a sonnet. For Tony Craig, a former Shakespearean stage actor, a sonnet represents a connection to his past. Growing up in England, he shared the typical Brit's interest in alcohol consumption. He enjoyed making beer at home when he was young. After marrying an American girl, he came to the United States and began to explore the wines here. Frustrated by the lack of money in the stage acting business, he applied for a starter cellar job at the David Bruce Winery. He was hired and astonishingly, with no formal winemaking training, became the head winemaker within two years. He is the first to admit that "it was totally by accident, a fortunate happenstance." However, when one considers that the approach to winemaking and acting is analagous, it is not so surprising. With the classic method acting (Stanislouski), the actor reacts to the other actor's words - there is no formula. Similarly, with winemaking, the vintner listens to what the grapes tell him.

After a twelve year tenure at David Bruce, Tony left five years ago and currently divides his time consulting for Silver Mountain, Muns Vineyard, and Tandre's Grapefield's own wines, heading the winemaking team at Savannah Channele, and producing wine for his own label, Sonnet. I sat down with him at Silver Mountain and he discussed his winemaking philosophy as we tasted through some of

Sonnet Pinot Noirs. His wines are unique in that they are aged in mostly Hungarian oak. He prefers the tighter grain of Hungarian oak which imparts no astringent tannins typical with long aging in French oak. The two types of oak are the same species and wines aged in both smell and taste the same. However, the mouth feel is different and more silky with the Hungarian oak. He tries to avoid unneeded oak tannins for they can actually reduce the color of the wine, produce a harsh texture, and unbalance the wine. Tony feels that the aromas and flavors of wine are pretty much set and one cannot do much to alter them. They are different every year. The structure and texture of a wine, however, can be modified by the type of oak used in aging and the length of time the wine spends in the barrel (Tony typically limits his aging to 13-15 months in 30% new Hungarian oak). How the wine feels (one 'feels' tannin) rather than how it tastes (one doesn't 'taste' tannin) is critical to the full enjoyment of a wine.



Tony's mantra is "Listen to the grapes and listen to the wine." He follows no formula. The style he is striving for is one of elegance and balance: wines that are not overblown and ones that will age beautifully. He employs the very least amount of manipulation possible, bottling the wines by hand very slowly so as "not to beat them up." He jokes that "It is a shame to have to put wine in bottles. When you put a wine in a bottle, it takes one to two years to reach the same point it was at in the barrel."

Tony comments that Burgundy cannot be a benchmark for California Pinot Noir. He feels strongly that we need to focus on our own vineyard sites and do the best we can do with our own terroir. "If we made Burgundy in California, the *Wine Spectator* would never understand and would award the wines 75 points! We need to do our own thing." He feels that the more we learn how different clones perform in different areas, the better our wines will become. It is key that we refrain from making the mistakes we did during the 50's and 60's.

2002 was the first vintage of note for Sonnet Wine Cellars with production of a few hundred cases of Pinot Noir. He hopes to build the label to four Pinot Noir bottlings of 500-600 cases each.

2003 Sonnet Krause Vineyard York Mountain Pinot Noir

14.2% alc., \$36. **2004 Sonnet Krause Vineyard York Mountain**

Pinot Noir 14.3% alc., \$36. The Krause Vineyard is located off Hwy 46 north of the town of Cambria in California's north central coast. This eight-year-old vineyard is located on Jack Creek Rd and the fruit from this vineyard is also bottled under the Jack Creek label independent from Sonnet. Tony first learned about this vineyard while working with the grapes at David Bruce. When Bruce started blending the grapes, owner Doug Cruz stopped supplying Bruce and instead sent them to Tony. The vineyard is subject to maritime influences and is quite cool. Like Chalone and the Santa Cruz Mountains, this site has a unique minerality imparted to the wines. This feature, along with the spice that comes from cooler climates, makes this an ideal site for Pinot Noir. Both vintages tasted were nicely crafted. The 2003 had an attractive nose of mushrooms, dark berries and toast; the 2004 was still aromatically bashful. The wines tasted of tart cherries with a touch of herbs and minerals. They finish nicely with clean and bracing acidity. Nicely proportioned and balanced.



2002 Sonnet Tondra's Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir 13.5% alc. **2003 Sonnet Tondra's Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., \$36. **2004 Sonnet Tondra's Grapefield Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., \$36. Tondra's Grapefield is adjacent to Garys' Vineyard. The owner is an old time farmer who also raised sheep. He noted the large number of vineyards being planted in the area in recent years and decided to follow suite. However, he refused to call his grape plantings a vineyard; "I have no damn vineyard. I had a cabbage field, now I have a grape field." Thus the name Tondra's Grapefield on the label. The vineyard is located in the middle part of the appellation altitude-wise. The higher areas are the coolest and produce wines that tend to be thin and acidic. The lower plantings are warmer and the wines more extracted. But the middle is just right and the moderate temperatures produce balanced wines. I found the three vintages very consistent in style with the most notable feature being impeccable balance. The 2002 is 100% Pommard, the 2003 and 2004 contain some Dijon 115 in addition to Pommard. All of the wines show luscious dark fruits including plum and prune and a nice touch of minerality in the finish. The last two vintages bring some red fruits from the 115 clone. These wines will appeal to those who prefer a style of Pinot Noir marked by elegance, purity of fruit, brisk acidity, integrated alcohol, and suede-like tannins.

2003 Sonnet Amber Ridge Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$36. The nose is a profusion of ripe cherries. There is a panoply of flavors here including cherries, dark cocoa, cinnamon, toast and forest floor. Cinnamon red hots without the 'hot'. I love the chocolate in this wine. Medium-bodied, dusty tannins, good acid. Again, my notes say balanced.

This is gifted winemaking that shines in both the Silver Mountain and Sonnet Pinot Noirs. Maybe Tony has started something here and rising winemakers may begin looking to the Bard for inspiration. Sonnet wines are available in select California retail wine stores. The website is www.sonnetwinecellars.com. The 2004 wines have just been bottled and will be released shortly. Tony says the 2005 vintage is phenomenal. The growing season was perfect except for some rainfall at flowering. The ripening season was warm and perfect with no heat wave. The result is wines with balance (there's that word again) and elegance. As a winemaker, his job was easy. The future is bright at Sonnet.



When I was in the Santa Cruz Mountains, I met Ed Muns, a former executive with Hewlett-Packard, who along with high-tech publicist Mary Lindsay, have planted a 15 acre vineyard on a ridge at 2,600 feet, facing Monterey Bay. French Pinot clones are thriving here using a vertical trellis system and drip irrigation left over from an earlier attempt to start a vineyard here twenty years ago. The location is perfect for Pinot Noir since it is cool at night in the summer. Gophers like it here too so their control is a major objective. In the 70's, this land was used for a Christmas tree farm, so trees keep popping up in the vineyard! First harvest was in 2003. Ed

currently sells his grapes to Soquel Vineyards and Silver Mountain and makes some Pinot Noir under his own label, Muns Vineyard, at Silver Mountain under the direction of Tony Craig and Jerold O'Brien. The website is www.munsvineyard.com.

Clos Tita: Hand-crafted Pinot Noir

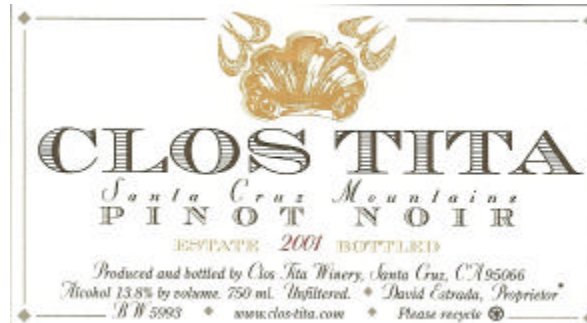
Clos Tita is a tiny one acre estate in the Santa Cruz Mountains planted in 1990 by dentist, Dr. David Estrada. His wines are truly artisanal for he performs all of the work himself. The vineyard is worked entirely by hand, and every vine is pruned by David, who is also the winemaker, cellar master and proud spokesperson for his wines. Monday through Thursday he practices dentistry, where from September to December, he has purple fingers under his gloves!



Clos Tita was planted to clones 15, 777, 113 and 114 at 900 foot elevation on sandstone and granite slopes. The vineyard employs closely spaced, short vines and is dry farmed. Production is 75-150 cases of Estate Pinot Noir and a few hundred cases of Cabernet, Merlot, and Syrah from purchased Santa Cruz Mountain grapes.

The winery was bonded in 1997 and the first Pinot Noir release was a San Francisco Chronicle Top 100 Wine. All of the Pinot Noirs are aged two years in French oak; 75% new oak for the Estate Pinot Noir and 25% new oak for the Cuvee Pinot Noir (which contains purchased grapes in varying amounts). The goal is to preserve a "house style" which showcases the terroir.

2001 Clos Tita Estate Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.8% alc., 75 cases, \$36. Only available at the winery. Light purple in color. The seductive nose displays cherries, cassis and sandalwood. More cherries dominant the flavors with subtle spice and sweet oak overtones. An elegant wine that has aged gracefully with soft tannins and a silky finish toned by a refreshing acidity. This is what Pinot Noir should be. Fine like red lingerie.



2002 Clos Tita Cuvee Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 13.9% alc., 125 cases, \$24. This wine contains 50% estate fruit - no estate wine was bottled in 2002. The aromatics are appealing with dark cherries and sweet oak. Medium-bodied, the wine goes down easy. Plenty of toasty oak on the finish. Not particularly complex, but a very decent Pinot. I had this with grilled pork loin and it was a nice companion.

2003 Clos Tita Cuvee Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.5% alc., \$36. 50% estate fruit and 50% from two well-established neighboring vineyards. This wine is a little shallow and simple. An easy drink, the Pinot flavors lack a kick and the texture of this earthy wine is grainy.

2003 Clos Tita Estate Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.0% alc., 50 cases, \$36. The nose is complex and features cherries, roses, spice and wet earth. An intriguing (and unique for the Santa Cruz Mountains) pepper note in the finish really satisfies. The lengthy finish shows a mouthwatering acidity. A balanced, well-composed treat. You can really get your teeth into this wine.

Clearly the Pinot Noirs from 100% estate fruit are the debutantes here. There is some retail distribution in California. The website is www.clos-tita.com. The phone is 831-439-9235.

Beauregard Vineyards

The Beauregard family has been farming in the Santa Cruz Mountains since 1940. As growers of premium grapes, they have been the largest fruit source in the region. Today they farm 100 acres of vineyards in the mountains. Jim Beauregard, who represents the third generation of Beauregards, gained his reputation at Felton Empire Winery in the late 70's and early 80's. He established the Ben Lomond Mountain Appellation in the Bonny Doon region of the Santa Cruz Mountains (an appellation within the larger Santa Cruz Mountains Appellation). In 1999, Jim formed a family partnership with his son, Ryan, and began making premium wines under the Beauregard Vineyards label. Jim and Ryan share winemaking duties.

I met young Ryan Beauregard at the Beauregard Vineyards Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf tasting room. This picturesque tasting room seems perfectly chosen for the name Beauregard translates in French to *Beautiful View*.



Beauregard produces multiple varietals, with total production 4,800 cases. A 2003 Trout Gulch Vineyard Chardonnay and a 2004 Zayante Vineyard Syrah have been highly awarded. Currently, there is a single Pinot Noir release but plans are to expand the Pinot Noir program and produce wine from four estate vineyards. A new winery is also in the works.

2003 Beauregard Vineyards Trout Gulch Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 14.6% alc., 370 cases, \$45. Dijon and Martini clones. A deeply colored wine made in a bigger style. The nose is dominated by cranberries, oak and a hint of alcohol. The wine has been bottled six months but is still closed. It is brimming with fruit waiting to get out, but at the moment, it just doesn't show itself. There are some appealing earth and mushrooms among the flavors that are evident. The texture is soft and the wine finishes with racy acidity. Give this wine another year in the cellar.

The Beauregard Vineyards tasting room is open daily from 1-6. It is a great spot to sip wine from. The website is www.beauregardvineyards.com. The phone is 831-425-7777.



Hallcrest Vineyards: Steeped in History

Hallcrest is located at the crest of a hill above the old town of Felton. Originally it was a retreat for the Hall family until 1941 when Chaffee Hall planted the first vineyard. A winery followed and the first vintage was released in 1946 at a time when there were only three wineries in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The winery's Cabernets and White Riesling gained considerable recognition for the Santa Cruz Mountains. In 1987, John Schumacher and his family purchased the Hallcrest property, which had been operating as Felton Empire Winery since Chaffee Hall's retirement. Schumacher restored the name, Hallcrest Vineyards, and continues to produce fine wine in the original winery. The quaint tasting room (pictured) is open daily and there are two picnic areas perfect for enjoying Hallcrest wines on a sunny afternoon overlooking Riesling vines planted more than fifty years ago.



John, who received his training at University of California, Davis, is a pioneer in organic farming and winemaking. He insists on sourcing organically grown grapes and part of his production is devoted to truly organic wines (sulfite free) of good quality. These are sold under the label, Organic Wine Works. The emphasis for the Hallcrest Vineyard label is making small lot wines from select vineyards and minimizing any manipulation that would detract from the unique source of the grapes. Vineyard Designate Pinot Noirs are only produced from sites that have strong varietal, regional, and site-specific character. Annual production is 20,000 cases.



The recent success of Hallcrest Vineyards wines has been astonishing and is a tribute to John's talent. At the 2006 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, Hallcrest Vineyards won the most Gold Medals for Pinot Noir (4), the most Silver Medals for Pinot Noir (3), and was the

most awarded winery at the competition.

On the final evening of my visit to the Santa Cruz Mountains, Jerold O'Brien hosted a dinner with several Santa Cruz Mountains winemakers including John Schumacher. I did not formally taste John's Pinot Noirs but sampled several at the dinner. I can say that a number of them really stood out to me. Like so many Santa Cruz Mountain Pinot Noirs I tasted on my visit, they were exquisite, pure, and balanced. I plan on purchasing some for my own cellar for future enjoyment. The current list:

2004 Hallcrest Vineyards Belle Farms Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir (a favorite), 166 cases, \$35. **2004 Hallcrest Vineyards Barrel Select Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** 437 cases, \$35. **2004 Hallcrest Vineyards Powerhouse Potter Valley Pinot Noir** 174 cases, \$35. **2004 Hallcrest Vineyards Terra Serena Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** (a favorite) 166 cases, \$35. **2004 Hallcrest Vineyards Vistal Del Mar Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** (a favorite) 167 cases, \$35. **2003 Hallcrest Vineyards Belle Farms Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** 91 cases, \$35. **2003 Hallcrest Vineyards Powerhouse Potter Valley Pinot Noir** 199 cases, \$35. **2003 Hallcrest Vineyards Veranda Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** 194 cases, \$35. **2002 Hallcrest Vineyards Ciardella Vineyard Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir** 800 cases, \$26.

Wines may be purchased on the website, www.hallcrestvineyards.com. 831-335-4441.

Windy Oaks Estate

Jim and Judy Schultze have used their 20 years of interest and experience in artisanal winemaking to create Windy Oaks Estate Vineyard and Winery. The Burgundian varieties, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, are produced from a 15 acre vineyard located 1,000 feet up on a ridge overlooking the Monterey Bay at the southern end of the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation. The Schultzes have lived in Europe and Australia and visit Burgundy yearly to exchange information and meet with their barrel makers. They have a clear sense of the Burgundian methods of winegrowing.



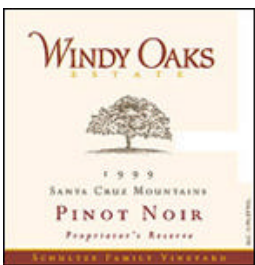
The vineyard is farmed according to organic and biodynamic principles. The vines are all hand-tended. The microclimate allows for a long growing season with bud break typically in late February and harvest in mid-October. The daily coast fog provides cool nights and typically burns off early in the morning.

The estate winery is designed to process the wine without pumps at any point. After meeting Jim and Judy, I can feel their sincere commitment to meticulous grape growing and winemaking. Their goal is Burgundian-influenced wines, that is, wines that are food-friendly and not 'fruit bombs'. They employ French oak barrels made with 3-year air-dried wood, long barrel aging (typically 18-24 months for Pinot Noir), and use no added enzymes.



2003 Windy Oaks Estate Henry's Block Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot

Noir 175 cases, \$29. Produced from two clones in the oldest part of the vineyard (planted in 1996). Primarily Wadenswil clone. Aged 21 months in 60% new oak. Cassis and wild strawberries marry in the attractive nose. The flavors are layered with bright cherries, red berries, tea and a hint of minerality. The mouth feel is silky and the finish refreshing. An elegant garden delight.



2003 Windy Oaks Estate Reserve Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 150 cases, \$42. This wine is made from three clones in the 1.5 acre Bay Block part of the original 3 acre vineyard. Aged 23 months in 75% new French oak. This is a wine of great potential. It is a festival of red and black fruits, with generous doses of spice, vanilla, and wet leaf. It is a rich and seductive wine that has the tannic backbone to age serenely. Very classy.

2003 Windy Oaks Estate Santa Cruz Mountains Pinot Noir 200 cases, \$24. A blend of clones from the estate vineyard. Aged in 75% new oak. Not tasted, but based on the wines above, the quality is certainly going to be evident. Silver Medal at the 2006 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.

This is a producer who crafts polished Pinot Noirs that I suspect will develop a strong cult following in the near future. The wines are available on the website, www.windyoaksestate.com and through a private mailing list. The winery is open to the public by appointment, 831-786-9463,



PrinceofPinot.com

For a full listing of wineries in the Santa Cruz Mountains consult the Santa Cruz Mountains Winegrowers Association website: www.scmwa.com

Santa Cruz Mountains Part 2

© 2006 PinotFile is a
Registered Trademark

Besides the wineries featured in this series on the Santa Cruz Mountains, the following producers of Pinot Noir are also worth seeking out: Alfaro Family Vineyards, Aptos Creek Vineyard, Bargetto Winery, Cinnabar Vineyards & Winery, Clos La Chance Wines, David Bruce Winery, Muccigrosso Vineyards, Picchetti Winery, Rhys Vineyards, Salamandre Wine Cellars, Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyards, Storrs Winery, Testarossa Vineyards, Thomas Fogarty Winery & Vineyards, Trout Gulch Vineyards, and Varner.

T.J. Rodgers, the multimillionaire founder of Cypress Semiconductor, has been producing wine under his Clos de la Tech label for nearly ten years from three vineyards including one at his home. He sells his wines (\$100 a bottle) to other Silicon Valley friends. Recently, he has purchased 160 acres in the Santa Cruz Mountains and has spent an estimated \$25 million in developing the property. He has planted 25 acres of Pinot Noir here to date. Named Domaine Lois Louise, the winery is being constructed inside three caves he is excavating on the property. This has created some resistance from the local community who feel their water supply may be threatened. Rodgers is certain he will prevail and achieve his goal of engineering world-class Pinot Noir.

“Randallisms”

Of course no discussion of the Santa Cruz Mountains would be complete without the enigmatic contributions of Bonny Doon’s Randall Graham. He was asked to speak at the recent Pinot Paradise event and here are some of his pearls or “Randallism” about farming and producing Pinot Noir.

“On the whole, creating a great Pinot Noir in the new world is essentially impossible. We are entirely too rational here. You must let rationality take a back seat. Sometimes you must jettison it from the back of the truck.”

“Respect your site. Don’t force something to grow that is not meant to grow there. If it’s too hot for Pinot, plant something else. If all else fails, plant Japanese horseradish.”

“Give biodynamics a try: what’s wrong with utopian fantasy? It may well be the key to enhancing mineral quality.”

“Rely on both white and black magic. Above all, practice great leaps of imagination.”

Randall is well known as a mad scientist -winemaker. His latest idea is the 2005 Transfusion inspired by Frankenstein. He used Pinot Noir from the Gemelli Vineyard on the Central Coast near Calera, Picked at 22.8 Brix, the grapes were crushed, the juice drained off, and a rosé was made. He then transfused the Pinot Noir skins with the juice of fresh-pressed Pinot Gris from Soledad, harvested at the same time. The wine that resulted was “dense with minerals, currants and coffee; very rich and satisfying with great soul.” When asked why he did it, he shrugged and said, “Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris are genetically related.” “Plus, he added, “Monogamy is overrated.”