

# PINOTREPORT

for people passionate about western pinot noir

Issue No. 14

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www.pinotreport.com

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## Out In Pinot Country...

**THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO BE A PINOT NOIR FAN.** As I make my way around Pinot Country, tasting with and talking to winemakers and grape growers, and as I taste and evaluate Pinots at my office here in Sonoma, I am not only amazed at the quality of wines I'm seeing, but also the focused intensity, passion and optimism of those who grow and make these terrific wines.

**We're in the midst of what might be the biggest worldwide renaissance in Pinot Noir** since the secular population of 17<sup>th</sup> century Burgundy (and especially their political leaders) figured out what the church had known for some time: that Pinot Noir from the Côte d'Or made some pretty special wines.

Whether you're in California, Oregon or beyond, Pinot Noir has never been as good as it is today.

### *Vintage Update And Outlook*

Most of the Pinots I've tasted for review lately are from the 2001 vintage. An excellent vintage, **2001 is several steps above 2000 for most Pinots**, producing wines that are as big and powerful, but much better balanced and structured. Most 2001s are more elegant than their 2000 counterparts and because of their excellent balance are generally drinkable from release (depending on your individual preference) but many will benefit from a couple of years in the cellar. **These are wines that absolutely should be part of your collection or consumption strategies.**

For me, the big news is vintage 2002. In last fall's **Special Harvest Report (Issue #7)** we heard winemakers from up and down the West Coast rave about the quality of the fruit and the harvest conditions for 2002. After extensive tastings all around Pinot country, I can report that those comments last fall were not just overly optimistic cheerleading. **The 2002 Pinots are incredible.**

[ continued on the next page... ]

## OUT IN PINOT COUNTRY

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Just about every wine I've tasted from barrel, while obviously in the very early stages of development, **has been uncommonly good** with incredibly rich, forward fruit, great acidity and structure and unbelievable balance. Remember, these are the barrel samples. I truly believe that 2002 is the best vintage in both California and Oregon since 1994, and it might even be better than 1994 in terms of overall, across-the-board quality

**So, how do you buy these two vintages?** I would be planning financially for my 2002 purchases (you know: home equity loan, second or third job, etc.) and **I would buy as much as I could afford.** That having been said, **I would not ignore the excellent 2001 Pinots** that are on the market now and that will continue to be released over the coming months. This is a good opportunity (prices aside) to stock up on two excellent vintages that will age nicely in your cellar while also providing you with terrific wines for current drinking.

### ***Anderson Valley Pinot Fest***

It's a little late coming out now, but I wanted to pass on my notes and comments on a terrific Pinot event I attended in mid May. **The Anderson Valley Pinot Noir Festival** is actually a three-day event, beginning with a technical conference on Friday, May 16. I attended the main consumer event on Saturday, May 17 at Pacific

Echo Cellars just outside Philo at the western end of the Anderson Valley.

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*"I truly believe that 2002 is the best vintage in both California and Oregon since 1994, and it might even be better than 1994 in terms of overall, across-the-board quality"*

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A big white tent housed the walk-around tasting of 20 wineries producing Pinots from Anderson Valley grapes: **Brutocao Cellars, Christine Woods Winery, Claudia Springs Winery, Copain, Elke Vineyards, Esterlina Vineyards, Goldeneye, Greenwood Ridge, Handley, Husch, Ici-La/Bas, Lazy Creek, Londer Vineyards, Navarro Vineyards, Pacific Echo, Raye's Hill Vineyards & Winery, Roederer Estate, Roessler Cellars, Skewis Wines and Williams Selyem Winery.** A country barbeque by **Zaks Catering** and a Pinot and cheese pairing by **Cheeseworks West** rounded out the afternoon.

That evening several area wineries teamed up to host five

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### ***PinotReport***

For People Passionate About Western Pinot Noir

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#### **Gregory S. Walter**

Editor and Publisher

**Michael Dotson**, Contributing Editor

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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 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  
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## OUT IN PINOT COUNTRY

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special winery dinners around the valley. The event concluded on Sunday with winery open houses.

This is the kind of smaller Pinot event where you actually have the opportunity to **spend a little time meeting winemakers and winery owners**, rather than the “fire and fall back” approach so common at the larger consumer tastings. Add to that the beauty of Anderson Valley on a late spring day and the proximity of the Mendocino coast and you have an event that should be on your calendar. For information on next year’s event check out the website at [www.avwines.com](http://www.avwines.com).

### ***Happy Birthday to PinotReport!***

With the last issue (#13), **PinotReport** completed its first year of publication. We celebrated around here with—what else—some terrific Pinot and a great home-grilled dinner of wild king salmon and fresh white corn. We toasted to success, sound corks and everyone (**including you loyal readers**) who has made **PinotReport’s** first year as rewarding and fun as it has been. It just doesn’t get much better than that. Or so I thought...

### ***A Great Birthday Present!***

About the same time as our first birthday, **PinotReport**

#### **WINE newsletters**

Want to sound like an insider when you talk about wine? Pick up one of these ultraniche newsletters, which offer an expert’s opinion on a specific region, grape or price point.

1. In his monthly **PinotReport**, Gregory S. Walter, a former editor at *Wine Spectator*, concentrates on Pinot Noir from America’s West Coast, and that’s it. Each month he provides a companionable mix of news, Pinot Noir-friendly recipes and reliable ratings, written in an upbeat—sometimes too upbeat—tone. Expect commentary like “Wow!” or “Killer Pinot!” (\$125 for 12 issues; [www.pinotreport.com](http://www.pinotreport.com)).

--*Food & Wine*, May 2003, Page 35

was featured, along with two other specialty wine newsletters, in the May issue of **Food & Wine magazine**. For those of you who didn’t see it, look elsewhere on this page for what **Food & Wine** had to say:

That about says it all!

Many, many thanks to Editor-in-Chief **Dana Cowin** and Wine Editor **Lettie Teague** at **Food & Wine** for the very cool mention and the endorsement of what we’re doing.

### ***Pinot Lovers Unite!***

For a while, I’ve been thinking that **Pinot Noir needs an organization with the sole purpose of promoting the enjoyment and growth of Pinot** through education, research sponsorship, seminars and tasting events—much like ZAP does for Zinfandel. **I think that PinotReport should get the ball rolling** to create this combined consumer and producer organization. What do you think? What would you call it? Would you want to be a member? I’d love to hear your thoughts on this—send an email to me at [gswalter@pinotreport.com](mailto:gswalter@pinotreport.com) and let me know what you think either way.

### ***In This Issue...***

In this issue, we’ve got reviews of some great new Pinot Noir releases from producers like **Acacia**, **Davis Bynum**, **Etude**, **Elk Cove**, **El Molino**, **Patz & Hall** and **Van Duzer**. Meanwhile, **Michael Dotson** lights the grill and prepares an awesome menu for the outdoor season.

In our next issue, look for a **Special Tasting Report** on **Pinot Gris** and **Pinot Noir Rosé** wines. These wines are the perfect choices when you need a refreshing, cool wine for your summer entertaining.

As always, I welcome your comments and hope you enjoy this latest issue.

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

## IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

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### 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

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#### Acacia Winery

##### *Pinot Noir Carneros St. Clair Vineyard Single Vineyard Selection 2001*

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Medium-deep ruby purple color; red cherry, plum, hint of rose aromas; rich deep red cherry and plum, full but elegant; moderate toasty oak, balanced with a long finish. Terrific balance and elegance. Like all of these Acacia single vineyard wines, these wines are best when allowed time to open up.

**496 cases made      \$50      Score: 92**

#### Acacia Winery

##### *Pinot Noir Carneros Beckstoffer Las Amigas Vineyard Single Vineyard Selection 2001*

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Deep ruby purple color; spice, black cherry and berry aromas with a touch of anise; big full style with lots of concentrated black cherry, dried fruit, spice, anise and toasty oak notes; full, balanced with good structure and a long finish. This vineyard is what's left of the original vineyard planted by Louis Martini in the 1950s and is where the Martini clone originated. This wine is a great tribute to that legacy; big and bold with lots of flavor. Make sure you give it some air before serving!

**556 cases made      \$60      Score: 92**

#### Acacia Winery

##### *Pinot Noir Carneros Lee Vineyard Single Vineyard Selection 2001*

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Deep ruby purple color; black cherry, blackberry, dried

flowers, clove, spice; big, full, lush black cherry and blackberry, complex spice flavors lots of dried fruit and floral notes, long finish. Incredible concentration and depth—this wine needs time in the glass before it really blooms. Lee Vineyard is a terrific dry-farmed vineyard that has been part of the Acacia Pinot program since the winery's beginnings in 1979.

**145 cases made      \$50      Score: 93**

#### Chalone Vineyard

##### *Pinot Noir Chalone 2001*

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Deep ruby purple color; spice, dried herbs, rose petals and deep cherry and plum aromas; big and full on mouth, lots of extracted fruit, deep, concentrated flavors without being overpowering; cherry, plum and spice flavors dominate; good structure with a long finish. According to winemaker Dan Karlsen, this vintage is the first to benefit from extensive replanting at Chalone and it shows. A terrific Pinot at a great price!

**10,500 cases made      \$25      Score: 91**

#### Davis Bynum Winery

##### *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Rochioli Vineyard Le Pinot 2000*

---

Deep ruby purple color; deep concentrated black cherry and blackberry and spice aromas; big on mouth with berry and intense spice and toasty oak flavors; long finish. Only a few wineries have access to grapes from the east block of Joe Rochioli's vineyard. This is a big Pinot with a long life ahead.

**51 cases made      \$80      Score: 90**

#### El Molino Winery

##### *Pinot Noir Napa Valley 2000*

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Medium ruby purple color; black cherry and plum aromas, with a lavender-dried floral note; delicious black cherry and plum flavors, complex spice, lavender, herbal components, great balance and structure, long finish. This wine is wonderfully balanced to showcase the pretty fruit and lavender flavors.

**900 cases made      \$51      Score: 92**

#### Flying Goat Cellars

##### *Pinot Noir Santa Maria Valley Dierberg Vineyard 2001*

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Light-medium ruby color; red cherry and red plum notes with a slight meaty note on nose; red cherry and plum flavors carry the palate with slight meaty and toasty oak notes on finish. Great balance and flavor give this Pinot lots of food possibilities.

**315 cases made      \$32      Score: 91**

### MAKE ROOM IN THE CELLAR!

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*"A truly incredible wine..."*

#### Etude Wines

##### *Pinot Noir Carneros Heirloom 2000*

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Medium ruby purple color; deep, complex aromas with blackberry, spice and pepper notes; big and full with lots of deep blackberry and black cherry flavors; moderate tannin, complex toasty oak notes that give an impression of sweetness, great structure and balance, full long finish. This wine is quite an achievement; a statement of just how concentrated and complex Carneros Pinot Noir can be. A truly incredible wine.

**300 cases made      \$80      Score: 94**

## IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

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### **Greenwood Ridge Vineyards** ***Pinot Noir Mendocino Ridge 2000***

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Medium-deep ruby purple color; deep earthy, spicy, meaty aromas with a hint of cherry fruit; lush, deep concentrated flavors that lean more toward meaty and spicy; interesting complex flavors that linger to the finish. This Pinot is pretty close to a textbook example of an intense cooler-climate style.

**345 cases made      \$25      Score: 88**

### **Patz & Hall** ***Pinot Noir Carneros Hyde Vineyard 2001***

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Light-medium ruby color; bright black cherry and plum aromas with a hint of spice and oak; bright, forward black cherry flavors, some toasty oak, spice, nutmeg notes; great structure and balance with a long finish. Elegant yet powerful Pinot with a depth of flavor that just keeps going on and on.

**700 cases made      \$50      Score: 92**

### **Patz & Hall** ***Pinot Noir Russian River Valley 2001***

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Light-medium ruby color; spice, pepper and blackberry aromas; rich and full on palate with a moderate dose of toasty oak, lots of blackberry and black cherry notes; very well

balanced and supple; long finish. The Russian River bottling is always a pleasure to drink—beautiful balance combined with incredible depth of flavor.

**3,300 cases made      \$33      Score: 92**

### **Robledo Family Winery** ***Pinot Noir Carneros 2000***

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Light ruby red color; earthy, dried red cherry, strawberry, floral notes; concentrated dried red cherry, strawberry and floral flavors, very nice balance, lingering finish. A well balanced, easy to drink Pinot—a great match for most foods.

**250 cases made      \$27      Score: 91**

### **Schug Carneros Estate** ***Pinot Noir Carneros 2001***

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Light-medium ruby color; cherry, clove, spice aromas with a note of oak; rich mouthfeel with cherry, spice and a touch of clove, moderate oak, clean, balanced with a lingering finish. Walter Schug has definitely found his niche on the Sonoma side of Carneros; I'm liking his Pinots more and more each year.

**5,850 cases made      \$20      Score: 89**

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### **About Our Tastings**

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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**:

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

## IN THE MARKET: Pinot Reviews, New and Otherwise

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### Schug Carneros Estate

#### *Pinot Noir Carneros Heritage Reserve 2000*

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Medium-deep ruby color; cherry, spice and clove aromas; full, tannic, dried cherry flavors with clove notes, good structure, lingering finish. This is bigger, richer and deeper version of the Carneros bottling achieved through individual barrel lot selection and extended barrel aging. Drink or hold, this is great!

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**647 cases made      \$30      Score: 91**

### Schug Carneros Estate

#### *Pinot Noir Sonoma Valley 2001*

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Medium-deep ruby purple color; strawberry, cherry, slight hint of mint or sage on nose; medium bodied with strawberry and cherry flavors, bright fruit, great balance and a silky finish. This Pinot's bright fruit is due in part to aging the wine mostly in large oak casks (ranging in size from 300-600 gallons), therefore minimizing the tannins and toasty oak character. A pleasure to drink!

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**6,131 cases made      \$15      Score: 90**

### ZD Wines

#### *Pinot Noir Carneros 2001*

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Medium-deep ruby purple color; concentrated, jammy berry notes, spicy aromas; jammy berry-cherry fruit, flavors of tea and spice, full in the mouth, concentrated with a lingering finish. Another very nice Pinot from ZD; great for near-term drinking but has the structure for a bit of age as well.

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**3,800 cases made      \$34      Score: 89**

## OREGON

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### Domaine Drouhin Oregon

#### *Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Cuvee Louise Drouhin 2000*

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Medium-deep ruby purple color; lots of spice, tea and black cherry aromas with a touch of toasty oak; deep, round and rich on the palate with concentrated red and black cherry flavors; very lush and silky in the mouth; great structure and a long full finish. This is an intense Pinot now with much potential for future growth in the cellar.

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**190 cases made      \$75      Score: 93**

### Elk Cove Vineyards

#### *Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2001*

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Light-medium ruby color; black cherry, spice aromas with slight bacon notes; rich full flavors, lots of black cherry and spice flavors, hint of bacon and smoked meat adds complexity; good structure, balance and a long finish. There's a lot to like

in this Pinot—delicious flavors, great balance and a great price.

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**7,000 cases made      \$20      Score: 91**

### Elk Cove Vineyards

#### *Pinot Noir Willamette Valley Windhill 2001*

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Medium ruby purple color; cinammon-spice, lavender, dried cherry aromas, very pretty nose; full, dried cherry and blueberry flavors, spice and lavender notes, moderate oak adds complexity through the finish. The aromas of this Pinot are so pretty, you almost expect the flavors to be a let down. Not so. More elegant than some previous vintages, but still intense and flavorful.

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**298 cases made      \$32      Score: 91**

### King Estate Winery

#### *Pinot Noir Oregon 2000*

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Medium ruby purple color; black cherry, berry aromas with spice and earthy notes; spicy black cherry flavors with a touch of oak, lively acidity and a lingering finish. Bright and lively style of Pinot with lots to like.

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**14,500 cases made      \$22      Score: 88**

### Van Duzer Vineyards

#### *Pinot Noir Willamette Valley 2001*

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Light-medium ruby purple color; earthy, jammy berry and spice aromas; berry and black cherry flavors with spicy notes, a bit tannic and bitter with some earthy flavors; long finish. Big, earthy style of Pinot that's best with a hearty meal.

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**3,000 cases made      \$19      Score: 86**

[PNR]

## SMART BUY!

*"Beautiful, concentrated Pinot..."*

### Sebastiani Vineyards

#### *Pinot Noir Russian River Valley Appellation Selection 2001*

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Medium-deep ruby purple color; deep, concentrated black cherry, berry, spice aromas with a touch of black pepper and allspice; rich and full with lots of deep black cherry fruit, toasty oak and spicy notes that keep going and going through the finish; great structure and balance. WOW! This beautiful, concentrated Pinot is a great step forward for Sebastiani and for winemaker Mark Lyon.

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**1,170 cases made      \$22      Score: 92**

# It's Time For Summer Grilling...

*The 'Outdoor Season' Is Ideal For Picnic-Inspired Barbeque Menus*

By Michael Dotson

AS THE ECONOMY CONTINUES TO SLOWLY MEANDER its way toward a turn for the better, it's a good time to relax outdoors with friends and family and enjoy food that is comforting and soul satisfying. And as the days get warmer and summer finally settles in, it's only natural to do your cooking outdoors as well. Outdoor grilling is truly one of my favorite cooking methods. This month I've created a grill-focused, picnic-inspired menu with a contemporary twist.

The first course started out as a salad built on my fond memories of good coleslaw. In creating a simplified, dressed up version I used shaved fennel in place of cabbage and replaced the mayonnaise with a bright, rich mustard vinaigrette. The dish became more of a first course when I added the grilled porcini mushrooms on a rosemary skewer and sprinkled it all with crunchy, nutty toasted garlic. This course is best with a dry, chilled Rosé of Pinot Noir. The bright acidity will match nicely with the vinaigrette and fennel while the tannins cut through the earthy richness of the mushrooms.

A mainstay in the American diet, especially in summer, is the hamburger. It's a comfort food that is really fun to play around with and personalize. For this dish, I've used lamb and mint to give the common hamburger an interesting, contemporary Mediterranean flavor. Grilling the potatoes and sprinkling them with lavender salt is a delicious change from potato salad. This dish is a great match with a Pinot Noir from the Willamette Valley with flavors of ripe blueberry and spice—a sublime combination.

The final course was inspired by a baked apricot dish I love to do when these quintessential summer fruits are at their sweetest. Here, I've transformed the apricots into something truly unique and tasty by quickly marinating them in lemon thyme and walnut oil and then grilling them to add the subtle smoke from the grill. Filling the apricots with the walnut-infused mascarpone and drizzling the whole unctuous combination with orange blossom honey finishes it with a flair. This dish has a bit of elegance to it that is best enjoyed with a Demi-Sec Champagne. The toasty yeast and slight sweetness of the bubbly make for a perfect match with the fruit, honey and nuts.

This menu is simple, delicious and will bring back your own familiar associations. Enjoy it the next time you've got a warm Sunday evening and a family meal to prepare.

*Michael Dotson is a fellow Pinot Noir lover and chef de cuisine at Euvia 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 [chefdotson@pinotreport.com](mailto:chefdotson@pinotreport.com)*



M E N U

**SUMMER GRILLING  
TIME**

**Grilled Rosemary  
Porcini Mushroom  
Skewers with Shaved  
Fennel, Toasted Garlic  
and Mustard  
Vinaigrette**

*Dry Rosé of Pinot Noir*

**Grilled Lamb Burgers  
with Mint Pistou,  
Cumin Mayonnaise  
and Lavender Grilled  
Potatoes**

*Elk Cove Vineyards Willamette  
Valley Windhill 2001*

*Chalone Vineyard Chalone  
2001*

**Lemon Thyme Grilled  
Apricots with Walnut  
Mascarpone and  
Orange Blossom  
Honey**

*Demi-Sec Champagne*



## ON THE MENU: Summer Grilling Menu

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### GRILLED ROSEMARY PORCINI MUSHROOM SKEWERS WITH SHAVED FENNEL, TOASTED GARLIC AND MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE

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Yields 4 servings

- 4 large porcini mushrooms, quartered
- 4 sprigs rosemary, 7 inches long each and cleaned of all leaves but the last inch on top
- 2 heads fennel
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced thin
- 11 tablespoons mustard vinaigrette (see recipe below)
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Olive oil for grilling
- 2 cups grapeseed oil for frying

1. Thread 4 pieces of mushroom onto each skewer, brush with olive oil and season each with salt and pepper.
2. In heavy bottom skillet, heat grapeseed oil over low heat to 300 degrees F. Add garlic slices and cook until golden brown; use a slotted spoon to transfer slices to a paper towel-lined plate.
3. Place skewers on a preheated grill over low heat and cook for about 3 minutes per side.
4. While mushrooms are cooking, use a mandolin or other slicer to thinly slice each head of fennel starting at the top.
5. Toss fennel with 3 tablespoons of mustard vinaigrette and season with salt and pepper.

#### FOR MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE:

- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon yellow miso
- 1 tablespoon shallot, finely diced
- 3 tablespoons water
- ¼ cup Champagne vinegar
- 1 cup canola oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

1. Place first 5 ingredients in mixing bowl. Whisk in canola oil slowly to emulsify and season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Recipe makes more than is needed, so save the rest for another use.

#### TO SERVE:

1. Divide fennel between 4 plates, spreading out to cover bottom of each plate. Place skewer in center, sprinkle with garlic chips and drizzle each plate with 2 tablespoons mustard vinaigrette.

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### GRILLED LAMB BURGERS WITH MINT PISTOU, CUMIN MAYONNAISE AND LAVENDER GRILLED POTATOES

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Yields 4 servings

- 12 ounces fresh ground lamb
- 12 ounces fresh ground chuck
- ¼ cup roasted red pepper, minced
- 1 teaspoon ground dry fennel
- ¾ cup mint, chopped fine
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup plus 8 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup good-quality mayonnaise mixed with 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 4 hamburger buns, preferably whole wheat
- 20 small red potatoes
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Lavender salt

1. Mix lamb and chuck with red pepper, fennel, 4 teaspoons salt and ground pepper. Form meat mixture into 6-ounce patties, a little larger in diameter than your hamburger buns. (Note: Do not make burgers more than 2 hours ahead as the salt will leach out water from the patties.)
2. To make pistou, mix mint, ½ cup olive oil, garlic and season with salt and pepper.
3. Preheat grill to medium high.
4. Place potatoes (see steps below) cut-side down on grill, season burgers and place on grill.
5. Grill burgers until desired temperature (about 6 minutes per side for medium rare).
6. Remove burgers and potatoes to plate to rest, while you quickly toast hamburger buns on grill.

## ON THE MENU: Summer Grilling Menu

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### FOR LAVENDER POTATOES:

1. Bring one gallon of salted water to boil. Cut potatoes in half and blanch for 12 minutes, strain and place in a bowl.
2. Toss with 4 tablespoons olive oil and lavender salt to taste.

### TO SERVE:

1. Spread bottom of each bun with cumin mayonnaise, place burger on, dress with a couple tablespoons of pistou.
  2. Place on plate and prop top of bun up against burger.
  3. Divide potatoes among plates and place next to burger.
- Note: Traditional burger condiments can also be served on the side.

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### LEMON THYME GRILLED APRICOTS WITH WALNUT MASCARPONE AND ORANGE BLOSSOM HONEY

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Yields 4 servings

6 ripe apricots, halved, with stones removed

- 1 tablespoon lemon thyme leaves
- 1 cup imported mascarpone cheese
- ½ cup toasted walnut halves, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons walnut oil
- 8 tablespoons orange blossom honey

1. Gently toss apricots in a bowl with lemon thyme leaves, walnut oil and a pinch of salt.
2. In a separate bowl, mix mascarpone with toasted walnuts and a pinch of salt and set aside.
3. On grill preheated to medium high, place apricots cut-side down for about 2 minutes, then turn over and cook an additional 2-3 minutes or until they just start to soften.

### TO SERVE:

1. Place three apricots in the center of each plate, fill each with a heaping tablespoon of cheese mix, drizzle with two tablespoons of honey each and garnish with whole pieces of the remaining toasted walnuts.

[PNR]

# PINOTREPORT

***PinotReport* is more than just another wine-review newsletter:**

- **Focus:** Pinot Noir from California, Oregon and other Western regions.
- **News:** Reporting of interest to consumers and the trade.
- **Features:** Profiles on the key Pinot people, wineries and events.
- **Tasting Reports:** Each issue contains the latest wine reviews.
- **On The Menu:** An original menu designed specifically for Pinot.
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