

PINOTREPORT

for people passionate about western pinot noir

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INSIDE

IN THE MARKET

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WINNER

James Beard Award For Newsletter Writing On Food, Beverage, Restaurants and Nutrition

Write to Congress Now!

MANY OF YOU WHO LOVE GREAT PINOT NOIR RELY ON BEING ABLE TO ORDER THESE SMALL PRODUCTION WINES DIRECT from the winery and have them shipped to your doorstep. It allows you to obtain wines that because of their small production are simply not available in your local markets. For years, consumers and consumer organizations have fought to preserve and extend our rights to receive those direct shipments with mostly positive results and a gradual chipping away of the insane and obsolete state laws hindering direct shipments.

Well, there's now a serious threat to your ability to order wine and have it shipped to you. **H.R. 5034**, a bill pushed by a beer wholesalers group, has been introduced in the House of Representatives and could if passed literally end direct wine shipping.

Tom Wark, a wine industry public relations professional as well as an astute industry commentator through his excellent "**Fermentation: The Daily Wine Blog**" has covered this issue from the beginning. I would urge you to read his coverage at www.fermentation.typepad.com. With Tom's permission, I'm reprinting part of that coverage below because it is a great summary of the impact of that bill's passage:

What You Must Know About the Bill To End Wine Shipping

H.R. 5034, a bill that will severely restrict your ability to access or ship fine wine, has been introduced into into the House of Representatives in Washington, DC. It must be opposed by those who enjoy fine wine, those who sell fine wine and those who support free and fair trade. It must be opposed by telling friends, family and colleagues what it will do if passed.

Here is what you need to know about H.R. 5034:

- 1. If passed, HR 5034 will end the direct shipment of wine in many states.*
- 2. HR. 5034 is an alcohol wholesaler protection bill.*

[Continued on next page]

OUT IN PINOT COUNTRY

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3. *HR 5034 means state alcohol laws would no longer be subject to fundamental Constitutional principles.*
4. *Backers of HR 5034 claim alcohol deregulation is happening, yet they can't point to any deregulation that has occurred.*
5. *The purpose of HR 5034 is to assure that alcohol wholesalers (middlemen) get a cut of every bottle of wine sold in America, whether they deserve it or not.*
6. *Small artisan wineries across the country will lose millions of dollars in revenue if HR 5034 is passed.*
7. *Wine Consumers will lose access to 1,000s of wines if HR 5034 is passed.*
8. *The market for fine wine will shrink considerably if HR 5034 is passed.*
9. *HR 5034 is based on the alcohol wholesaler-perpetuated lie that direct shipping of wine and winery to retailer sales leads to minors drinking wine and binge drinking. There is no evidence to support either*
10. *HR 5034 amounts to alcohol wholesalers declaring war on consumers, wineries, wine shops, the federal courts and free trade.*

The time to write your Congressional representatives and tell them how you feel is now! For an excellent, automated and painless way to send a message to your senators and congressperson, visit www.freethegrapes.org and halfway down the page under "Hot Topics" you'll see a link labeled "Defeat HR5034." Click it and you will be taken to the messaging tool.

Facebook also has a "Stop H.R. 5034" page at www.facebook.com/STOPHR5034.

This is for real.

This is not a drill.

It is not a false alarm.

We all need to make Congress understand that this bill is wrong, wrong, wrong and that under no circumstances should it become law! If it does pass, many of the wines you read about here and enjoy as much as I do will become even

harder if not impossible to get unless you have some special connections or you live in wine country.

Schug Marks 30th Anniversary

Thirty years is a long time to do anything and in the up and down business climate of the California wine industry, 30 years in the business is a significant achievement indeed. **Schug Carneros Estate Winery**, located on the western edge of the Carneros AVA at the southern end of the Sonoma Valley, is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

Founded in 1980 by husband and wife **Walter and Gertrud Schug**, the winery has always focused on cool-climate Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Walter Schug is one of the true Pinot Noir pioneers in California having made some memorable Pinots from the old Heineman Mountain Vineyard during his tenure as winemaker for Joseph Phelps Vineyards from 1973 to 1983. He made his decision to start his own brand in 1979 when Joseph Phelps decided to stop production of Pinot Noir. (Interestingly, Joseph Phelps is back in the Pinot business in a big way now with Freestone Vineyards).

Today, Schug Carneros Estate is very much a family operation. Walter is still involved as winemaker emeritus; his son **Axel Schug** is the winery's managing partner. Sonoma-born **Mike Cox** has been the winemaker since 1996. In addition to Pinot Noir, the winery produces Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and a Late Harvest Riesling

The winery plans to mark its anniversary with the release later this year of its first estate Pinot Noir. I can't wait for that and wish the Schug winery family all the best!

In This Issue...

This issue features some terrific new releases from a wide range of producers including **Archery Summit, Brandborg, Calicaro, Chronicle, Churchill Cellars, El Molino, Graton Ridge, Hayman & Hill, Kawarau Estate, MacMurray Ranch, Marimar Estate, Miller Wine Works, Morgan Winery, Motos Liberty, Pelerin, R, Rippon Vineyard, Roar Wines and Tin House.**

As always, I thank you for your support and hope that you enjoy this latest issue.

-- Gregory S. Walter, editor and publisher

IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

This Issue's Tasting Notes

All wines were tasted blind and scored before knowing anything other than that the general region they were from. My notes and comments follow.

Archery Summit

Archery Summit Winery was founded in 1993 by Gary Andrus, who also founded Pine Ridge Winery in the Napa Valley. Located in the Red Hills of Dundee in the northern Willamette Valley, Archery Summit's winemaker Anna Matzinger draws from 115 acres of estate vineyards—the Archery Summit Estate, Arcus Estate, Red Hills Estate, Looney Vineyard and Renegade Ridge Estate—to produce both blends and vineyard designated Pinots. These are concentrated, complex Pinots, among some of the best produced in Oregon.

Archery Summit

Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Premier Cuvee 2007

Deep ruby color; rich, complex nose with black cherry, black tea and floral notes; deep, ripe stewed black cherry and plum flavors; plush, opulent texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Lush, complex Pinot with delicious flavors and great texture.

9,500 cases made \$48 Score: 92

Brandborg Vineyard & Winery

Elkton, Oregon is not necessarily the first place you think of for quality Pinot Noir in Oregon. It's not as popular as the Willamette Valley to the north and yet Elkton's location at the north end of the Umpqua Valley south of the city of Eugene has the "chops" to make good Pinot Noir. Just ask Terry and Sue Brandborg, whose Brandborg Vineyard & Winery has been producing solid Pinot Noir along with Gewurztraminer,

Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Riesling, and Syrah. Terry and Sue met at a wine event in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and began getting to know each other. They realized that among many other things they had in common was a love of wine and a shared dream to establish a vineyard to grow great Pinot Noir. They commenced their search in 1999 and in 2001 settled on a property southwest of the town of Elkton in the coastal mountains with elevations ranging from 750 to 1,150 feet. These are good wines from a region that should get more attention.

Brandborg Vineyard and Winery

Pinot Noir Umpqua Valley Ferris Wheel Vineyard 2006

Medium ruby color; rich red cherry and earthy aromas with spice notes; rich, ripe, lush cherry flavors with silky texture, sweet oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Rich, fruity Pinot with some juicy fruit flavors.

452 cases made \$38 Score: 89

Brandborg Vineyard and Winery

Pinot Noir Umpqua Valley Bench Lands 2006

Medium ruby color; earthy, forest floor aromas with some stewed cherry; ripe, earthy, stewed cherry flavors with forest floor and herbal notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Earthy, slightly herbal style that has a lot of nuance.

2,961 cases made \$22 Score: 86

Brandborg Vineyard and Winery

Pinot Noir Umpqua Valley Love Puppets 2006

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, spicy, cherry aromas; ripe, bright red cherry flavors with lots of spicy notes; nice structure and balance; long finish. Bright, forward Pinot with a lot of interesting spicy flavors.

800 cases made \$30 Score: 89

MAKE ROOM IN THE CELLAR!

"Simply outstanding..."

Roar Wines

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; deep cherry, cranberry, sweet earth, floral and spiced aromas; rich, full, layers of dark raspberry and cherry flavors; spice and earth notes; silky texture; great structure and balance; long finish. This Pinot is like Mozart for the mouth! Beautiful flavors laced in a deep, delicate structure—it's simply outstanding!

730 cases made \$50 Score: 98

SMART BUY!

"Zippy, bright flavors..."

Motos Liberty

Pinot Noir California 2008

Medium ruby color; bright, strawberry/raspberry aromas; bright, forward strawberry and cherry flavors with crisp acidity; great balance; lingering finish. Zippy, bright, refreshing Pinot with lots to like. Great for a spring picnic.

n/a cases made \$9 Score: 90

IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

Calicaro

Calicaro is truly a bi-coastal wine venture—the name says it all. “Cali” for California where the grapes are sourced and the wine is made and “Caro” for South Carolina where founder Dave Ball resides. A healthcare and business attorney in Greenville, South Carolina by day, Dave Ball has always had a fascination for wines, even to the extent that he made wine from orange juice with a home winemaking kit when he was in eighth grade. Amazingly, his desire to make wine continued after that experiment. After years of enjoying great wines he decided the time was right to start his own venture. He teamed up with Shauna Ball who lives in Berkeley, California and has had a long interest in collecting both French and California wines. The focus for Calicaro is clearly single-vineyard designated Pinot Noir from selected vineyards in California. Cabernet is also produced. Wines are made at Crushpad in California under the supervision of winemaker Chris Nelson. Production is tiny but the Pinots are definitely worth seeking out.

Calicaro

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Lone Oak Vineyard Paris Mountain 2008

Medium ruby color; deep, rich aromas of black cherry, bacon and smoky oak; rich, lush, full black cherry flavors, pepper, smoky bacon notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Rich, lush Pinot that is a delight to drink on its own but will go incredibly with any grilled meat.

25 cases made \$45 Score: 93

Calicaro

Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills La Encantada Vineyard Poinsett 2008

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, slightly closed, some pepper, dark cherry and plum aromas; deep, rich, dark cherry and plum flavors with earthy, pepper notes; some tannin; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep, spicy Pinot that needs time to open up. However, it drinks pretty well now.

25 cases made \$45 Score: 92

Calicaro

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Split Rock Vineyard Liberty Bridge 2008

Medium-deep ruby color; bit tight on the nose with some dark cherry and earthy notes; deep, full flavors of dark cherry, spice and earth; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep, lush Pinot with a long life ahead of it.

50 cases made \$45 Score: 92

Chronicle

Owner Mike Hengehold created Chronicle Wines with the idea of creating wines sourced from cool-climate, extremely high

quality vineyard sites in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. To make wines that expressed the unique character of these vineyards, Mike brought in two distinguished winemakers: Dan Cederquist, a veteran of Stag's Leap and De Loach who deeply understands old vine Zinfandel, and Ted Lemon, whose Littorai Pinots keep the bar high for cool-climate Pinot Noir. Chronicle produces several bottlings of Zinfandel and two Pinot bottlings: a Sonoma Coast blend and a vineyard designate from the Cerise Vineyard in Anderson Valley.

Chronicle

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; earthy, forest floor, dried mushroom aromas; complex, spicy plum and ripe cranberry flavors; vibrant acidity; good structure and balance; long finish. Complex and earthy Pinot that calls out for a hearty mushroom pasta.

492 cases made \$40 Score: 93

Churchill Cellars

Ken and Susan Churchill moved to the Russian River Valley in 1999 inspired by a visit to Tuscany. They wanted to grow grapes and make wine. Not exactly a unique story, but Ken and Susan were determined to grow and make great Pinot Noir. With the help of Paul Sloan of Small Vines Viticulture, they established their estate vineyard, Bella Luna Vineyard, and planted it to a mix of Dijon clones: 115, 667, 777 and 459. Churchill Cellars was born with its debut vintage in 2003. The winemaker is Anthony Austin, a veteran Pinot Noir winemaker. Pinot bottlings include a regional Russian River Valley and vineyard designates from the Bella Luna Vineyard and Leepin Vineyard.

Churchill Cellars

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Bella Luna Vineyard 2007

Medium ruby color; rich, deep cherry and spice aromas; deep, rich red cherry and raspberry flavors with spice and sweet oak notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep and rich Pinot with very nice fruit.

120 cases made \$39 Score: 93

Churchill Cellars

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast Leepin Vineyard 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, earthy, black cherry aromas with forest floor notes; deep, complex black cherry fruit with earthy notes, sweet oak, good structure and balance; long finish. Earthy and complex, this Pinot has some great cool-climate fruit and the right amount of forest floor notes.

214 cases made \$39 Score: 92

El Molino Winery

El Molino Winery was founded in 1871 by W.W. Lyman, and operated until Prohibition would shut its doors for more than a half century. Following a successful career on Wall Street, Reginald Oliver purchased and refurbished the long-unused winery and re-launched the El Molino brand in 1981, with his first commercial Pinot Noir and Chardonnay coming in the mid-1980s. Production is roughly 2,000 cases with about half of that in Pinot Noir. Reg Oliver was a maverick in many ways, and remained under the radar producing great Pinot Noir from vineyards in Napa Valley—a region many think is too warm for Pinot. He was also a pioneer and a visionary, resisting the temptation of the marketplace to make big, overblown wines. He opted for power and depth through elegance and balance in all of his wines. El Molino's Pinot Noirs are consistently among the very best made in Napa Valley each year. They are silky and elegant, with spicy, berry and cherry notes and a great depth of flavor. They invariably pair well with food because of their balance and silky texture. Reg Oliver died of melanoma in 2005 at the age of 66. His daughter Lily and her husband Jon Berlin carry on the work at El Molino and with them at the helm, we can be sure that his legacy will continue.

El Molino Winery *Pinot Noir Rutherford 2006*

Medium ruby color; spice, herbal aromas; rich, complex, spicy red cherry flavors with herbal, mineral notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Approachable, forward Pinot with great flavors for grilled meats.

903 cases made \$57 Score: 91

Graton Ridge Cellars

Graton Ridge Cellars is the latest incarnation of the Paul family's more than six decades of commitment to sharing the plenty of the Russian River Valley with visitors from far and

wide. At first, visitors came to sample and buy Gravenstein apples and fresh apple juice; today it's Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Three generations of the Paul family, led by Art and Barbara Paul are involved in the family business today. Winemaker Nick Legg produces small lots from the estate vineyard.

Graton Ridge Cellars *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Paul Family Vineyard 2007*

Medium ruby color; fresh strawberry and floral aromas; bright, concentrated strawberry and cherry flavors with some earthy notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Bright and concentrated, this Pinot is showing its youth and needs a little time to even out.

136 cases made \$40 Score: 89

Graton Ridge Cellars *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2007*

Medium ruby color; deep red cherry aromas with sandalwood notes; bright floral, creamy raspberry and red cherry flavors with some cranberry and earthy notes; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Earthy style with forward fruit, this is a good Pinot for a wide range of dishes.

340 cases made \$30 Score: 92

Hayman & Hill

Hayman & Hill is a brand created by veteran winemakers David Hayman and Dennis Hill to produce a wide range of wines from a wide range of California appellations. The duo created the brand while both were working at Blackstone Winery in the Sonoma Valley. The brand has since become part of wine giant Constellation Wines. Jamie Meves was named winemaker in 2007 and the Hayman & Hill Pinot bottling is from the Santa Lucia Highlands and is a terrific value.

MAKE ROOM IN THE CELLAR!

"Deep and complex..."

Rippon Vineyard *Pinot Noir Central Otago Lake Wanaka 2007*

Medium-deep ruby color; slightly closed, deep, complex earthy, stewed cherry aromas; rich, ripe, deep stewed cherry flavors, complex spice and earthy notes; a bit of tannin and toasty oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep, complex Pinot with a lot of life ahead. Meanwhile, it is an amazing wine looking for a great short rib or similar concentrated, slow-cooked meat dish to complement.

977 cases made \$54 Score: 96

SMART BUY!

"Bright and fruity..."

MacMurray Ranch *Pinot Noir Central Coast 2007*

Medium-deep ruby color; spicy, deep cherry aromas; rich, ripe, forward cherry and spice flavors; bright acidity, good structure and balance; long finish. Bright and fruity, this makes for a great easy-drinking Pinot for the table.

89,000 cases made \$23 Score: 91

IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

Hayman & Hill

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Reserve Selection 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, herbal, earthy aromas; deep, herbal and stewed cherry flavors; bit soft on the palate; good balance and lingering finish. Soft and supple, this is an understated Pinot with some interesting flavors.

9,000 cases made \$15 Score: 86

Kawarau Estates

Kawarau Estate was established in the heart of Central Otago in 1992 by Charles Finny and Wendy Hinton. So committed are they to organic farming that the estate vineyards were certified organic before the winery's first vintage. The estate vineyards are located north of Cromwell at the base of the Pisa mountains. Kawarau Estate produces Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc. Dean Shaw makes the wines at the Central Otago Wine Company in a minimal interventionist style focused on the character of the vineyard.

Kawarau Estates

Pinot Noir Central Otago Reserve 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, spicy, herbal cherry aromas; deep, complex, stewed cherry flavors with some herbal and mineral notes; slight tannin; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep and very complex Pinot that needs time in the glass to open up.

575 cases made \$35 Score: 91

MacMurray Ranch

The land that is MacMurray Ranch today was originally homesteaded by Colonel George Porter, who came to the Russian River Valley in 1846. Porter's family farmed the land for generations until in 1941 actor Fred MacMurray purchased the ranch to raise his family there. The main difference at the ranch between then and now is that vineyards have replaced the pasture land. In 1996, several years after Fred MacMurray's death in 1991, the 1,700-acre ranch was purchased by the E.& J. Gallo winery and the brand created. MacMurray Ranch focuses on Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, the former being sourced primarily from estate vineyards in the Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast, although winemaker Susan Doyle has begun sourcing Pinot from outside the North Coast area, as far away as the Santa Rita Hills.

MacMurray Ranch

Pinot Noir Central Coast 2007

Please see "Smart Buy!" on page 5.

MacMurray Ranch

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, dark cherry, spice and forest floor aromas; rich, deep, complex dark cherry with great spice and forest floor notes; nice touch of sweet oak; good structure and balance; long finish. Balanced and full of flavor, this Pinot drinks well now but has plenty of life ahead.

70,000 cases made \$28 Score: 92

Marimar Estate

Marimar Torres has been involved in the wine business all her life. Born in Barcelona, Spain, her family's Torres wine company has been in the global wine business for three centuries. Marimar came to California in 1975 and after two years of searching acquired the land and created the Marimar Estate in the Green Valley appellation of western Sonoma County. Marimar Estate's has two vineyards Don Miguel Vineyard, named for her late father, and Doña Margarita Vineyard, after her mother. Marimar Estate produces Chardonnay and Pinot Noir—the Pinots are deep, with lush cherry notes and fine, elegant structure and balance.

Marimar Estate

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Don Miguel Vineyard Stony Block 2006

Deep ruby color; earthy, deep dark cherry, berry aromas; deep, big and bold dark cherry and blackberry flavors with earthy notes; moderate tannin; good structure and balance; long finish. Big, bold and full of flavor, this Pinot needs a good deal of time in the bottle to develop and in the glass to open up.

n/a cases made \$47 Score: 91

Miller Wine Works

Gary Miller is a chef and a winemaker, and he finds tremendous synergy and commonality between the two pursuits. He found his passion for wine in college while working in a wine shop near Purdue University and took a detour into food with study at the Culinary Institute of America and work in kitchens at the Greenbrier in West Virginia and the Little Nell in Aspen. He ended up in the Napa Valley and with some encouragement from friends, launched Miller Wine Works to make the kind of wines that have affinity and synergy with great food. His Pinot Noir from the Kendric Vineyard in Marin County is nicely balanced with subtle and complex flavors. Miller Wine Works is one of those under-the-radar producers that you should get to know before everyone else does.

Miller Wine Works

Pinot Noir Marin County Kendric Vineyard 2006

Deep ruby color; complex forest floor and dark cherry aromas;

IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

deep, complex earthy, dark cherry flavors with forest floor, oak and some tannin; good structure and balance; long finish. Earthy, full style of Pinot that needs time to open up, but is worth the wait.

500 cases made \$40 Score: 92

Morgan Winery

Dan Morgan Lee and his wife Donna founded Morgan Winery in 1982 in the Monterey County city of Salinas. Dan, a native of the town of Turlock in the Central Valley, switched his emphasis from veterinary studies to viticulture and enology while attending UC Davis and began his wine career working at Jekel Vineyards and then Durney Vineyards in Monterey County. After that, he did a few years of consulting as a winemaker before starting Morgan Winery. Dan and Donna realized their dream when they were able to purchase a 65-acre ranch on the benchland of the Santa Lucia Highlands in 1996 as a site for an estate vineyard and, eventually, a winery. The Lees named the ranch Double L, short for “double luck,” for their twin daughters who were five years old at the time. Double L is a great source of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay and is farmed organically. Dan's winemaker, Gianni Abate, shares Dan's Central Valley heritage and his passion for making great wine. Morgan Pinot bottlings include the “Twelve Clones” blend of all 12 clones planted in Double L and vineyard designates from Double L Vineyard, Rosella's Vineyard and Garys' Vineyard. The Morgan style is texture-driven with deep cherry and plum fruit, silky mouthfeel and great structure.

Morgan Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Double L Vineyard 2007

Medium ruby color; slightly closed nose with hints of red fruits; full, deep plum, pomegranate and cherry flavors with spicy notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Big and deep, this Pinot needs a bunch of air in the glass to open up.

525 cases made \$48 Score: 90

Morgan Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2007

Medium ruby color; complex stewed plum, wood and earthy spiced aromas; deep plum, cherry and raspberry flavors, earthy notes, velvety texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep and velvety, this is a Pinot that will just rock with grilled pork or beef.

550 cases made \$48 Score: 93

Morgan Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2007

Medium ruby color; subtle plum and tea aromas; deep,

complex plum, raspberry and dark cherry flavors with earth and tea notes; supple texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Exquisitely balanced, this is a terrific Pinot to drink now, but will improve for years in the cellar.

500 cases made \$48 Score: 94

Morgan Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Tondre Grapefield 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; dark cherry, black tea and spice aromas; full, deep, dark cherry, plum and raspberry flavors with spice notes; some tannin; good structure and balance; long finish. A deep and complex Pinot with some tannins to resolve. Pair with a grilled steak.

300 cases made \$48 Score: 90

Morgan Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Twelve Clones 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; earthy, floral aromas; deep, bright plum, strawberry flavors with earthy, spice and tea notes and moderately mouth coating tannins; good structure and balance; long finish. Full and complex, this is a Pinot that will develop additional interesting flavors over time.

12,000 cases made \$32 Score: 91

Motos Liberty

Motos Liberty is a brand launched recently by Panther Rock Wine Company, a new company recently formed by fourth generation members of the Franzia family (of Bronco Wine Company and “Two Buck Chuck” fame). It's a value brand featuring Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Pinot Noir. John Allbaugh is the winemaker and like all the wines under the Franzia family umbrella, they are well made, interesting wines at a great price.

Motos Liberty

Pinot Noir California 2008

Please see “Smart Buy!” on page 3.

Pelerin

Pelerin is a small Pinot and Syrah producer focused on fruit sources from the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA. The word Pelerin is French for pilgrim and the name plus the image of the old world traveler on the label symbolizes founders Chris and Cathy Weidmann's journey in wine. Chris and Cathy met while studying at UC-Davis and as their relationship grew so did their dream of owning a small, artisanal winery some day. After cutting his teeth with stints at Newton Vineyard in Napa Valley and Morgan Winery in Monterey County, Chris established relationships with Gary Francioni of Rosella's Vineyard and Rich and Claudia Smith of Paraiso Vineyards and

IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

the dream of Pelerin became reality. Chris and Cathy strive to use artisan, organic methods and organically grown fruit whenever possible and do nearly all of the cellar and business work for Pelerin themselves. The Pinot Noir from Rosella's Vineyard has great depth and texture and is worth a search of the market.

Pelerin

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; deep, complex, stewed black cherry aromas with smoky notes; deep, complex, rich black cherry, spice, earthy flavors with some smoky, toasty oak notes; great balance and structure; long finish. Complex and very deep Pinot with beautiful flavors now that will only get better with time in the cellar and at least an hour in the glass.

396 cases made \$54 Score: 94

R

R is a proprietary label created by Robert Della Santina and Ron Kantor, co-owners of the Enoteca Della Santina wine bar and retail shop in the town of Sonoma, Calif. And yes, you would be correct in wondering why I am reviewing and writing about essentially a private label wine that is not available in stores and restaurants outside Sonoma. Normally that would not fit my criteria for inclusion in the newsletter. But let's face it, life is a string of exceptions and I claim my right to use one now. The Enoteca offers 30 wines by the glass and at least 200 wines from all over the world at retail prices. The fact is that the Enoteca is my favorite place in Sonoma to drink wine and the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay that Ron and Robert have put together under the R label is worth writing about. Fruit for both the Pinot and the Chardonnay is sourced from the Russian River Valley and the wines are made at J Vineyards and Winery in Healdsburg. The R wines are also the "house" Chardonnay and Pinot for Della Santina's Trattoria next door. These are terrific wines and the Enoteca is a terrific place that you should make part of a plan to visit Sonoma wine country.

R

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2008

Medium ruby color; deep, spicy red cherry aromas with some cola notes; rich, ripe, red cherry flavors with lots of spice and cola notes; sweet oak; silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Ripe and rich Pinot with a silkiness that makes you want to drink it all night long.

300 cases made \$21 Score: 93

Rippon Vineyard

Rippon Vineyard & Winery has a very interesting history dating back to the early 1970s when Rolfe and Lois Mills

defied the local viticultural conventional wisdom and planted some experimental vines above their house on a steep bank. After several years of monitoring harvest results six grape varieties out of 15 really showed the potential to make great wine: Pinot Noir, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Gamay and Osteiner. Today, the Rippon estate vineyards are mostly planted to Pinot Noir and Riesling. The estate's name—Rippon—comes from Emma Rippon, an Englishman born at the beginning of the 1800s who married Frederick James Sargood. In 1850 they moved to the new colony of Victoria, Australia to set up a small merchant business. Later, grandson Percy Sargood, came out to Dunedin (then New Zealand's largest port and capital city) and in 1912 he bought Wanaka Station. Percy's grandson, Rolfe Sargood Mills grew up between Dunedin and Wanaka and always dreamed of one day moving back on to the family farm. He did and Rippon Vineyard is the result. Nick Mills, the son of Rolfe and Lois Mills and Rippon's current winemaker, returned to the family property in 2002 after four years working in Burgundy with some ideas of his own about how New Zealand Pinot Noir should be grown and made. Today, Rippon is a real family affair: Nick is the winemaker, his wife Jo Mills is the export manager; Nick's brother David manages the property; and Nick's sister Charlie is the vineyard manager. Rippon's Pinot is complex, earthy and ageworthy.

Rippon Vineyard

Pinot Noir Central Otago Lake Wanaka 2007

Please see "Make Room In The Cellar!" on page 5.

Roar Wines

Gary and Rosella Francioni, third generation farmers in the Santa Lucia Highlands, are proprietors of Roar Wines, proprietors of Rosella's Vineyard and partners with Gary Pisoni in Garys' Vineyard. With the Roar Pinots, they set out to capture the pure character of the Santa Lucia Highlands vineyards that they know so well. The name Roar refers to the sound that the coastal winds make as they blow through the gaps and down the benchland that makes up the region. Roar Pinot bottlings include a regional Santa Lucia Highlands Pinot and vineyard designates from Rosella's Vineyard, Garys' Vineyard and the Pisoni Vineyard. It's hard to find a Pinot winemaker in Santa Lucia Highlands who Gary hasn't helped out in one way or another. Ed Kurtzman is the winemaker for Roar. The Francionis are perfect proof that artisan wines are a true reflection of the people behind them. Like their wines, Gary and Rosella are beautiful, classy people.

Roar Wines

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 2007

Medium-deep ruby color; dark cherry, spiced plum and warm earth on the nose; deep and complex with exotic plum, cherry and raspberry flavors; good structure and balance; long finish. Deep, earthy and complex, this is a Pinot that needs some time

IN THE MARKET: Recent Pinot Noir Reviews

to develop. Worth the patience!

330 cases made \$55 Score: 96

Roar Wines

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Rosella's Vineyard 2007

Please see "Make Room In The Cellar!" on page 3.

Tin House

Tin House is a small family-owned and operated winery focusing on three varietals—Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah—from the coastal valleys of California's Central Coast. The winery is named for the rustic tin sheds in the founders' ancestral home of Hungary. Pinot bottlings are from the Edna Valley and Santa Maria Valley regions.

Tin House

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley 2007

Medium ruby color; some spice and red cherry aromas; ripe, rich red cherry flavors with spice and earthy notes; good structure and balance; long finish. Spicy, interesting Pinot that works with many dishes.

160 cases made \$25 Score: 91

Contacting The Winery

Below is contact information for wines discussed in this issue.

Archery Summit

503.864.4300, www.archerysummit.com

Brandborg Vineyard & Winery

541.584.2870, www.brandborgwine.com

Calicaro

864.483.9972, www.calicaro.com

Chronicle

707.637.7461, www.chroniclewines.com

Churchill Cellars

707.578.5393, www.churchill-cellars.com

El Molino Winery

707.963.3632, www.elmolinowinery.com

Graton Ridge Cellars

707.823.3040, www.gratonridge.com

Hayaman & Hill

888.659.7900, www.cwine.com

Kawarau Estates

www.kawarauestate.co.nz

MacMurray Ranch

707.431.5507, www.macmurrayranch.com

Marimar Estate

707.823.4365, www.marimarestate.com

Miller Wine Works

707.254.9727, www.millerwineworks.com

Morgan Winery

831.751.7777, www.morganwinery.com

Motos Liberty

www.motosliberty.com

Pelerin

831.320.0146, www.pelerinwines.com

R

707.938.4200, www.enotecadellasantina.com

Rippon Vineyard

www.ripton.co.nz

Roar Wines

831.595.2098, www.roarwines.com

Tin House

831.484.1814, www.tinhousewinery.com

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PINOTREPORT

for people passionate about western pinot noir

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Editorial Philosophy

PinotReport is an independent newsletter owned, written and published by Gregory S. Walter. All tastings unless otherwise noted are done blind by the Editor. Any and all opinions and analysis expressed in these pages unless otherwise noted belong to Gregory S. Walter, who has no financial involvement or connection whatsoever in the production, distribution or sales of wine.

Wine Samples

PinotReport accepts wine samples for use in its general "In The Market" new releases tastings as well as its special tasting reports. Please follow these guidelines for submitting wine samples for review.

1. All samples should be fully finished bottles ready for market.
2. Please submit one bottle of each wine.
3. Each wine submitted should include a data sheet with at minimum the suggested retail price, case production and distribution data.

All samples should be sent to the following address:

PinotReport

Attn: Gregory S. Walter

625 Ross Court, Sonoma, CA 95476

Tel: 707.935.0326

About Our Tastings

Generally, there are two types of tastings that appear in each issue of **PinotReport**. The first are our regular "In The Market" tastings of Pinot Noirs new on the market.

The second are our special "Tasting Reports" where we from time to time focus on a particular appellation, producer or style.

How We Taste

We taste wine in small flights with no more than 12 wines in a tasting session and one tasting session in a day. While all scores are finalized before the wines are revealed, wines are usually kept open for a day or more to see how the wines develop. Additional commentary may be added based on this, but scores are not changed.

All tasting unless otherwise noted is done blind by the Editor. Other tasters may participate, but their scores and comments are not part of the official tasting record. The tasting coordinator (who does not taste) arranges and bags all wines, which are then scored and comments recorded before bags are removed. Duplicate wines are inserted in tastings to measure consistency.

Our tastings are done under controlled, consistent conditions. We do not under any circumstances use tasting notes from large tasting events or other sub-optimal tasting venues in our published, scored tasting reports.

Wine Prices and Sourcing

Wine prices vary all around the country and can often vary significantly within the same city. We make every effort to only publish a winery's suggested retail price. This price in some cases will be higher than those you can find in your local markets. The wines we taste either come from the wineries in the form of tasting samples (always finished bottles ready for market) or wines we purchase at retail or at the winery.

Our Wine Ratings

The wines we taste are rated using a 100-point rating system. We fully understand the ongoing debate over the use of the 100-point system and while we respect the right of those who simply despise the system to continue to do so, we believe that the scale has value when used with the accompanying tasting notes as a **relative guide** to wine quality that has the added benefit of **being familiar** and **truly intuitive** for most consumers.

PinotReport's 100-Point Scale

96-100	SUPERIOR; it doesn't get better.
90-95	OUTSTANDING; approaching the best
86-89	ABOVE AVERAGE; a very good Pinot.
80-85	AVERAGE; OK if it's all you have.
60-79	BELOW AVERAGE; not recommended.
50-59	UNDRINKABLE.

Clos Pepe: A Vigneron's Quest For Great Dirt

Just-Published Book Tells Story Of Building World-Class Vineyard Estate

Clos Pepe: A Vigneron's Quest For Great Dirt

By Stephen P. Pepe

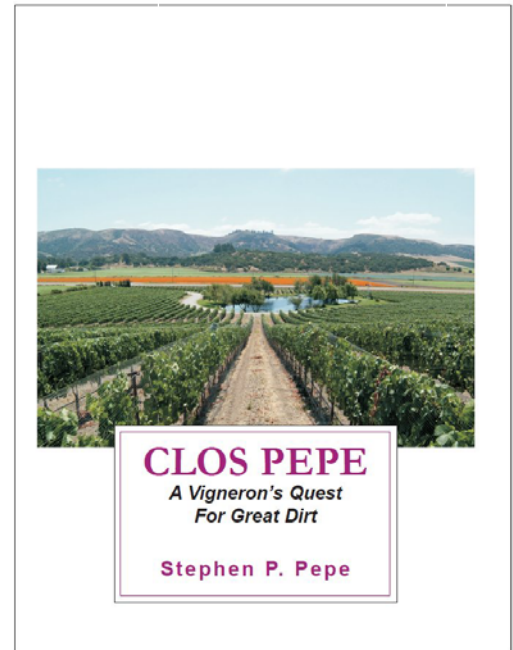
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The story of one of the most celebrated Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyards in California, **Clos Pepe Vineyard** in the Santa Rita Hills, is captured in a new book by founder **Stephen P. Pepe** and has just been published by my imprint **Carneros Press**.

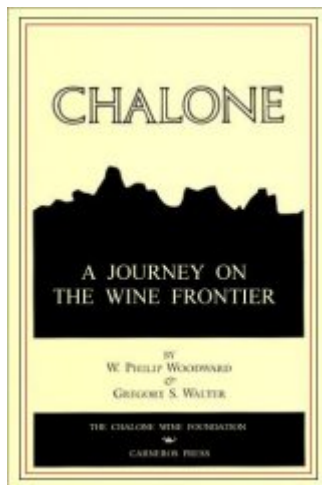
"**Clos Pepe: A Vigneron's Quest For Great Dirt**" is a compelling story about Stephen Pepe's journey from successful attorney, home winemaker and backyard vineyardist in Long Beach, Calif., to a true vigneron (French for one who cultivates a vineyard for making wine) in the then up-and-coming Santa Rita Hills wine region in Santa Barbara County. It's a journey of change and exploration—at times light-hearted and ironic and at other times deliberative and frustrating—with the culmination being the creation of one of the finest Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vineyards and wine brands in California.

Just Published! Order Now!

"**Clos Pepe: A Vigneron's Quest For Great Dirt**" is available directly from Carneros Press for \$25 per copy either online at carnerospress.com or use the convenient order form on the next page.



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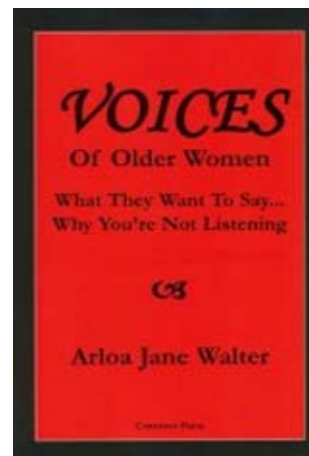
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