

PINOTREPORT

for people passionate about western pinot noir

ISSUE NO. 17

OCTOBER 2003

www.pinotreport.com

INSIDE

- **PINOT NEWS:** *New winemakers, AVAs.....* 2
- **PINOT EVENTS:** *Four you can't miss.....* 3
- **IN THE MARKET:** *The latest Pinot reviews....* 4
- **ON THE MENU:** *Michael Dotson serves up a tasty harvest menu.....* 8
- **ORDER NOW!** *Get the Report.....* 12

Passionate
About
Pinot?
Subscribe
Today.
Get
The Report.

See Page 12
For Details

Fall Is A Busy Time...

A LOT SEEMS TO HAPPEN IN THE EARLY FALL. There just seems to be too much going on. Kids going back to school, people reluctantly closing out the vacation season (and state of mind) and getting back to work, and oh, yes—the harvest.

Because of this busy time and because I've been out paying attention to the 2003 harvest, we continue our tradition of skipping the September issue and delivering two issues in October. The second October issue will be published in the next 10 days and will contain a **harvest report** and a **special report** on a terrific emerging Pinot region.

In this issue, in response to questions I've received from you, I've put together my list of recommended **Pinot-focused tasting and seminar events** happening over the next 12 months. Any of these events is a terrific opportunity to fully immerse yourself in Pinot Noir for as little as a few hours or as much as four days—but you need to **plan ahead** as these fill up and sell out quickly.

This issue was an **embarrassment of riches** in terms of great Pinots to review. I reviewed some of my perennial favorites and continue to be amazed at the consistent quality and excitement of the Pinots from **Arcadian, Etude, Kosta Browne, Merry Edwards, Roar, Sanford, and Truchard**. Equally exciting are wines from newcomers **Copeland Creek** and **Lost Canyon**.

Meanwhile, **Michael Dotson** shares an imaginative harvest menu featuring some of the wonderful bounty of the harvest and pairs it all to one special Pinot Noir. It's an ambitious meal but well worth the effort!

A final note: some of you may have heard that I have recently taken on the role of President and Publisher of **Wine Country Living** magazine. It's an exciting challenge, but rest assured it will not take me away from **PinotReport**. As always, I welcome your comments and hope you enjoy this latest issue.

-- **Gregory S. Walter, editor and publisher**

2 New Oregon AVAs Proposed

The **Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau** (TTB) issued a notice of proposed rulemaking seeking the establishment of the **Yamhill-Carlton District** and the **Chehalem Mountains** viticultural areas in Oregon. Both of the proposed viticultural areas would lie within the existing **Willamette Valley** viticultural area. These proposals are the third and fourth of six new viticultural area proposals being developed for the Oregon wine regions. The others are **Dundee Hills**, **Eola Hills**, **McMinnville Foothills** and **Ribbon Ridge**.

TTB would like to hear any comments you might have on these proposals. Written comments must be received on or before December 14, 2003 and can be sent by the following means: via mail to Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, P.O. Box 50221, Washington, DC 20091-0221, Attn: Notice No. 18 (Chehalem Mountains) or No. 19 (Yamhill-Carlton District); via fax at **202.927.8525** or email to nprm@ttb.gov

Davis Signs Bills For Sales At Tastings

California Governor Gray Davis recently signed two bills designed to make it easier for wineries to connect with consumers and **sell them wine at non-profit wine tasting events**. The new laws take effect Jan. 1, 2004. Current

California law prohibits a producer from selling wine at a nonprofit event unless it's held on the winery's premises.

AB 1505, sponsored by **Assemblywoman Patricia Wiggins** (D-Santa Rosa) lets licensed California wineries participating in a non-profit event take orders for their wines from consumers as long as the actual transaction takes place back at the winery. SB 88, sponsored by state Senator **Wesley Chesbro** (D-Arcata), creates a wine sales permit process that allows wineries to sell bottles of wine at nonprofit events, though at a separate location than where they are offering tastings.

WINEMAKER MOVES

Lynmar Winery Signs Paul Hobbs

Paul Hobbs is the new consulting winemaker for Russian River Pinot producer **Lynmar Winery**. Hobbs consults for several wineries as well as makes wine under his own Paul Hobbs label. He replaces former winemaker **Daniel Moore**.

DeKorth Takes Reins At David Bruce

Dean DeKorth has joined **David Bruce Winery** as winemaker. DeKorth hails from **Morgan Winery** in Monterey County. DeKorth replaces **Anthony Craig** who left to become winemaker at **Savannah-Chanelle** and to focus on his own label, **Sonnet**.

PinotReport

For People Passionate About Western Pinot Noir

Gregory S. Walter

Editor and Publisher

Michael Dotson, Contributing Editor

PinotReport (ISSN 1539-5197) is published monthly by PinotReport LLC, PO Box 2051, Sonoma, CA 95476. All contents Copyright © 2003 PinotReport LLC. All Rights Reserved. Short passages may be quoted without permission if proper credit is given to **PinotReport**.

To Subscribe

Subscriptions to **PinotReport** are available at the special Charter Rate of \$75 for one year via online and \$125 for one year via print or fax. To subscribe, either use the form included with this issue, call 707.935.0326 or subscribe online at pinotreport.com.

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 involvement or connection whatsoever in the production, distribution or sales of wine.

Wine Samples

PinotReport accepts wine samples **of Pinot Noir only** for its "In The Market" and special "Tasting Reports." All samples should be sent to the following address:

PinotReport

Attn: Gregory S. Walter
625 Ross Court, Sonoma, CA 95476
Tel: 707.935.0326

Don't Miss These Pinot Experiences!

Education, Fellowship And Great Pinot Are Well Worth The Ticket Price

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT AND TASTE NEW PINOTS is to attend some of the excellent Pinot Noir-focused seminars and tasting events held each year all around the country.

There are the small local events—sponsored by wineries, restaurants or local retailers. **But for the “full immersion” approach to Pinot**, there are four events held each year on the West Coast that you need need to consider. The fellowship, education and interaction with vintners and Pinot lovers are **well worth the price** of entry.

If you can afford it (both in time and dollars) I'd recommend scheduling some time before or after any of these events to do a little exploring around Pinot country on your own. Here are details on these “big events” presented in chronological order:

PinotFest

Farallon Restaurant in San Francisco is the scene for just about **the best single-event Pinot tasting** I've ever attended. The fifth annual “**PinotFest: A Public Tasting of a Sexy Wine**” is a walk-around tasting featuring at least 46 of the finest Pinot producers from California and Oregon. The public portion of the tasting (there is a trade-only private event earlier in the day) runs from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., **Saturday, November 22, 2003** and will also feature hors d'oeuvres and passed small bites from Farallon's stellar kitchen.

I love this event because it's relatively small and for the most part you're going to meet winemakers and winery principals. **It's a great opportunity to talk Pinot with the people behind the wines.** Farallon's wine director **Peter Palmer** organizes the event and it's easy to see that he's a Pinot lover. Check this out fast as the event is coming up. Call **415.956.6969** or visit **www.farallonrestaurant.com**.

World Of Pinot Noir

More than 90 producers from around the world will participate in the fourth annual **World of Pinot Noir** at the **Cliffs Resort in Shell Beach, Calif.**, in the heart of the Central Coast's Pinot country. The 2004 event is set for **March 5-6, 2004** featuring two days of tastings and seminars held at local Pinot wineries plus a grand dinner prepared by chef and restaurateur **Michel Richard of Citronelle in Washington, D.C.**

This event is gaining momentum and **gets better each year.** The 2004 edition promises to be truly spectacular with some new features and **even more tasting** than in past years. I would urge you to check out their website, take a look at the program details and sign up as soon as possible. For more information, call **Patricia Rogers** at **805.489.1758** or visit **www.worldofpinotnoir.com**. (For my special coverage of the 2003 event, see **PinotReport**, Issue #12, April 2003)

Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival

The Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival is a three-day event that in the past has comprised a technical conference (for the trade) and then a main event consumer tasting with winery dinners to follow and then a third day of winery open houses around the Anderson Valley. The 2004 event will be held May 14-16 and the full agenda has not been announced.

This is another great, intimate Pinot event. **Because of its small size and focus on a single region**, you really have the opportunity to taste, talk about and understand Anderson Valley Pinots. **The relaxed, beautiful atmosphere** and the incredible range of things to do in Mendocino County make this an event to plan a week around. It sells out quickly and if you have an idea that you want to go you'll want to look for accommodations early. For more information, call **707.895.9463** or visit **www.avwines.com**.

International Pinot Noir Celebration

The granddaddy of Pinot events, the **International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC)**, is held each year in the middle of **Oregon's Willamette Valley**—that state's prime Pinot country. This three-day event is one of the **most Pinot-intensive weekends you will ever spend** with seminars, tastings, winery and vineyard visits as well as incredible Pinot-focused meals. The 2004 event will be held **July 23-25, 2004** at Linfield College in **McMinnville, Ore.**

It's amazing that **in spite of its scope and size**, IPNC is an intimate experience. You learn about Pinot not only from the experts leading each of the extensive tastings but also from the person sitting next to you—a consumer like you or a famous Pinot winemaker. But as intense an educational experience IPNC is, it's also a lot of fun. The lunches and dinners are the best, featuring talented chefs from Oregon and abroad and the most interesting and laid back Pinot lovers around. **This event sells out fast so check it out soon.** For more information, call **503.472.8964** or visit **www.ipnc.org**. (For my special coverage of the 2002 event, see **PinotReport**, Issue #5, August 2002)

[PNR]

IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

This Month'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.

CALIFORNIA

Arcadian

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Sleepy Hollow Vineyard 2000

Medium-deep purple ruby color; deep black cherry and plum with a hint of herbs and slight vegetal note on nose; dry, full, nice black cherry flavors with toasty oak and some savory spice flavors; good structure and balance; lingering finish. A silky, delicious Pinot that cries out for pairing with a great meal.

700 cases made \$35 Score: 90

Arcadian

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 1999

Medium-deep purple ruby color; spicy, cumin, plum, cola and toasty oak on the nose; rich and full on the palate with plum and dried fruit flavors; complex savory character marries well with toasty oak; good acidity, balanced with a lingering finish. Complex and interesting, this Pinot has that well-rounded rich character from Garys' Vineyard.

450 cases made \$45 Score: 91

Arcadian

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands 2000

Medium-deep purple ruby color; deep and intense spicy, plum aromas; dry, lush and silky on palate with nice plum and black cherry flavors, great structure and balance, long finish. Beautiful, silky, and delicious Pinot at a bargain price. Arcadian winemaker Joe Davis gets a high-five for this one!

850 cases made \$18.99 Score: 92

Arcadian

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 1999

Medium-deep purple ruby color; deep, concentrated aromas of dried cherry, sage and toasty oak; big, full, tannic, deep dried cherry fruit, lots of spice, pepper and savory notes; thick on the palate, long finish. Another mega-Pinot from the Pisoni Vineyard. Loaded with interesting character and tannin, this wine needs lots of air to open up.

600 cases made \$75 Score: 90

Arcadian

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard 2000

Medium-deep ruby purple color; deep, intense, black cherry

and plum aromas; intense, deep, silky and complex flavors, deep black cherry and plum, with an smoky bacon character, nice toasty oak, great structure and balance, long finish. WOW! Killer Pinot from Joe Davis at Arcadian. Incredible depth and complexity, with beautiful fruit.

850 cases made \$35 Score: 94

Beaulieu Vineyard

Pinot Noir Carneros 2000

Medium ruby purple color; cherry, earth and spice aromas; big, full, cherry, earth and spice flavors with toasty oak, balanced, good structure, long finish. An elegant and powerful Pinot from a Pinot pioneer in California—nice flavors and well suited to many foods.

17,000 cases made \$18 Score: 89

Carneros Creek Winery

Pinot Noir Carneros Reserve 2001

Medium ruby purple color; slight earthiness, deep berry/cherry aromas; nice cherry and berry flavors with earthy notes, sweet spicy toasty oak; lingering finish. Another solid, well made Pinot and another significant step forward for founder Francis Mahoney and winemaker Ken Foster in the rejuvenation of this pioneer Carneros winery.

5,100 cases made \$25 Score: 89

Copeland Creek Vineyards

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2001

Medium-deep ruby purple color; deep spice, berry and cherry notes on nose; nice cherry and berry fruit with spicy notes and a nice dose of sweet oak, very nice structure and balance. Great new release and first wine I've seen from Copeland Creek. Winemaker Don Baumhefner has a real winner here—a tasty Pinot that really opens up with some time in the glass.

336 cases made \$30 Score: 91

Domaine Chandon

Pinot Noir Carneros 2001

Medium ruby purple color; earthy, plum and spicy aromas; deep, baked cherry and plum flavors with earthy and spicy notes; great structure, moderate tannin, lingering finish. This is a very well balanced, well structured Pinot—another example that sparkling wine makers can make some of the most interesting still Pinot Noirs. This wine simply sings with grilled salmon or a mushroom pasta dish.

7,300 cases made \$29 Score: 92

Domaine Chandon

Pinot Meunier Carneros 2001

Medium ruby purple color; deep, complex aromas with cherry, earth and spice; rich black cherry, very nice silky texture, spice and earth notes, sweet oak, nice structure and balance. Pinot Meunier, while a workhorse red grape of the Champagne

IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

region, is largely undiscovered and unplanted here in the West. Domaine Chandon planted the variety long ago in their Carneros vineyards. Pinot Meunier has a lot of complexity and structure and will go well with many foods.

3,700 cases made \$29 Score: 91

Etude Wines

Pinot Noir Carneros 2001

Medium ruby purple color; spicy, deep dried cherry, lavender aromas; rich and full with silky cherry, spice and earthy flavors, touch of lavender on the palate too; balanced with a lingering finish Beautiful flavors with a complexity and texture that really works for me.

7,600 cases made \$40 Score: 92

Foxen

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Bien Nacido Vineyard 2001

Deep ruby purple color; intense berry and earth aromas with a touch of mint; big and tannic with lots of berry and savory flavors; nice mouthfeel, long finish. Definitely a Syrah-lovers Pinot; big, intense, tannic style, but still with some terrific character from the Bien Nacido vineyard.

700 cases made \$40 Score: 89

Foxen

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley 2001

Deep ruby purple color; intense, dense, spicy berry nose; intense, spicy, berry flavors with lots of tannin and toasty oak notes, full bodied, great acidity, long finish. Another big styled, delicious Pinot from Foxen that still manages to be balanced.

2,000 cases made \$24 Score: 89

Foxen

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Julia's Vineyard 2001

Deep ruby purple color; deep, earthy, dried fruit, slight cumin notes; big, full with lots of dried black cherry and plum notes, toasty oak, some smoky bacon notes, good structure and balance, long finish. Big and full like the other two Foxen Pinots, but this wine has more richness, complexity and a deeper fruit component—as well as being very well balanced.

275 cases made \$40 Score: 92

Gainey Vineyard

Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Limited Selection - Unfiltered 2001

Deep ruby purple color; cherry, spice and a slight lavender note on nose; very nice cherry, berry and plum fruit, silky, good structure, spicy, toasty oak, clean and long finish. Beautiful flavors in an intense style of Pinot without excessive

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" that focus on a particular appellation, producer or style.

How We Taste

We taste wine in flights of usually no more than 10 wines and no more than 20 wines in a tasting session. Ringers and duplicate wines are inserted in tastings to measure consistency and keep us on our toes.

All tasting unless otherwise noted is done blind by the Editor. From time to time 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.

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 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 many 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.

Here is **PinotReport's 100-point scale**:

96-100	SUPERIOR ; it doesn't get better.
90-95	OUTSTANDING ; approaching the best
80-89	ABOVE AVERAGE ; a fine Pinot.
70-79	AVERAGE ; OK if it's all you have.
60-69	BELOW AVERAGE ; not recommended.
50-59	UNDRINKABLE .

IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

tannin or oak.

644 cases made \$35 Score: 91

Gainey Vineyard

Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Limited Selection - Unfiltered 2001

Deep ruby purple color; slight herbal, lavender aromas, some berry, black cherry and plum; big, full, black cherry and plum notes, tannic, long on finish. This is a huge Pinot with lots of youthful tannin, but in character for Santa Rita Hills, it's intense fruit and structure keeps it from being overdone.

860 cases made \$38 Score: 89

Joseph Swan Winery

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Cuvee de Trois 2001

Medium-deep purple ruby color; red cherry, spice and some earthy aromas; dry, rich, red cherry, berry and spice flavors, a touch of toasty oak adds complexity, balanced and delicate. A delicate and finely tuned Pinot with nicely complex flavors.

974 cases made \$20 Score: 90

Joseph Swan Winery

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Saralee's Vineyard 2000

Medium ruby color; spicy, sweet oak aromas, with red cherry notes; light and delicate juicy fruit flavors, lots of spice and red cherry notes, good acidity, very nice balance. This lighter-styled Pinot has great flavors. Great for sipping or light meals.

503 cases made \$25 Score: 89

Joseph Swan Winery

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Trenton Estate 2000

Medium-deep ruby purple color; fresh, lush cherry and spice aromas; big, full and tannic on the palate, cherry and spice flavors are there but oak dominates. Very nice big style of Pinot, the oak is dominant but not overdone. Great with beef or lamb.

275 cases made \$42 Score: 88

Kosta Browne

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2001

Medium-deep ruby purple color; ripe aromas of red cherry, cola and spicy, toasty oak aromas; big, rich red cherry, cola, spice flavors, silky, balanced with a long finish. Elegant and silky Pinot from Kosta Browne; nice pretty flavors.

140 cases made \$34 Score: 91

Kosta Browne

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Cohn Vineyard 2001

Medium-deep ruby purple color; ripe aromas of red cherry, complex spice, cola, and toasty oak aromas; big, rich cherry, cola, spice flavors with a touch of clove; balanced with toasty oak flavors; long finish. Big rich style with lots of deep fruit and lush mouthfeel. This Pinot really shows off the quality what the Cohn Vineyard can do in the right winemaking hands.

230 cases made \$48 Score: 92

Kosta Browne

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2001

Deep ruby purple color; deep, dense aromas of dark fruit, plum, spice and pepper on nose; rich, intense black cherry and blackberry fruit, deep flavors with a lush mouthfeel; great structure and balance, long finish. Beautiful and intense with a depth of flavor that goes on and on. And at only \$28, this Pinot is quite a deal.

185 cases made \$28 Score: 92

Lost Canyon Winery

Pinot Noir Carneros 2001

Medium ruby purple color; cherry and earth aromas, spicy oak on nose; full and rich on palate with cherry, spice and earthy flavors, good structure, balance and a lingering finish. Nice style from a new producer and I think one to watch—good forward flavors with the structure and balance to match but not overdone with oak.

175 cases made \$38 Score: 91

Lost Canyon Winery

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2001

Medium ruby color; berry and cherry notes, as well as a spicy, clove note; nice, ripe black cherry flavors with toasty vanilla oak, good structure, balanced, with a lingering finish. This is a nice, complex Russian River Pinot. Worth the search.

50 cases made \$35 Score: 88

Merry Edwards

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Olivet Lane Methode a l'Ancienne 2001

Medium-deep ruby purple color; closed but has a deep and complex feel on the nose; big, full, rich and complex black cherry, sage, spice and sweet oak flavors; lush and velvety on the palate with great structure and balance, long finish. WOW! Merry Edwards' Olivet Lane bottling is Russian River Valley through and through. Take the great character from a 30-year old vineyard and add Merry's touch and you've got a world-class wine.

630 cases made \$48 Score: 95

IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

Merry Edwards

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Windsor Gardens Methode a l'Ancienne 2001

Medium-deep ruby purple color; subtle, closed, spice, black cherry and earth on nose; big, full, rich on palate with lots of black cherry, spice, earth and even a touch of lavender; great structure, balanced despite the intense flavors, long and intense on the finish. This is a big, complex Pinot that has a lot of time ahead of it. Unfortunately the 30+-year-old Windsor Gardens vineyard is on the verge of becoming a new tract of houses. This is a Pinot to buy while you still have the chance.

200 cases made \$54 Score: 94

Merry Edwards

Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast 2001

Deep ruby-purple color; slightly closed on nose, spicy, black cherry, lavender and vanilla notes; concentrated black cherry and plum flavors, great depth, touch of lavender, incredible structure, complex yet very silky on the palate; balanced with a long finish. This Pinot from Merry Edwards should be in every Pinot lover's cellar. It's not only great Pinot, but the incredible \$27 price means you should try to get a case.

1,480 cases made \$27 Score: 93

Roar Wines

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2001

Medium-deep purple ruby color; deep, intense aromas of black cherry, smoky bacon, earth; big, rich and lush flavors, black cherry, plum, smoky bacon, spices, deep and intense flavors, great structure, long finish. When Pinot lovers (like me) find a beautiful, seductive wine like this Roar Garys' Vineyard bottling, we just want to put everything else aside, take our time and explore this terrific wine.

252 cases made \$44 Score: 95

Roar Wines

Pinot Noir Santa Lucia Highlands Pisoni Vineyard 2001

Deep purple ruby color; jammy, berry and cherry aromas with a hint of pepper and spice, dense and slightly closed on nose; dry, big, full and intense; very deep cherry and berry flavors with lots of tannin; good structure with a very long finish. WOW! In keeping with the character of the Pisoni Vineyard this is one big mutha Pinot. It's not overdone, it just needs some time both in your cellar, but also in your glass.

180 cases made \$48 Score: 93

Sanford Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills La Rinconada Vineyard 2001

Deep ruby purple color; spicy, complex, mint, herbal, black

cherry notes; deep, complex, black cherry, plum and spicy, toasty oak notes; great structure, balance and long finish. WOW! La Rinconada is such an intense Pinot that you would expect it to be overpowering on the palate. Not so. Credit Richard Sanford and Bruno D'Alfonso with keeping this terrific wine in balance and a stellar Pinot experience.

4,500 cases made \$50 Score: 95

Sanford Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills Sanford & Benedict Vineyard 2001

Deep ruby purple color; deep and concentrated black cherry aromas with meaty, smoky bacon notes; deep, complex, concentrated black cherry and plum flavors, smoky bacon, sage, spicy, tannic but very well balanced; great structure and a long finish. The Sanford & Benedict bottling is an interesting contrast to the La Rinconada—where the La Rinconada is intense, the Sanford & Benedict is silky and complex. This wine is truly beautiful.

2,200 cases made \$43 Score: 94

Sanford Winery

Pinot Noir Santa Rita Hills 2001

Deep ruby purple color; deep black cherry and plum notes; big and rich, lots of very nice black cherry and plum flavors, spicy, toasty oak, long finish. Each year this bottling from Sanford seems to be less a generic Santa Barbara County Pinot and more an terrific and tasty entry-level introduction to the Santa Rita Hills style.

19,000 cases made \$26 Score: 90

Siduri Wines

Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Sapphire Hill Vineyard 2001

Medium-deep purple ruby color; spicy, berry, toasty oak aromas on nose; big, rich cherry and berry flavors; good structure, some spicy, toasty oak notes, long finish. A big and bold Pinot with a lot of flavor and a lot of character to match with a wide range of foods.

188 cases made \$45 Score: 90

Truchard Vineyards

Pinot Noir Carneros 2000

Medium ruby purple color; slightly spicy, smoky notes, cherry and berry aromas; silky on the palate with sweet flavors of cherry, strawberry, spice and smoky oak; nicely balanced and a lingering finish. This is a beautiful example of how silky and refined Carneros Pinot can be. The Truchards have been working their vineyards for a long time and it shows.

2,979 cases made \$32 Score: 92

[PNR]

Harvest Is Celebration Time!

Michael's Menu Pays Tribute To Season's Bounty, Special Friends

By Michael Dotson

THE EARLY FALL IS SIMPLY MY FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR TO HAVE A CELEBRATION DINNER. The days and nights are getting shorter and cooler and the harvest is well underway. So as the good earth's bounty is brought in off the vines and from the fields, let's celebrate this special time of year!

For me, harvest is not only a time to show appreciation for what the vines and crops have given; but also an opportunity for me to **pay tribute to special people** in my life. This month's menu was created for such a special dinner and those in attendance were a great influence in creating the menu.

To start, a warm gazpacho of **heirloom tomatoes and corn** is a perfect way to say farewell to warm summer days and the addition of the foie gras crouton makes the shorter, cooler days that lie ahead seem, at least for now, less menacing.

Leg of lamb has always been the ultimate Sunday dinner for me—evoking great memories of braised leg of lamb at my Grandmother's house. So a leg of lamb stuffed with one of my favorite flavor combinations is both a celebration and my way of paying homage to her with my own contemporary twist.

Lamb goes so well with a number of things but I could think of no more appropriate side dish than a **seasonal ragout** of summer string beans and fresh shell beans with a mint and parsley pistou.

As I walked through the market thinking of the harvest looking for an inspiration for dessert, I came upon a bin with a variety of grapes. I simply began bagging the different types and started thinking of a fresh grape compote. I decided to pair it with a sweet olive oil cake and earthy black pepper crème fraiche on my way past the wall of boutique olive oils.

With the menu decided and the invitations out the only thing left was to **determine which wines to serve.** I thought that rather than make this decision myself before dinner, we would open a number of bottles and share the journey. Half way through dinner we discovered to our surprise, considering the range of high quality Pinots on the table, that **there was one wine that stood well above the others** and went exceptionally well with all courses except the dessert. Gary Francioni's Roar Wines Santa Lucia Highlands Garys' Vineyard 2001, an incredible wine on its own, took to the earthy flavors in the soup with a silkiness that was hard to beat. With the lamb, the Roar was **about as close to perfect** as it gets.

There is no better occasion than the changing of seasons to reflect and tell a few people how much they mean to you than with a thoughtful menu and a warm, inviting dinner.



M E N U

*FALL HARVEST
MENU*

**Warm Gazpacho with
Heirloom Tomatoes,
Sweet Corn and Foie
Gras Croutons**

**Grilled Stuffed Leg of
Lamb with Oil Cured
Olives, Figs and
Braised Onions**

**String and Shell Bean
Ragout with Mint-
Parsley Pistou**

*Roar Wines Santa Lucia
Highlands Garys' Vineyard
2001*

**Olive Oil Cake with
Fresh Grape Compote
and Black Pepper
Crème Fraiche**



ON THE MENU: A Fall Harvest Menu

WARM GAZPACHO WITH HEIRLOOM TOMATOES, SWEET CORN AND FOIE GRAS CROUTONS

Yields 4 servings

FOR GAZPACHO:

- 2 cups red heirloom tomatoes, seeded and diced
- ½ cup yellow pepper, diced
- ½ cup cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, quartered
- 2 cups fresh corn kernels
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons aged sherry vinegar
- 1 tablespoon tarragon leaves
- 1 tablespoon parsley leaves
- 1 cup filtered water or vegetable stock
- Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

FOR CROUTONS:

- 3 ounces fresh foie gras cut into ½" cubes seasoned and well chilled
- 6 slices bread from thin baguette
- Salt and pepper to taste

1. In a medium sized bowl place all soup ingredients, reserving 1 cup of corn. Season and let marinate for 1 hour.
2. Heat a heavy sauté pan until very hot and with your ventilation system on high sear the foie gras until brown on one side turn and sear 1 more minute.
3. Remove seared foie gras and all fat to a cold plate and cool on counter.
4. Turn broiler on, brush bread slices on both sides with foie gras fat and toast on both sides under broiler until golden brown.
5. Purée soup in batches in blender until very smooth and strain through a double mesh strainer.
6. Place soup and reserved corn in pot and heat over medium heat until just warmed through. Do not cook too long or heat before you are ready to serve or soup will lose its fresh taste.

TO SERVE:

1. Ladle soup into bowls, place a crouton in center of soup, place a few cubes of foie gras on each crouton and drizzle about a tablespoon of fat around each soup.
2. If fat has set up just place in microwave for about 15 seconds or on warm spot on stove for a few minutes before using.

GRILLED STUFFED LEG OF LAMB WITH OIL CURED OLIVES, FIGS AND BRAISED ONIONS

Yields 4 servings

- 1 7-8 pound whole leg of lamb, shank bone attached and thigh bone removed (have this done by your butcher)
- ¾ cup red onion, diced
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ cup oil cured olives, pitted and quartered
- ½ cup black mission figs, diced
- 1 tablespoon rosemary, chopped
- ¼ cup parsley, chopped
- Salt and fresh ground pepper
- Butchers twine

1. Turn gas grill on low heat and close lid to preheat.
2. Place red onion, red wine and honey in sauté pan over medium heat and reduce until pan is dry. Remove to plate to cool.
3. Trim excess fat from lamb leaving only a very thin layer.
4. In a small bowl combine onions, olives, figs, rosemary, parsley and season to taste.
5. Lay leg of lamb cut side up, lay open, season with salt and fresh pepper and fill with stuffing. Overstuff slightly as some will fall out when you tie up the leg.
6. Fold lamb over stuffing, turn so shank bone is at 12 o'clock and starting at shank, tie twine to bone and tie up like a roast to the thigh end. If you are not familiar with how to do this you can cut lengths of string that fit around leg comfortably and tie pieces snugly around leg every inch and a half. Try to

ON THE MENU: A Fall Harvest Menu

keep leg at an even diameter as this will help ensure even cooking.

7. Season lamb on all sides generously with salt and pepper.
8. Place on upper rack of your grill with cut side up for about 20 minutes or until well caramelized. Turn and repeat process, then move leg to one side of grill and turn burner off on the side that the meat is on to cook using indirect heat. Cook an additional 20-30 minutes for medium rare or about 130 degrees F in the thickest part of the thigh. If you do not have an upper rack on your grill, it's OK to cook the lamb on the lower grill. This will shorten your initial cooking time when caramelizing the meat, so just add the time difference to the final cooking step. (Note: All cooking is done with lid closed on grill.)

TO SERVE:

1. When finished remove the lamb to a platter and let rest for a minimum of 20 minutes. Before you slice the meat into ¼-inch thick slices pour juices into small bowl or cup for use in bean ragout.

STRING AND SHELL BEAN RAGOUT WITH MINT-PARSLEY PISTOU

Yields 4 servings

FOR RAGOUT:

- 1 cup fresh shell beans, cooked
- 1 cup French green beans
- 1 cup yellow wax beans
- 1 cup romano beans
- ½ cup vegetable stock or water
- Resting juices from lamb
- 2 tablespoons butter
- Salt and fresh pepper to taste

FOR PISTOU:

- 2 tablespoons mint, chopped
- 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
- 1 tablespoon shallot, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1. In 1 gallon of boiling salted water, blanch French, yellow wax and romano beans individually for 3 minutes each and then shock in ice water.
2. In a small bowl mix pistou ingredients and season to taste.
3. With a small knife cut French and yellow wax beans in half with a bias cut. Cut romano beans to similar size as other beans with a bias cut as well.
4. In a pot large enough to hold all ingredients heat stock or water over medium high heat.
5. When simmering, add all beans and the reserved juices from the lamb and season with salt and pepper; cook for 5 minutes.
6. Add pistou, butter and stir until butter has melted and slightly thickened juices.

TO SERVE:

1. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed, then spoon onto platter or into wide bottomed bowl.

OLIVE OIL CAKE WITH FRESH GRAPE COMPOTE AND BLACK PEPPER CRÈME FRAICHE

Yields 4 servings

OLIVE OIL CAKE:

- 4 large eggs at room temperature
- ½ cup sugar
- Zest of 1 lemon, finely grated
- 2/3 cup semolina flour
- 1/3 cup unbleached all purpose flour
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ¼ cup good olive oil
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Sift the dry ingredients into a bowl.
3. Butter an 8-inch round cake pan and line the bottom with a buttered piece of parchment paper.
4. Place eggs in bowl of hot water to warm.

ON THE MENU: A Fall Harvest Menu

5. Crack eggs into bowl and beat using an electric mixer on medium-high speed, gradually adding sugar. Beat 4-8 minutes--depending on type of mixer you have--until the mixture falls from the beaters in a thick ribbon.

6. Fold in lemon zest and then sprinkle dry ingredients in over mixture and gently fold in a third at a time. Then quickly but gently fold in the olive oil and vanilla extract at the same time.

7. Pour batter into pan and bake for 30-35 minutes or until a tooth pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes, run a knife around the edge of cake and invert onto a wire rack to cool.

GRAPE COMPOTE:

1 cup fresh grape juice

½ cup good red wine (a Pinot would work)

¼ cup honey

½ cup globe grapes, halved

½ cup red grapes, halved

½ cup black grapes, halved

Pinch salt

Additional honey to taste if needed

1. Combine grape juice, red wine and honey in a stainless steel pot and reduce over low heat by half.

2. Thicken by adding a tablespoon of cornstarch mixed with a tablespoon of red wine off the heat and then placing back on the heat until it boils. Cool completely before using, this can be made a day ahead.

3. One hour before serving, combine all grapes with reduced grape juice, salt and more honey to taste, if needed.

FOR CRÈME FRAICHE:

¾ cup crème fraîche

1 teaspoon sugar

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Pinch salt

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and beat with whisk until mixture just begins to get stiff. This is best done one hour before serving so flavors can come together.

TO SERVE:

1. When cake is cool cut into 6-8 wedges. Place a wedge of cake on each plate, spoon a ¼-cup of compote onto each plate and over the tip of the cake. Place a large dollop of crème fraîche on compote and garnish with a twist of black pepper if desired. Cake can also be plated on platter in a similar fashion for a family style presentation.

Michael Dotson is a fellow Pinot Noir lover and chef de cuisine at Evvia Estiatorio in Palo Alto, Calif. His culinary journey has included Au Crocodile in Strasbourg, France; PlumpJack Café and the Slow Club in San Francisco, PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn and Sonoma's Heirloom Restaurant. Michael can be reached by email at cheldotson@pinotreport.com

[PNR]

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MENU FOR PINOT NOIR?

Do you have a favorite menu for Pinot Noir? I'd love to hear about it! Send me the details as well as the Pinot Noirs you like to pair with the menu to gswalter@pinotreport.com.

PINOTREPORT

You're reading more
than just another
wine-review newsletter

**Subscribe Today.
Get The Report.**

To Order, See Page 12 or visit
www.pinotreport.com

PINOTREPORT

ORDER FORM

To order online, please visit www.pinotreport.com

Yes! Please sign me up for **PinotReport** at the **special Charter Subscriber rate** indicated below:

ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION

- 1 year (12 issues) of **PinotReport** delivered by email. **Special Charter Subscriber Price: \$75.00 per year.**
 2 years (24 issues) of **PinotReport** delivered by email. **Special Charter Subscriber Price: \$135.00 per year.**
Email Format Options: HTML Text (Choose the option that best suits your email program)

PRINT SUBSCRIPTION:

- 1 year (12 issues) of **PinotReport** delivered by First Class Mail. **Special Charter Subscriber Price: \$125.00 per year.**
 2 years (24 issues) of **PinotReport** delivered by First Class Mail **Special Charter Subscriber Price: \$225.00 per year.**
Delivery Method Options: First Class Mail Fax Fax Number: _____

****International Print Subscription Orders: please add \$25.00 to cover additional airmail postage.****

IS THIS A GIFT ORDER? YES NO If YES, please follow the directions below.

1. ORDER INFORMATION

MAILING ADDRESS (You or recipient if gift order)

Name

Company

Address

City, State Zip

Country

Phone (in case we have a question)

Email Address

BILLING ADDRESS (You if credit card and/or gift order)

Name

Company

Address

City, State Zip

Country

Phone (in case we have a question)

Email Address

(For gifts, attach any gift message to this form)

2. PAYMENT INFORMATION

- CHECK payable to PINOTREPORT (US Funds)
 VISA American Express
 Mastercard

Card Number

Expiration Date (MM/YY)

Card Verification Value (**Required** for credit card orders)*

* The Card Verification Value (CVV) is required by our bank for credit card orders. The CVV is a three- (MC, VISA) or four-digit (AMEX) number printed on the signature panel on the BACK of your credit card just following your credit card number. We use the CVV as a key security check to fight against credit card fraud.

3. TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

Please tell us if you are a:

- Consumer Distributor Sales
 Wine retailer Winemaker
 Restaurateur Marketing/PR
 Winery Owner Wine Media

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER!

Please complete the form above. If paying by check, make it payable to PinotReport and enclose form and payment in an envelope and mail to: PinotReport, PO Box 2051, Sonoma, CA 95476. You can also fax this form to 707.996.6735. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of first issue. For any questions, call 707.935.0326 or email gswalter@pinotreport.com.

PNR0310