VARIETAL FOCUS:

Pinot Gris

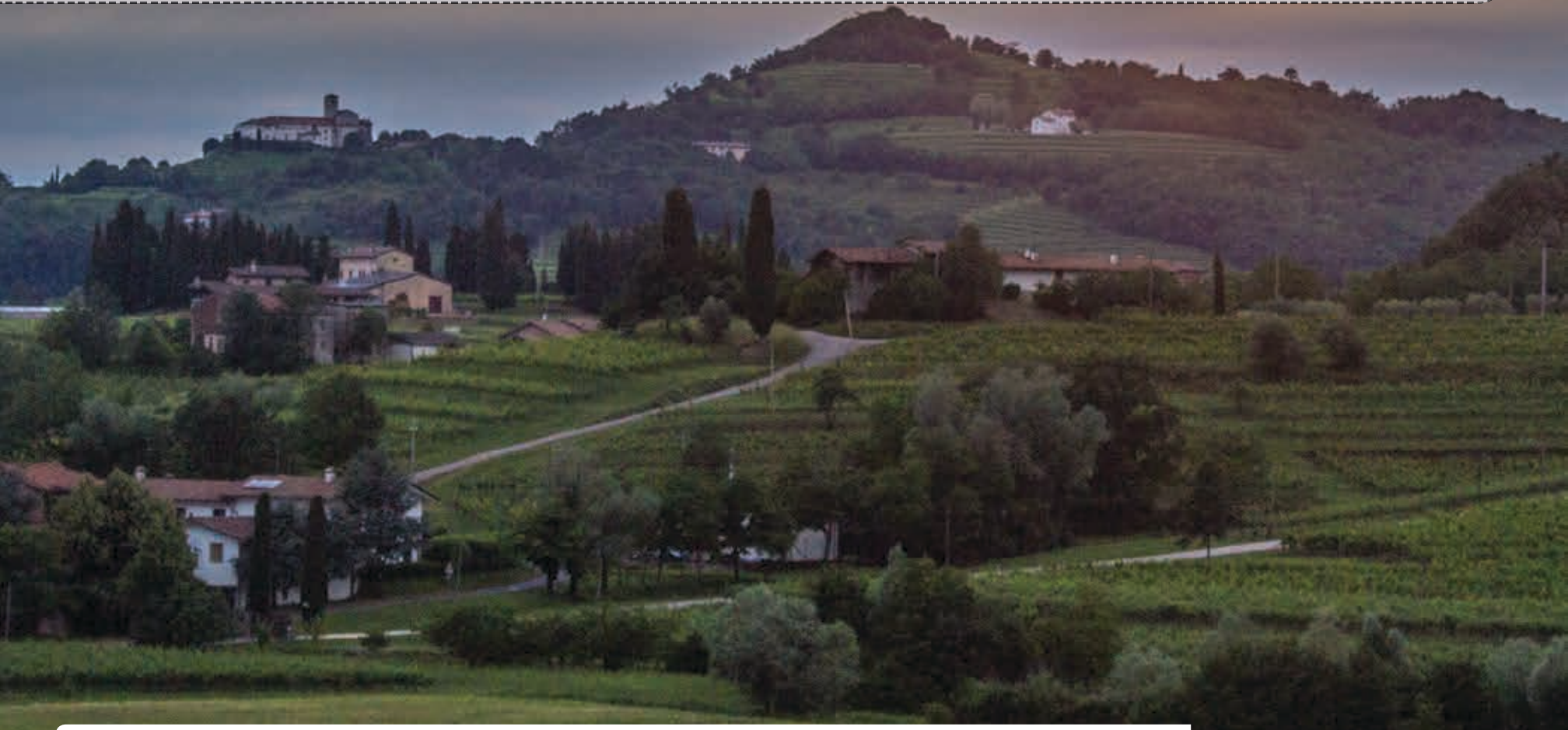
Lance Cutler

PINOT GRIS is a white winegrape variety originally found in Burgundy, France when it was known as Pinot Beurot. It was planted in Switzerland in the 1300s and moved from there to Northern Italy, where it was called Pinot Grigio and became very popular in the late 1900s. Researchers have found that the Pinot Gris DNA profile is almost identical to Pinot Noir. They surmise that the color difference is due to a genetic mutation that occurred hundreds of years ago.

Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir grapes are indistinguishable until veraison. Both varieties share leaf shape and vine structure, and grape bunches are the same size and shape. Pinot Gris can ripen to a range of colors, from its namesake grey, to pinkish brown or even dusty purple. Even the names Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio are interchangeable for the most part, although convention follows that Alsatian Pinot Gris tends to be riper and more full-bodied than its Italian Pinot Grigio counterpart, which exhibits lighter body and more acidity.

Hundreds of years ago in Burgundy, Pinot Beurot (butter) was used to add richness to Pinot Noir, a practice that continued as late as the 1930s at which time it was forbidden. Now, the most famous Pinot Gris in France is produced in Alsace where it comprises 14 percent of the region's vineyards. Pinot Gris has been grown in Alsace for 400 years, and it used to be known as Tokay d'Alsace. The cool climate and volcanic soils allow the Pinot Gris grapes to get fully ripened, yielding a rich, full-bodied wine filled with floral aromas.

Italy stands as the world's largest producer of Pinot Grigio. Starting in Northern Italy in regions like Lombardy, the Veneto, Friuli and Alto Adige, Pinot Gris had great success as wines that were crisp and fresh with stone fruit flavors and floral aromas. As Pinot Gris plantings spread throughout Italy, it became the most popular white winegrape in the country. This popularity has resulted in some bland, mass-produced wines that have hurt the reputation of the variety.



Lance Cutler has been a working winemaker in Sonoma County for 35 years. He has been a contributing editor for *Wine Business Monthly* for more than 10 years. His unique perspective on winemaking has led to our Industry Roundtable series and our Varietal Focus series. Lance is also the author of four books, including *The Tequila Lover's Guide to Mexico*.

Pinot Gris is grown throughout the world. In Germany it is known as Rulander, in Switzerland Malvoise, in Hungary Szürkebarat. Pinot Gris is grown in both the North and South of New Zealand. It is grown in California, Washington and, especially, Oregon, where since 2000, Pinot Gris has been the number one white grape variety grown in the state. **David Lett** of **Eyrie Vineyards** planted the first American Pinot Gris vines in 1966 and produced the first Oregon Pinot Gris in 1970. **Richard** and **Nancy Ponzi**, **David Adelsheim** and **Don Lange** were early proponents of the variety. In 1991 **King Estate Winery** brought Pinot Gris onto the national stage, and they now produce close to 250,000 cases annually.

Pinot Gris is usually produced as a varietal wine. It does best, quality-wise, in cool-climate areas.

In warm regions or when it is over-cropped, it can produce bland, vapid wines. A fairly early ripener, it can be pretty vigorous. Depending on style and location, it can produce good quality fruit in the 3- to 5-tons per acre range. Flavors and aromas cover a wide spectrum, from lemon and lime citrus to stone fruit to floral blossom character. Oak is rarely used as a flavor component, but is often used in neutral forms, sometimes in conjunction with sur lie treatments and/or malolactic fermentations to increase mouthfeel and richness. Individual winemakers may leave a bit of residual sugar to balance acidity and increase palate weight. Because of its acidity, it lends itself to a wide range of foods.

For this varietal focus, we started in the Napa Valley, where the first question was, "Pinot Gris, why not Cabernet?" The obvious answer was, "We grow the Pinot Gris where the Cabernet does poorly." **Shawna Miller** from **Luna Vineyards** attempted a cross between Old World and New World styles. **Matt Reid** from **Benessere Vineyards** wanted to retain citrus and melon character, but enhance it with tropical notes of passion fruit and lemon grass. The **Terlato** family almost single-handedly created the Pinot Grigio category by importing **Santa Margherita** from Italy. Now their **Terlato Wine Group** is based in Napa, but they still make their Pinot Grigio in Italy. **Doug Fletcher**, vice president of winemaking, says they attempted to make a wine that showed fruit, but with richness and balanced acidity.

Oregon is Pinot Gris country. We got some of the true pioneers to participate in this varietal focus. **Luisa Ponzi** of Ponzi Vineyards took her family's old vine Pinot Gris and pushed it as far as she could texturally. Don Lange was also looking for texture when his **Lange Estate Winery & Vineyards** made the first Oregon Pinot Gris fermented in oak puncheons. King Estate Winery is the largest Pinot Gris producer in Oregon and winemaker **Brent Stone** said their Domaine effort is modelled in the Alsatian style. **Corey Beyer** said **Archery Summit Winery** used a concrete egg to create a mélange of the best styles in the world. **Illahe Vineyards** winemaker **Brad Ford** placed balance over aromatics for his Pinot Gris. **Aaron Lieberman** from **Iris Vineyards** tried to balance fruit and acidity to appeal to a broad audience.

PHOTO COURTESY: TERLATO VINEYARDS

Luna Vineyards

2016 Estate Pinot Grigio, 1,700 cases, $32

Shawna Miller was born in Virginia and received a B.S. degree in forestry from **Virginia Tech**. After visiting Napa Valley, she opted into the wine business. She worked at several Napa Valley wineries, including **Beaulieu Vineyards** and **Rombauer Vineyards**. She also worked in New Zealand and Australia, maximizing her learning opportunities. She is currently winemaker for **Luna Vineyards** where she has worked for eight years.

We concentrate more on Brix than either TA or pH because we want to keep the alcohol down. We also don't want the grapes to get too ripe because that brings out banana character, which we don't like.

"Grapes are harvested at night and then whole cluster-pressed where they receive 50 ppm SO_2 at the press pan. We use a Champagne cycle on the press, trying to minimize phenolics and bitterness. We usually don't need to make any acid additions. The juice gets a 2 pounds per 1,000 gallon addition of bentonite to compact lees and remove any pinking, and then a 36 hour cold soak at 40° F. We use GoFerm at the start and Fermaid O twice during fermentation, which is carried out between 55° F to 60° F. We use a wide range of yeasts. The wine is fermented mostly in stainless steel tanks with about 40 percent being fermented in five-year-old neutral barrels. Once the wine is dry, we stir the lees weekly for about six months.

"The wine gets racked at bottling, unless we have an issue, where we might rack an additional time. We cold-stabilize by chilling tanks and test to see if additional bentonite is required for heat stability. We sterile-filter using cross-flow filtration and use cork closures. The wine receives two to three months in bottle before release."

According to Miller:

"We are attempting to create a balance between Old World and New World styles of Pinot Grigio. We want crisp fruit notes of citrus, lemon and grapefruit with a rounded mouthfeel. We look for lemon pie aromas with some light flowers, like jasmine, along with lemon custard flavors in the mouth. We try to avoid bitterness and heavy phenolics.

"Our vineyard is adjacent to the river, so our soil is primarily sandy loam at an elevation of 100 feet. Vine spacing is 10x6 feet, and the vineyard is irrigated. Our clones are 146 and 154 planted on 5C and SO4 rootstock to help control vigor. Our farming practices are non-certified organic. We use no pesticides. We will drop fruit to manage crop size and do some canopy thinning, mostly on the shade side, but still want to protect from sunburn. We will thin more heavily in rainy vintages where Botrytis can be an issue.

"To pick, we look for the skins to grey and the seeds to turn brown. We want the flavors to leave the realm of green apples and move to tart lemon or lemon pie.

Tasting Notes

Miller: I get a light lemon pastry, along with light floral jasmine. There is a lot of lemon on the palate with some light honey. As this wine develops, it should go the way of honeydew and light apricot, and that is starting to happen. The acid gives it lift, and it is a warm weather friendly wine.

Reid: I think you hit your target. I get great fruit on the nose and the palate, and it is a wide range of citrus with a lot of lemon that goes into ripe lime. I get the jasmine and a hint of apricot. There is a nice texture.

Fletcher: I get a lot of the lemon custard. It is very aromatic with that custardy character, along with some lime. There is moderate weight in the middle with a firm, crisp acidity in the finish, which lends a lot of character, as well as body. Pinot Grigio can struggle a little with body. This one certainly doesn't.

Lieberman: I get more green apple and pear on the nose, and there is a nice crème brulée as well. That creaminess really comes across on the taste, along with a weighty mouthfeel with a lactic creaminess. I love the balance. They did a great job with the acidity.

Stone: I got more of the floral notes, almost rose petals and apple. I agree it was rich with creaminess. I thought the finish might be flat given the mouthfeel, but it was nice and bright, so the acidity complemented the creaminess on the palate.

Lange: I get a bit of SO_2. There is some herbal bouquet and a touch of vanilla. It is simple on the palate. This wine is a quaffer. It is straightforward, unencumbered and doesn't have a lot of pull across the palate.

Beyer: It has some nice melon characteristics with some grassy notes that I like. The nose is very subtle with hints of floral aromatics. It is delicate. Acidity is linear with some balanced nectarine flavors.

Ponzi: You can pick out that this is from a warmer climate because, while not tropical, there is some guava, passion fruit and papaya character. There is a bit of almond essence. It is more convincingly varietal in the mouth. It has nice, bright acidity with a riper note of banana. It is like Bananas Foster with that caramel, but the acid keeps it bright.

Terlato Vineyards

2016 Pinot Grigio, Friuli, $24.99

Doug Fletcher graduated from the **University of Oregon** with a degree in biology and began his winemaking career working for **Martin Ray** in the mid-1970s. He helped when **Steltzner Vineyards** started their winery in the Stags Leap District and has been working with fruit from that area ever since. He joined **Chimney Rock Winery** in 1987 and was in charge of re-planting the original estate and then supervising an additional 65-acre planting with the Terlatos in 2001. Appointed vice president of winemaking for the Terlato Wine Group in 2006, Fletcher oversees all aspects of winemaking at the Terlato properties and serves as a senior consultant to the Terlato Family's joint ventures throughout the world.

According to Fletcher:

"Our goal is to show the varietal character present in this Friuli Colli Orientali region of Northeastern Italy. The wine shows fruit aromas of lemon, honeydew and melon. It shows the fruit, but with richness and a fine balance between fruit and acid. It is not tart nor does it have high alcohol. The weight gives it a presumption of sweetness without the presence of sugar, probably because the cool, higher elevations give us full ripeness at lower sugars than normal.

"The vineyards sit on alluvial soils coming out of the Alps. These soils are mostly gravelly, providing good drainage, which is needed because we typically get a lot of rain. There are marls and sandstones alternating in layers, with the marls rich in limestone and potassium and less phosphorus. This higher potassium allows the vines to convert tartaric acid faster, giving us less total acidity when the grapes are ripe.

"There are multiple vineyards, but most are planted in 6x5 feet spacings on Kober 5bb and some SO4 rootstock, which helps us control vigor. The clones are primarily R6 (Vivai Cooperativi Rauscedo), the typical Northern Italian clone, and some 505 SMA (San Michele all'Adige) in the newer vineyards. All of the vineyards are dry-farmed. We use what the Italians call the traditional viticulture of respect, which uses only organic fertilizers. We use cover crops, till between the vines and use sulfur.

"We use a unique pruning system intended to maximize the flow of sap from the roots to the vine. This focuses on determining which buds to cut. Done right, this allows a more even flow of sap throughout the vine, providing a more even shoot push. We can do less thinning. We get even veraison, and the fruit ripens at the same time even though we are able to harvest 7 tons per acre.

"We pick based on taste and flavor, usually between 23° and 23.5° Brix. We don't worry too much about pH, but we are looking for the flavors to develop into lemon and melon, and we like to see malic acid drop some. Grapes are destemmed and membrane-pressed gently to avoid extracting color and bitterness. We settle one day at 50° F then rack to stainless steel tanks. No acid additions are necessary.

"We inoculate with selected *saccharomyces cerevisiae* and *bayanus* yeasts. We add only organic nutrition at the beginning and at a third of fermentation to obtain optimal fermentation kinetics. Wine ferments at 64° F to 68° F. This fermentation is carried out on the lees in the tank, which are stirred weekly. One to two percent is fermented in neutral barrels for six months. There is no malolactic fermentation. The wine is cold-stabilized using temperature and heat-stabilized using bentonite. The wine is sterile-filtered using cartridges and bottled using natural cork. We age in bottle at least two months."

Tasting Notes

Fletcher: It has some of that lemon curd character but less of that bright fruit with more stone fruit character but still mostly lemon. It has nice rich weight in the middle without being bitter at all. There is a nice balance between the acidity and the weight of the wine.

Reid: I get the lemon curd rather than fresh citrus. It is more of a melon, cantaloupe profile, which is really nice. It is refreshing without being simple. It would be great to quaff on a hot sunny day, but it is still interesting. Very pleasant wine.

Miller: It has a cool lemon curd quality with melons as well. There is a lovely citrus finish, more like ginger instead of some weird grapefruit. It has a lively fruit finish that I think would be very food-friendly, but it could hold up to just quaffing as well.

Stone: It has fruit on the nose, tending toward a clean pear. It has a nice round mouthfeel with pear and more zest. It is well balanced and round.

Lieberman: This wine comes across as being made from riper fruit. I get a lot of orange zest and then some blood orange and floral notes in the aroma. In the mouth it seems dry with some low acid and apple character. It finished short, and I pick up some slightly bitter phenolic notes.

Lange: It is a simple, straightforward wine with a fairly complex herbal character in the bouquet. It might be oregano or sorrel, and it is intriguing. This has a broader panorama of acid on the palate. It dances on the palate with complex acidity.

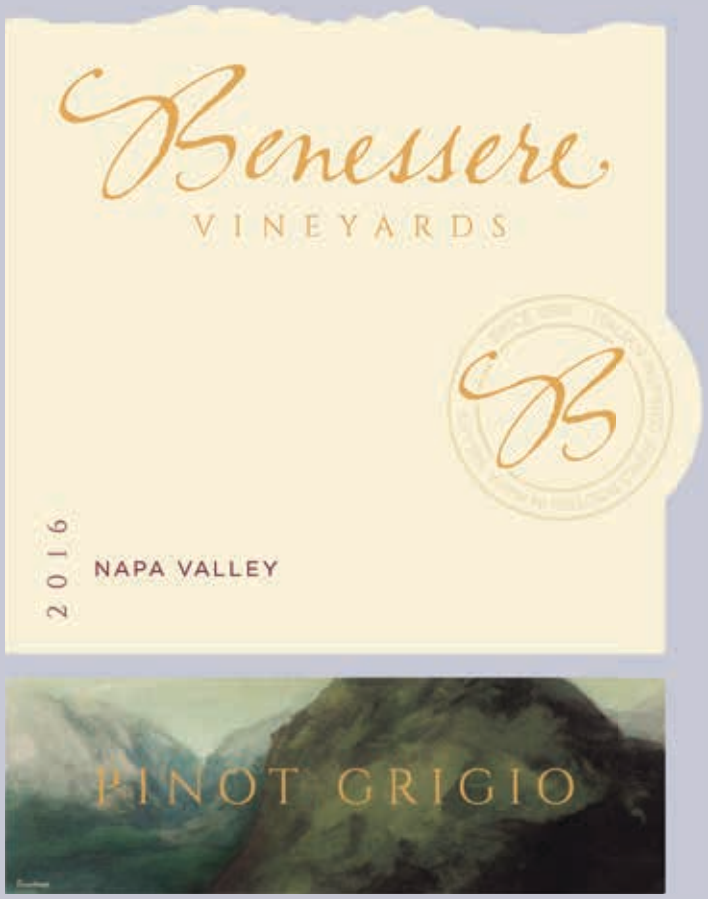
Beyer: This has more floral character on the nose, especially fennel. The palate is spread out. The acidity seems a bit softer but comes together for a nice finish. It is definitely different from the Napa wines. It is very nice wine.

Ponzi: I get a salty brininess to this. It reminds me of oyster shells. It is ripe with red apple. Very interesting wine. Pretty austere mid-palate and fairly neutral. It has nice acidity and good balance and finishes dry. It is more interesting in the nose, for sure.

Benessere Vineyards

2016 Pinot Grigio, 14.1% alc., 1,010 cases, $25

Matt Reid was born in Chicago, but moved frequently as his father chased academic work. A lifelong wine lover, he ended up in San Francisco, moving to Napa Valley in 2003 after completing his degree in viticulture and enology at **UC Davis**. He has worked at **Artesa Winery**, **Seavey Vineyards** and **Quixote**. He consults for **Burgess Cellars** and is the winemaker for Benessere Vineyards. He and his wife, **Marcy**, also have their own brand called **People's Wine Revolution**.



According to Reid:

"With all of our varietal vines I strive for varietal typicity, and the theme for Pinot is mutation. It doesn't matter if the Pinot is white, black or grey: it is going to be complex. For our Pinot Grigio, we want to retain the citrus and melon aromas and flavors, but we want to complement them with tropical passion fruit and lemon grass.

"Our grapes come from a vineyard with gravelly clay loam soils at 95 feet elevation. Vine spacing is 6x8 feet. We use clone 154 on SO4 rootstock. We farm traditionally, use minimal irrigation and harvest 4.5 tons per acre. We will pull leaves to provide shaded sunlight for the clusters. The vineyard has excellent chemistry, so TA and pH are not a concern. Flavors seem spot-on around 23° Brix, which is perfect and provides us with a finished wine at relatively low alcohol. We see nothing to be gained by waiting for the fruit to get riper.

"We whole cluster-press, taking it up to 1.4 bar, which keeps the solids low. Some color comes out, but it disappears. We add 50 mg/L of SO_2 at the press pan. There is no settling, and we ferment on the gross lees. We inoculate with Delta yeast and use yeast rehydration nutrients only because the grapes have sufficient YAN. No acid additions are necessary. Fermentation is carried out at 60° F in stainless steel tanks and lasts about 10 days to full dryness. We rack after fermentation and allow the wine to sit on the lees until we are ready to bottle. We use CelStab to cold-stabilize and usually find the wine heat-stable due to fermenting on lees. We will use bentonite if necessary. We sterile-filter via pad filtration and bottle-age three to four months before release. I love using screwcap closures. All corks, good or bad, lend aroma and/or taste to wine. I want the wine to taste like the wine I made."

Tasting Notes

Reid: I'm happy with this. I hit the notes I wanted to hit. I get the citrus, the jasmine, a little bit of melon, along with lemongrass and a hint of passion fruit. It is pretty rich on the palate even though the TA is up there, but that gives a cleansing finish.

Fletcher: This has some of that reductive, no-oxygen style. This has more of the gooseberry and lemongrass quality than the melon quality, maybe due to less oxygen in production. It is very attractive. It is a different style than the other two. It has a nice complexity.

Miller: The lemongrass is spot on and a nice difference from the lemon curd. It has a cool tropical element, along with jasmine, but the finish is what's different from the other two. It has well-managed Pinot Grigio phenolics and comes across like a refreshing tropical tea.

Stone: For me on the nose it is really clean with somewhat muted aromatics. The palate is bright and seems to be very dry with a subtle hint of complex oxidation with some green apples. I like the finish and acidity, which surprised me.

Lieberman: The aroma profile is distinctive from the Oregon wines, much riper with more red apple. The wine is not bitter, but the phenolics are higher. The taste is bright and dry with pleasant green apple flavors. This wine has a really long finish with acid that sits on the back of your palate.

Ponzi: I get some slight reduction in the nose. Then there is pineapple, which is pretty. It is more evolved, a bit maderized, but retains the banana note, kind of like banana cream pie. It is a different style but is a very pretty wine.

Beyer: The nose is delicate and subtle with some Sauvignon Blanc character, along with cantaloupe. The fruit on the palate seems a bit lifted, and there is a bit of sweetness on the finish, but nice acidity carries it through.

Lange: This had a grassy, sort of Sauvignon Blanc, juniper character in the bouquet. I get quite a bit of that on the palate as well. It has more palate presence and more pull through on the finish than the Luna.

VARIETAL FOCUS:

Pinot Gris

DATA SHEET

NAPA

WINERY	LUNA VINEYARDS	TERLATO VINEYARDS	BENESSERE VINEYARDS
Wine	**2016 Estate Pinot Grigio**	**2016 Terlato Vineyards Pinot Grigio Friuli**	**2016 Pinot Grigio**
Blend	100% Pinot Grigio	100% Pinot Grigio	100% Pinot Grigio
Winemaker	**Shawna Miller**	**Pierpaolo** and **Luca Sirch**	**Matt Reid**
Style Goals	A food-friendly expression of Napa Pinot Grigio with a balance between Old World and New World styles with crisp fruit notes and a rounded mouthfeel.	Create an elegant, terroir-driven wine with more flavor and a crisp finish. Bright aromas of white peach, pear and spring flowers. Complex and layered with mouth-filling texture and a crisp, mineral finish.	Looking for varietal typicity, which means retaining the citrus and melon aromas and flavors, but complemented with tropical passion fruit and lemongrass.
AVA	Napa	100% Estate, multiple vineyards	Oak Knoll District
Vineyard	Luna Estate	Friuli Colli Orientali (Italy)	Napa Valley
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Sandy loam	Alternating layers of marls and sandstones, called "Flysch"; Rich in limestone and potassium	Gravelly clay loam
Elevation	100 feet	260 to 1,000 feet	95 feet
Vine Spacing	8x6 feet	1,340 to 1,450 vines per acre	6x8 feet
Rootstock	5C and SO4	Kober 5bb and SO4	SO4
Clones	146 and 154	Clone R6 (Vivai Cooperativi Rauscedo) and 505SMA San Michele all'Adige	154
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Irrigated	Dry-farmed	Minimally irrigated
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	Non-certified organic	Traditional	Traditional
Production	5 to 6 tons per acre	3.5 tons per acre	4.5 tons per acre
When Picked	Look for skins to grey and the seeds to turn brown; Flavors move from green apple to tart lemon or lemon pie; Focus on Brix to keep alcohol low	Tasting the grapes and observing analytical data with particular attention to acidity	Flavor
Vineyard practices	Drop fruit to manage crop size; Do some canopy thinning on shade side; Thin more heavily in rainy vintages	Unique pruning system to maximize the flow of sap from roots to vine, which allows a more even shoot push	Pull leaves to provide shaded sunlight for clusters
WINEMAKING DATA			
Sorting	No	Usually not necessary	Cluster-sort and MOG removal
SO_2	50 ppm at crusher	5 gr/hl on freshly pressed must	50 mg/L at press pan
Crush Format	Whole-cluster-press	Destem and press with softness to avoid color extraction and bitter compounds	Whole-cluster press
Settling	36 hours at 40° F	One day at 50° F	No settling
Yeast	A wide range	Selected *Saccharomyces cervisae* and *bayanus*	Delta
Nutrients	Goferm at start and Fermaid O twice during fermentation	Organic nutrition added at the beginning and at one-third of fermentation	Yeast rehydration nutrients only
Acid Additions	Not if picked correctly	None except in rare, particularly hot years when a bit of malic acid is added	None
Fermentation Temperature	55° F to 60° F	64° F to 68° F	60° F
Fermentation Manipulation	Experiment every year with new products, constantly evolving the process	None	None
Tank Types	Stainless steel tanks	Different sized stainless tanks to allow us to vinify different vineyards separately	Stainless steel
Barrel Fermentation	Ferment a small amount in neutral oak barrels	1 to 2 percent	None
Barrels Used	Six months in 5-year-old neutral oak barrels	4-year-old barrels for 6 months	DNA
Stir Lees	1 to 2 times weekly when wine is dry	Lees stirred weekly until pre-filtration blending	No
Racking	Sweet rack and pre-bottle or as needed	Do not rack	After dryness and again to bottle
Cold Stability	Traditional	Cold stabilization	CelStab
Heat Stability	None	Bentonite	Bentonite
Filtration	Sterile	0.45 micron cartridge filter	Sterile via pad filtration
Closure	Cork	Natural cork	Screw cap
Bottle Aging	2 to 3 months	2 months	3 to 4 months

VARIETAL FOCUS:

Pinot Gris

DATA SHEET

OREGON

WINERY	ILLAHE VINEYARDS	IRIS VINEYARDS	PONZI VINEYARDS
Wine	**2016 Pinot Gris**	**2016 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris**	**2014 Old Vine Pinot Gris**
Blend	100% Pinot Gris	100% Pinot Gris	100% Pinot Gris
Winemaker	**Brad Ford**	**Aaron Lieberman**	**Luisa Ponzi**
Style Goals	Balance is more important than aromatics. We want a wine that is rich, creamy and spicy.	Appeal to a broad audience. Fresh and fruity with enough acidity to make it mouth-watering and enough residual sugar to elevate the perception of fruit in both the aroma and flavor.	Work with our Old Vine Estate Pinot Gris to push the envelope on texture and develop a different style, one that is fuller-bodied, oily and unctuous.
AVA	Willamette Valley	Willamette Valley	Willamette Valley
Vineyard	Illahe Vineyard and Erratic Oaks	Chalice Vineyard (Estate)	Ponzi Estate Vineyard
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Marine sedimentary clay	80% Bellpine and 20% Jory	Hillsboro loam (sandy soil)
Elevation	300 feet	850-950 feet	182 feet
Vine Spacing	7x5 feet	8x5 feet	10x5 feet
Rootstock	101-14	3309C, 44-53M, Riparia Gloire	Own-rooted
Clones	VCR, 152, 146	INRA 146, INRA 152	152
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	LIVE-certified, sustainable	Traditional	LIVE-certified
Production	2.9 tons per acre	About 4 tons per acre	3.5 tons per acre
When Picked	Brix, pH days from bloom	Taste for flavor and precise acidity: Brix, TA, pH	Taste and analysis. Looking for greater than 20° Brix, pH above 3.1 and TA above 6.0g/liter
Vineyard practices	Hedge, cane prune and pull leaves	Some years thin to even ripeness at 80% veraison; Pull leaves on east side only following fruit set; Pull west side only if disease pressure warrants	Scott Henry trellis allows vines to self-adjust crop size; Cover crops, cultivating every other row; Some leaf pulling mid-summer and fruit thin bunches that lag behind; Tuck canes three times each growing season
WINEMAKING DATA			
Sorting	Yes	Only if there are Botrytis problems	Dependent on vintage
SO_2	60 ppm at press	20 ppm in tank after pressing	None at press, 50ppm post-ml
Crush Format	Whole-cluster-press	Whole-cluster-press using Champagne style press cycle	Whole-cluster-press
Settling	2 to 4 days on Bentonite	Settle for one day at 40° F; Rack ~200 NTU	Settle for 24 hours; Clean rack at 60° F
Yeast	VL1	58 W3 and Ball	House yeast
Nutrients	None	Fermaid K, then again with Fermaid A at 1/3 Brix depletion	None
Acid Additions	None	Usually not necessary	None
Fermentation Temperature	59° F to 68° F	54° F to 62° F	58° F
Fermentation Manipulation	One racking	Rack or pump-over is reduced	None
Tank Types	50% stainless steel and 50% neutral oak	Stainless steel	Stainless steel
Barrel Fermentation	1,600-gallon neutral oak tank	None	6-year-old neutral oak
Barrels Used	3 months in Radoux 1,600-gallon tank	None	12 months, then racked and another 10 months
Stir Lees	No	No	Stir lees weekly for first six months
Racking	Once during fermentation and once at bottling	Once within days of completing primary and at bottling	Once at 12-month mark
Cold Stability	Chiller, conductivity test, KHT	Chilled and seeded with potassium bitartrate	Chilled to 34° F
Heat Stability	Bentonite, Pocock and waters	Bentonite	Bentonite
Filtration	Sterile	DE to 0.2 micron, then cellulose pads to 0.25 micron; 0.45 micron at bottling	Cross-flow only
Closure	Cork	Screw cap with liner	Cork
Bottle Aging	1 to 2 months	6 months or more	6 months

VARIETAL FOCUS:

Pinot Gris

DATA SHEET

OREGON

WINERY	LANGE ESTATE WINERY AND VINEYARDS	ARCHERY SUMMIT WINERY	KING ESTATE WINERY
Wine	**2016 Pinot Gris Reserve**	**2016 Ab Ovo Pinot Gris**	**2016 Domaine Pinot Gris**
Blend	100% Pinot Gris	100% Pinot Gris	100% Pinot Gris
Winemaker	**Jesse Lange**	**Chris Mazepink/Corey Beyer**	**Brent Stone**
Style Goals	Alsatian in style, but fermented in neutral oak puncheons to focus on palate weight and mouthfeel. Want complex viscosity that is thick and unctuous on palate and will develop with age.	A mélange of the best parts of the world. Flint and minerality of Chablis, melon and tropical fruit of the Rhône coupled with the viscosity and texture of Alsace.	Alsatian style, rich, dry and ageable. Lot selection is geared toward aromatic complexity and depth on the palate.
AVA	Willamette Valley	Dundee Hills	Willamette Valley
Vineyard	Lange Estate Vineyard, Tukwila Vineyard, Yamhill Vineyards	Red Hills Estate Vineyard	King Estate Vineyard
VINEYARD DATA			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Willakenzie and Jory soils	Jory volcanic soil	Belpine, Jory and Dupee
Elevation	300 to 700 feet	560 to 640 feet	800 to 1,200 feet
Vine Spacing	7x4 feet and 8x5 feet	3.5x5 feet	11x5 feet and 9x5 feet
Rootstock	3309, own-rooted, 101-14	3309/101-14	3309, 101-14 and Riparia Gloire
Clones	152, 146	PG 152, PG 146	146 and 152
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed	Dry-farmed
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	LIVE-certified sustainable	Sustainable practices and LIVE-certified	Biodynamic
Production	3 tons per acre	3.25 tons per acre	3 tons per acre
When Picked	Strict adherence to methodical and repetitive sample procedures to monitor ripeness trajectory, but really looking for flavor/acid balance	Quantitative measures of Brix, pH, TA and subjective measures like taste, flavor, seed ripeness, stems, leaves and weather	Pick when juice has optimized flavor and sugar development while retaining acid and showing no green or unripe characters; Determined by sensory and lab tests
Vineyard practices	Drop fruit, pull leaves, cover crops, VSP, Scott Henry, organic spray program	Unilateral cordon, VSP trellis, moveable catchwires; Remove laterals and pull leaves to reduce disease pressure; Thin to adjust crop level; Alternate cover crop to manage vigor and soil health	Cane prune, VSP and Lyre, pull leaves early so vine can recover; shoot thin, compost and manage cover crops; fruit thin as necessary
WINEMAKING DATA			
Sorting	Hand-sorted in vineyard and again at picking bin, then twice at winery	Everything sorted on processing line	Sorted in vineyard
SO_2	N/A	30 ppm at settling pan	35 ppm at press pan
Crush Format	Destem, press lightly, use only free run juice	Crush a small portion before pressing and go direct whole cluster to press with the balance	Whole-cluster-press
Settling	Cold-settle 40° F for two days	24 to 48 hours at 45° F	48 hour settle at 40° F
Yeast	Varied	89% commercial and 11% spontaneous	Alchemy II, W15, QA23
Nutrients	None	DAP Microtrace Essentials prior to fermentation and again halfway through if needed	Dynastart at inoculation and SIY33 during fermentation
Acid Additions	None	After pressing, goal is 3.15 to 3.25 pH and between 0.6 to 0.7 TA	Bring acid to 0.60g/L before fermentation
Fermentation Temperature	Varies in lot and barrels	Ambient	55° F
Fermentation Manipulation	None	Stop fermentation when glucose/fructose reaches desired level	None
Tank Types	Stainless and concrete	Concrete eggs, stainless steel barrels and wooden barrels	Closed top, temperature-controlled stainless steel
Barrel Fermentation	Varies	12% new acacia, 12% used acacia	None
Barrels Used	Varies	12 months	None
Stir Lees	Not typically	One to two times per week	Once a week for 5 months
Racking	Varies	Only when assembling for bottling	Three racks; Juice before fermentation, splash rack toward end of fermentation, again before filtration
Cold Stability	Chilled prior to bottling	Chill with glycol refrigeration in tank	Electrodialysis
Heat Stability	Bentonite	Bentonite	Bentonite
Filtration	Cross-flow-filtered	Cross-flow and membrane filter at bottling	Cross-flow
Closure	Stelvin Plus	Cork	Cork
Bottle Aging	6 to 12 months	6 to 8 months	3 months

Ponzi Vineyards

2014 Old Vine Pinot Gris, 13.1% alc., $38

Luisa Ponzi was three years old when her parents started their winery. She's been in the business ever since. After graduating from **Portland State University** in 1990, she went to France where she apprenticed with **Christophe Roumier** of **Domaine Roumier** in Chambolle Musigny. She also worked with Italian producer **Luca Currado** of **Vietti** in Piedmont, Italy. She has travelled to wine regions all over the world, participated in every **International Pinot Noir Celebration** since 1986 and has won dozens of awards and accolades. She has held the winemaker position at **Ponzi Vineyards** since 1993, where she produces 17,000 cases of Pinot Gris but only 200 cases of this Old Vine bottling.

According to Ponzi:

"Our Estate Vineyard was established in 1970, and we have been producing Pinot Gris commercially since 1981. We keep all of our lots separate through production, and over time I had noticed that the Estate Old Vine Pinot Gris was giving us wine with an extra textural dimension. In 2014, I decided to push the envelope on texture and develop a different style. I wanted to make a more complex and textured Pinot Gris, one that was oily and unctuous. I wanted a fuller-bodied, extended lees contact Pinot Gris that was texture-driven, one that could match with main dishes and not just be considered an 'appetizer' wine.

"The grapes for this wine are exclusively from the original vines planted in 1970 at the Ponzi Estate Vineyard and then grafted to Pinot Gris a few years later. The vineyard sits in the sandy soil of Hillsboro loam. Elevation is just 180 feet, and the vines are spaced in 10x5 foot plantings, about 900 vines to the acre. Vines are own-rooted, and the clone is 152. The crop can be difficult because of pronounced vigor. Trying to control crop in the face of so much vigor wasn't really working. It wasn't until we went to the Scott Henry trellis system that the grapes came into their own. Now, we get close to 6 tons per acre of this incredible fruit. Evidently, these vines just needed to run wild a bit.

"We plant cover crops, primarily of rye grass and clover, cultivating every other row. We leaf-pull mid-summer and do some fruit thinning if bunches are lagging behind. Pinot Gris is not overly susceptible to sunburn. We tuck canes three times each growing season. To determine when to pick, we look at numbers. We focus on the numbers for Pinot Gris more than any other variety. Since we prefer low alcohol wines, we try to pick between 20.5° to 21° Brix, which gives us a TA of 0.8 and a 3.2 pH. We also focus on flavor. We want that early leafy, stemmy character to evolve into green apple and citrus. We wait for the skin bitterness to diminish and for the skins themselves to soften.

"Grapes are hand-picked, sorted if necessary and then whole-cluster-pressed. We press to about 1.1 PSI and use all of the juice, making no press cuts. We follow phenolics to determine when to stop pressing. Often the juice is brown, but that drops out post-bottling. We add no SO_2 until post malolactic. We use no nutrients nor do we add acid. The juice settles for 24 hours at 53° F before getting racked to 15-year-old neutral oak barrels. The juice goes in fairly dirty. We fill the barrels and place fermentation locks on them. Once native/house yeast fermentation begins, we remove a bit of juice from the barrels to allow fermentation space. Juice ferments around 55° F, and fermentation proceeds slowly, often lasting two to three months.

"We allow the wine to undergo native malolactic in barrel, stirring the lees weekly for six months. We make a 50 ppm SO_2 addition post-malolactic. At the one year mark we rack the wine, but keep it on the lees without stirring for another 10 months. We chill the wine to 34° F to achieve cold stability and use bentonite for heat stability. The wine is cross-flow-filtered, but not sterile-filtered. We bottle with cork, because I am more comfortable with cork and it is traditional. The wine got six months of bottle age before release."

Tasting Notes

Ponzi: I get a Graham cracker, brown butter note. It is not about fresh fruit jumping out of the glass; this is more subdued and complex. There is an interesting coconut oil note in this wine. What I love is that weight on the palate even though the alcohol is not high. There is a nice, broad mid-palate that is silky and mouth-filling. That's what we were looking for. There is nice yellow apple acidity on the finish.

Reid: This is a completely different expression from California. For me, it is all about the texture and mouthfeel, and not about the fruit. It is really creamy, unctuous and rich. It has pleasant flavors but what stands out is the texture.

Fletcher: For an older Pinot Gris, the color is still vibrant. The aroma is almost like roasted nuts, but it is not oxidized. It has a kind of complexity like cashew, and then it has great mouthfeel.

Miller: This is totally different. I agree with the nuttiness, but I also got a dried orange, citrus, granola. There are a lot of deep flavors that are different from the lemon curd we tried before. It has a robust, brisk phenolic finish. Very interesting.

Lieberman: This is a different wine with yellow straw character. I get caramel and ripe, red apple on the nose. The caramel carries over into the taste, along with the apple. It has a lot of weight on the mouth and is soft throughout. The finish is nice with no bitterness, but it is a bit short with fairly low acid.

Stone: I got some nuttiness with maybe a bit of oxidation, which lends complexity. There are some creamy, biscuit notes in the nose. On the palate I definitely picked up on the caramel, butterscotch notes, along with the apple, almost like a caramelized green apple. The finish is nice and silky with lower acid. It is cool wine, definitely different but nice.

Lange: There is a fair amount of oak presence. Some of the primary fruit is starting to back off, so the oak is more predominant now. The oak should round out and be better integrated. It changes while it sits here in the glass.

Beyer: This is different from every other wine in the tasting. It is very spicy with toasty vanilla on the nose. The spiciness and caramelization flow over onto the palate. It has really good acidity that ties things together. It is very interesting wine.

Lange Estate Winery and Vineyards

2016 Pinot Gris Reserve, 13.2% alc., $28

Don Lange was the fourth producer of Pinot Gris in the New World and takes pride in pioneering barrel-fermented Pinot Gris in 1987. He graduated from the **University of Iowa** with a Master of Fine Arts degree and then pursued a career as a songwriter/folk singer, winning a grant from the **National Endowment for the Arts** and recording three albums. An anticipated career move to Southern California ended with him becoming enamored with wine and winemaking, soon narrowing the focus to Pinot Noir. In 1987 he moved to Dundee, Oregon with his wife **Wendy** and started **Lange Estate Winery & Vineyards**.

According to Lange:

"Our Pinot Gris is Alsatian in style, but it is original. Because we ferment in puncheons, we focus on palate weight and texture. Each block of grapes is farmed separately, picked separately and fermented separately. We want a wine of complex viscosity that is thick and unctuous on the palate and one that will develop with age.

"Our vineyard sits at 300 to 700 feet on Jory soils. Vine spacings are 7x4 feet and 8x5 feet. Everything is dry-farmed, and we are LIVE-certified sustainable. Rootstock is own-rooted, 3309 and 101-14. We use clones 152 and 146. We have both VSP and Scott Henry trellis systems. The vineyard speaks to us and tells us what to do. We judiciously pull leaves on the east side to get some light into the fruit zone. We grow cover crops, which are then mowed. We only use organic spray. We generally farm 4 tons per acre on the Pinot Gris.

"Numbers are not big in determining when we pick, but we take lots of samples. We are really looking for flavor/acid balance. Early on the flavors are green and grassy. As the fruit ripens, we see more herbal, floral and apple flavors. We also want that hard-edged acidity to soften a bit. Grapes are thinned twice during the growing season and at harvest sorted in the field and again at the winery. Grapes are destemmed and lightly pressed with only the free run juice making it to the tank. We stop pressing based on phenolics and color. We add no SO_2 until after primary fermentation.

"We cold-settle for two days at 35° F and then rack to a variety of neutral barrels and puncheons. We do not add acid and rarely need to use any yeast nutrients. The barrels are inoculated with various yeasts. Fermentation proceeds at cellar temperature, which varies, and that fermentation seems to churn the lees so that we do not need to stir them. Fermentation lasts four to 12 weeks, depending on the barrel. Post-primary fermentation we top the barrels, add SO_2 and let the wine sit in contact with the lees. We monitor each barrel and discourage malolactic fermentation.

"We chill for cold-stability and use bentonite for heat-stability. Barrel selection and blending can take up to four weeks to decide—only the best of the selected puncheons will grade out at the Reserve level. The selected barrels go into this reserve bottling and blend into a tank. The wine is cross-flow-filtered and topped with Stelvin Plus because we have lived through too many cork compromises. The wine receives six to 12 months' bottle age before release."

Tasting Notes:

Lange: There is citrus and orange zest in the nose with a grassy herbaceousness on the edge. I get a hint of vanilla and some gravelly minerality. It has nice mouthfeel and good palate weight with enough acid to carry through on the finish.

Ponzi: This has that classic Bosc pear, along with powdered sugar on the nose. Very classic. It is really pretty. It follows through in the mouth. It is a little sweet, but the acid is nice and bright, giving it some green apple tartness. It has nice balance and maybe a little CO_2 to keep it lively in your mouth.

Ford: The first thing I noticed was some very well-balanced oak, giving a bit of vanilla but not overwhelming. Varietally appropriate with light fruit, like apple blossom. The weight is excellent with wonderful mouthfeel.

Beyer: Nice aromatics. Clean with hints of citrus and toastiness and some nice white peach fruit. The acidity is very nice and well integrated. There is a nice richness to the finish that hangs in there and layers out before it extends on the back palate.

Stone: I get some perfume on the nose, along with some biscuit character. I got some pineapple on the palate. Overall it has pretty good weight with a little R.S. that is balanced with the acidity. It is a solid wine.

Lieberman: I like this wine too. There is a whole bunch of pear on the nose with a hint of floral notes and a bit of baking spice. It has that fresh apple taste, like a really good Tarte Tatin that is perfectly cooked. I like the finish as well.

Fletcher: It has a bit of that reductive character to it, maybe a bit of that lemongrass or cheesy, but not in a pejorative way at all. Behind that is some really nice citrus fruit character. So it is a mix of those two in an interesting way. It finishes with a little bitterness.

Miller: It does have a bit of reduction without the long, drawn out creaminess of some of the others. It is very modern and has a nice citrus refreshing finish. I'd say it is varietally correct.

Reid: The first thing I noticed was prickly acidity, which is not at all tart, but really bright and lively. I'd like to see how this is in four or six years. It is still very tight and young, and probably has a future ahead of it.

Archery Summit Winery

2016 Ab Ovo Pinot Gris, 14.2% alc., $54

Corey Beyer has worked at **Archery Summit Winery** since 2004. His title is cellarmaster, but he acts as more of a co-winemaker.

According to Beyer:

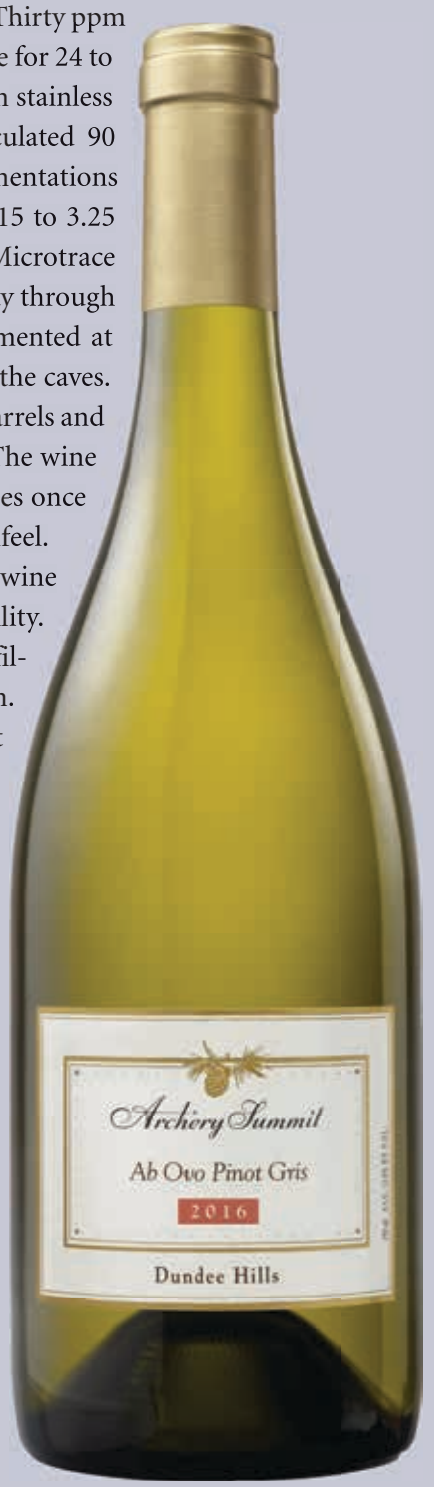
"The stylistic vision for Ab Ovo (from the egg) is a mélange of the best from many parts of the world. We seek the flint and minerality of Chablis, with melons and tropical fruit of the Rhône, coupled with the viscosity and texture of Alsace.

"Vines are grown on Jory soil between 560 to 640 feet. Older plantings are spaced 3.5x5 feet while newer plantings are 4x9 feet. We use clones PG 152 and PG 146 planted on 3309 or 101-14 rootstock. We are LIVE-certified sustainable and dry-farmed. The vineyard is unilateral cordon with VSP training and moveable catch wires. We hedge, remove laterals and pull leaves on the morning sun side to reduce disease pressure. (We'll pull both sides in the face of rain.) We alternate cover crop to manage vigor and soil health. We drop fruit on the younger vines and to maintain uniform ripening, usually coming in between 3.25 and 4 tons per acre.

"We take quantitative measures of Brix, TA and pH, but also rely on taste, logistics and weather. We look for the acid to come into balance with the sweetness, and we taste seeds to monitor bitterness. Usually we pick between 22.5° and 23.8° Brix. We tend to pick young vines early to retain fruitiness and pick the older blocks later for weight and viscosity.

"Everything gets sorted on the processing line, and then a small portion gets crushed while the rest goes directly to the press. Thirty ppm SO_2 gets added to the settling tank. We cold-settle for 24 to 48 hours at 45° F. Pinot Gris can be fermented in stainless steel, acacia barrels or concrete eggs. We inoculated 90 percent of the lots and had spontaneous fermentations on 10 percent. We adjust acid with a goal of 3.15 to 3.25 pH and between 0.6 to 0.7 TA. We use DAP Microtrace Essentials prior to fermentation and then halfway through fermentation only when needed. The wine fermented at ambient cellar temperature, which was 58° F in the caves. 12 percent of this wine was aged in new acacia barrels and another 12 percent was in used Acacia barrels. The wine was aged for seven months and we stirred the lees once or twice per week to increase texture and mouthfeel.

"We rack only to make our blend. We chill the wine for cold stability and use bentonite for heat-stability. The wine is cross-flow-filtered and membrane-filtered at bottling to block malolactic fermentation. The wine is cork finished and receives six to eight months' bottle age before release."



Tasting Notes:

Beyer: I get a bit of citrus, hints of toast and a little orange blossom or white flower aromatics. On the palate I get more melon and toastiness, along with some focused minerality and acidity that round it off and bring it through the finish.

Lange: We're back to that citrus with lemon and lime zest. There is a bit of toastiness and some white flower with a racy linear quality. There is some bitter almond character toward the finish, which I like a lot.

Ford: It jumps out a bit and is lively. I get some of that sandalwood, along with floral and fruit. There could be some melon, along with the citrus in here. The mouthfeel is centralized and active. It seems summery.

Ponzi: This is pretty but serious. It has some spice, peppery notes and exotic star anise. It's got really pretty texture from the egg but also retains focus. It is linear but has this nice silky thread through it. It is round without losing freshness. It has higher alcohol, but it holds it well, and the finish is nice and long.

Miller: I think this one is similar to the Lange. It is also very modern with a stainless steel reductive style. It is linear and modern, as well as young and tight. It would be interesting to see this down the line. The mouthfeel is refreshing but finishes a little short.

Reid: I get a lot of depth and richness out of this. It is a little shy of fruit, but I don't think that's what this wine is about. There is a lot of structure to it. I wouldn't be surprised if this has a significant barrel component to it. It is an interesting wine that is a lot of fun.

Fletcher: I like the aromas, but done blind I'm not sure I would guess Pinot Gris. The aromas are not reduced or vegetal; they are just different. It has more mineral than fruit. In the mouth it is rich and full with a nice finish.

Lieberman: The nose is more floral than anything else. I want to say honeysuckle. There is pear and honeysuckle in the taste. It has good balance with little R.S. if any. Good palate weight. The acid is lower than some of the other wines, but the balance is really nice.

Stone: I got some floral components, along with some damp slate minerality. It has excellent texture and mouthfeel, along with honey and orange blossom on the palate. Great overall finish and balance. I love the weight of this wine.

King Estate Winery

2016 Domaine Pinot Gris, 13.5% alc., $30

Brent Stone began his career as an R&D chemist where he managed food laboratories and quality assurance programs for several years in the dairy industry. He joined **King Estate Winery** and worked as the lab manager in 2011 while receiving formal training in enology at **Washington State University**. He was promoted to winemaker at King Estate in 2016.

According to Stone:

"We like to model our wine after Alsatian-styled Pinot Gris. Lot selection is geared toward aromatic complexity and depth on the palate. We are looking for pear and orange blossom aromas and flavors, along with a rich, bold mouthfeel. We use sur lie to enhance that mouthfeel and weight, and it is important for us that the wine improve with age.

"Our vines grow on three distinct soil types; Belpine, Jory and Dupee. The Jory is deep and fertile, provides the most vigor and needs adjustment for crop size. The Belpine drains well and is deep while the Dupee is shallow and requires water to handle stress. Elevations vary between 800 and 1,100 feet. Vine spacing is 11x5 feet and 8x5 feet. We have three rootstocks: 101-14, 3309 and some Riparia. Everything is clone 146 or 152. We dry-farm and are Certified Biodynamic.

"We like to have a decent canopy over the fruit so we don't over-expose the fruit. We will pull leaves early so that the vine has time to recover. Vines are cane-pruned. We shoot thin. We compost and manage our cover crops. We will fruit thin as necessary and work on shoot positioning. The VSP trellis blocks yield 3.25 to 3.5 tons per acre. The lyre split block has more fertile soil and handles 4.5 to 5.25 tons per acre.

"We pick when we notice an absence of green flavors and the juice has optimized flavor and sugar development while retaining good acidity. Usually we end up picking about 21.5° Brix with .6 TA and 3.2 pH. Grapes are sorted in the vineyard and whole cluster-pressed. We add 35 ppm SO_2 at the press pan. We settle the juice for 48 hours at 40° F. We rack post-settling and then add yeast. If we need to add acid, we do that before yeast inoculation, bringing the juice to 0.60g/L. We warm the juice to 55° F and use several different yeasts for complexity, including Alchemy II, W15 and QA23. We use Dynastart at inoculation and SIY33 during fermentation.

"We want our fermentations to go 'low and slow' to preserve aromas, so we ferment at 55° F in closed top, stainless steel tanks. Fermentations tend to run about 40 days, and we will do a splash racking towards the end of that fermentation, especially if there is noticeable reduction present. The wine sits on lees for five months and the lees are stirred weekly. We cold-stabilize with electrodialysis and heat-stabilize using bentonite. The wine is cross-flow sterile-filtered. We use cork stoppers and age the wine for three months before release."

Tasting Notes:

Stone: I get some floral, orange blossom, honeysuckle notes here. I get some pear and a little zest. On the palate it tends toward pear and lime zest with subtle honey notes. There is some minerality and some fresh, high acidity that carries the wine through the finish.

Lieberman: The pear and lemon zest is what popped out to me. The floral notes are definitely there. There is some orange blossom honey as well. On the palate the pear flavor dominates, and then you get that honey again. I love the finish. The acidity is basically perfect in this wine.

Reid: I really like this wine. It has a great combination of richness and brightness with good acidity. It is rich and opulent on the palate, but it finishes clean. Again the fruit is subdued, but it is very pretty.

Fletcher: I agree, it is not focused on fruit, but it has an interesting aroma profile that is a cross between fruit and herbs and mineral character that I find attractive. It has a nice richness, along with acidity and maybe a hint of residual sugar that works for this particular wine.

Miller: I really like this wine too. It is interesting and beautiful. It is obviously feminine in style. The nose is all white flowers and white stone fruit, some minerality and some fresh rain. The mouthfeel is really cool too. I think there probably is a little R.S. with all those floral notes, but the acid is still there and is very refreshing. This would be an easy bottle to drink.

Lange: I get white flower blossom and cool Daphne aromatics, which is really cool. On entry I get some lemon/lime citrus and nice expansive mouthfeel. It has a good finish. I really like a wine that finishes well.

Beyer: I get a kind of dry grass, dry hay character, which I like. It has nice soft floral characteristics as well. You get some dried fruit on the palate. It seems balanced on the palate and has a good finish.

Ponzi: It has some beautiful honeysuckle notes with pretty dried apricot behind that. There is a touch of cardamom. It has a really pretty nose. This is classic Oregon Pinot Gris. It has lots of powdered sugar in the mid-palate with a little residual sugar. It has nice acid. It is a little softer style.

Iris Vineyards

2016 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris, $18

Aaron Lieberman graduated **Oregon State University** with a degree in crop and soil sciences. He spent three years in the **Peace Corps** in Guatemala before returning to Oregon and landing at the vineyard manager position at **Amity Vineyards** in 1996. He founded **Cottonwood Winery** with his father in 2002. His curiosity caused him to start learning more about winemaking. He worked in the cellar at **De Ponte** in 2001 while maintaining a full-time job as vineyard manager. In 2003 he became assistant winemaker for **Owen Roe**, and in 2008 he was hired as winemaker for Iris Vineyards.

According to Lieberman:

"The goal for this Pinot Gris is to appeal to a broad audience. To that end it is made fresh and fruity with enough acidity to make it mouth-watering and enough residual sugar to elevate the perception of fruit in both the aroma and flavor. Mouthfeel is secondary to the aromas and flavors. It is meant to be a fresh style with aromas of pear, ripe apple and citrus peel, and we want a wine that is relatively low in alcohol.

"Our vineyard is comprised primarily of Belpine soil (80 percent) and Dupee (20 percent) at an elevation of 850 to 950 feet. Vines are spaced 8x5 feet. We are traditionally farmed and dry-farmed. Rootstock is 3309C, 44-53M, 101-15 and Riparia Gloire. Our clones are INRA 146 and INRA 152. In the vineyard we are going for a canopy that is balanced with our crop load. We are using more cover crops and less tillage as time goes on. We will pull leaves on the east side only following fruit set. West side leaves may get pulled late in season if disease pressure warrants it. We will do a fruit drop at 80 percent veraison to even maturity and separate clusters.

"We use chemistry as a guideline. Flavor is the most important factor in determining when to pick; however, the precise acidity is very important to the style we are trying to achieve. We want the grapes to be fruity with an absence of green flavors. We like to taste some pear flavors and we chew the skins to assess bitterness.

"We usually do not sort unless there are problems with botrytis. If need be we will do a pre-harvest sort in the vineyard. Enzyme is added to the picking bins immediately before we dump them into the press. We whole cluster press using a Champagne-style press cycle that is very long using minimal rotation. We add 20 ppm SO_2 to the juice in the tank once pressing is finished. After a half day of settling, we add bentonite to the juice and then settle for one day at 40° F. I like for the juice to rack at about 200 NTU.

"We usually don't need to add acid but will use tartaric if necessary. We are switching to Fermaid O now, but this wine received Fermaid K initially and then again with Fermaid A. We do not use DAP. The wine was fermented in stainless steel tanks, keeping temperatures between 54° F and 62° F. Fermentation lasts 30 to 60 days. We may rack or pump over if there is reduction. We rack within days of completing primary fermentation.

"We will chill and seed with potassium bitartrate to achieve cold stability. We will use bentonite for heat stability, but usually don't need to since we have added it to the juice before fermentation. Wine is DE-filtered to 0.2 micron, then pad-filtered and finally membrane-filtered at 0.45 micron for bottling. We use screw caps with tin liners to preserve freshness. The wine gets six months or more of bottle aging before release."

Tasting Notes:

Lieberman: I get pear and yellow apple on the nose. On the palate the pear is dominant, and there is a hint of lemon zest and some orange blossom, but not honeyed. It is light in the mouth, but I think I am pushing sugar/acid balance to the edge of my stylistic goals. I would probably back off on the R.S. with this acidity in the future.

Stone: The first thing I notice is a nice slate, mineral component on the nose, which I think is really pleasant. There is some lemon oil and a little bit of violet character. The pear is prominent on the palate, along with some zest and some perfumed floral character on the finish that is pleasant.

Beyer: It has citrus, along with floral characteristics on the nose. There is a lot of fruit on the palate with round, soft acidity. It is easy to drink. Very nice.

Lange: It has an expressive bouquet or orange crème brulée with a touch of vanilla. I like the way it fell on the palate initially. It hits and then spreads out, but maybe stops a little short. It had good palate presence but then sort of dried out.

Ponzi: This has some lactic character, like lemon custard with a vanilla note. It might be riper with some higher alcohol and more residual sugar. It is like a warmer climate Pinot Gris almost. Very juicy acidity.

Fletcher: I distinctly get the aroma of celery seed, more so the aromas of herbs than fruit. It is attractive in that reductive style again. There is nice weight to it with a good finish that is not bitter. The acidity is nice on the finish, but the aroma profile is different from what I am used to, but I can imagine all kinds of interesting foods this would go with.

Miller: I think it is really interesting. I didn't get celery seed, but I was thinking of wet slate, but there is no mustiness. It has a lot of mineral to it. I don't get a lot of fruit on either end, but it has an interesting finish that is very refreshing. The acidity gives it a really nice mouthfeel.

Reid: I think it is varietally true, but it is not an expression of Pinot Gris I have experienced before. It is like all the parts are assembled in a different order or something. I like the mouthfeel, and I think there is some R.S. that is helping that along because it is up there on the acid levels, which make for a beautiful finish, but might be a bit much without whatever touch of R.S. it has.

Illahe Vineyards

2016 Pinot Gris, $19

Brad Ford got his degree in the classics. He worked as a carpenter, grant writer and English instructor before helping his father on their first grape harvest in 2004. He worked at **Evesham Wood** and **Domaine Serene** while studying viticulture and enology at the local college. **Illahe Vineyards** released its first wine in 2007, and Brad has been winemaker ever since. Their winery operates by gravity flow, uses solar power, recovers rainwater and even uses horses to deliver grapes from the vineyard.

According to Ford:

"For us, balance is more important than aromatics. We usually get some spice flavor, along with green fruit, apple and pear notes. We have a marshmallow sweetness that lends to mouthfeel and contributes to the wine's smooth character. It finishes with some minerality.

"Our 80-acre vineyard sits on marine sedimentary clay at an elevation of 300 feet. Vines are spaced 7x5 feet. Rootstock is 101-14, and we have three clones: VCR, 152 and 146. We are LIVE-certified and sustainable. We prune to 11 or 12 buds per plant. The vines are on VSP trellis and will get as high as 6 feet, so we will top and hedge in June after flowering. We pull leaves to lessen shade because these grapes need sun to ripen. We go through to drop third clusters before harvest. Our grapes are dry-farmed, and we get 2.7 to 3 tons per acre.

"We harvest primarily by numbers although we also pay attention to days from bloom. We shoot for 22° Brix and a pH around 3.1 to 3.2. Grapes are sorted at the winery on a sorting table and then whole-cluster-pressed in an old Willmes membrane press. We add 60 ppm SO_2 and settle the juice for two to four days at 50° F. We add neither acid nor nutrients, but we do add bentonite to the juice. The juice is racked with half going to a neutral 1,600 gallon Radoux barrel and half going to stainless steel. We inoculate with VL 1 yeast because it gives moderate expression and balanced aromatics. We use no enzymes.

"The wine ferments at 59° F to 68° F and takes as long as 60 days to finish. We do not stir the lees because the rolling fermentation seems to do the job for us. We will rack during fermentation to deal with H_2S, and then again when we are ready to bottle. We blend after primary fermentation and add SO_2. Cold stability is achieved by using KHT and a chiller. We gain heat stability by using bentonite as needed. The wine is sterile-filtered, sealed with natural cork and receives one to two months' bottle age before release."

Tasting Notes:

Ford: It tastes a bit toasty right now. It has a spicy characteristic, but it is more of a sandalwood character with some marshmallow. I don't get a lot of fruit, but there is some apple and pear. It is calm and restrained and has been changing in the glass.

Beyer: There are some nice floral components in the nose with a little mineral, and I get that sandalwood. The aromas are delicate. I get some citrus peel also. It has nice acidity, full mouthfeel and seems well-balanced.

Lange: It is herbaceous in a good way with some orange zest. There is a touch of anise on the palate that I love. There is a touch of vanilla. The palate weight is lovely. There is a solid acid finish.

Ponzi: This has some sulfide aromas. It has that tar, matchstick character. There is some stone fruit, peach and yellow plum in the mouth that is really pretty. There is nice mouthfeel. The only thing I don't like is the sulfide.

Stone: It is a bit closed on the nose. There is some pear and zest, but not much on the floral side. It is lighter on the mouthfeel, but fresh and nice. I get some tangerine. It is bright and fresh in a lighter, leaner style.

Lieberman: I like the pale gold color. I got mostly perfume and floral notes and then picked up some pear and orange zest. The taste had some pear followed by zest. It was light in the mouth, but I like the balance overall.

Miller: I think this is very different from the California styles. It is a reduced style with a lot of herbal character. I don't get a lot of fruit out of it. It does have a lot of phenolic character with a refreshing acidic finish. It is a very austere wine.

Reid: This one has a little funkiness on the nose, not TCA but something. On the palate, it is probably the fruitiest of the wines from Oregon, but it is all citrus with a lot of lemon. There is definitely an herbaceous character to this.

VARIETAL FOCUS:

Pinot Gris

The best thing about doing these varietal focus stories is listening to winemakers' conversations while they talk about their wines. Winemakers are passionate about what they do, and they have strong theories about each step they take in making a particular style of wine. There were endless discussions of the differences between Pinot Gris style and Pinot Grigio style. The general consensus is that Pinot Grigio wines are Italian-styled and typically lighter-bodied, crisp with acidity, loaded with stone fruit and lemon lime aromas and finished with fresh, clean flavors. Pinot Gris wines look more toward Alsace and are more full-bodied, richer, floral with orange blossoms, pear and apple, exhibiting more texture reminiscent of lemon curd or powdered sugar while retaining that crisp, clean acid balance.

The winemakers in this varietal focus aimed for styles that were all over the map. Wines were fermented in oak or straight stainless steel or concrete eggs. They went through malolactic or didn't. Some sat on lees, some stirred the lees rigorously, and some preferred as few lees as possible. Some harvested at 21° Brix while others brought in their fruit at 23.5° Brix. I respect winemakers in their pursuit of a particular style, but in this case, it really didn't matter. It was all delicious, and it all tasted like Pinot Gris more than anything else.

Pinot Gris is the number two selling white wine in the United States, outsold only by Chardonnay. It is the number one imported white wine variety, and the reason it is so successful is because it tastes good. No matter how you try to stylistically change it, the inherent pleasures of Pinot Gris shine through. It is fresh, crisp, vibrant wine with recognizable aromas, varying between citrus, stone fruit and pear awash with comfort food flavors of lemon pie, crème brulée and exotic fruits. However dense the texture and mouthfeel, it almost always finishes with enough acid to make you want another glass. It is wine to quaff on a summer day. It is perfect for lunch and matches with a wide range of foods.

Each of these winemakers was aiming for a particular style of Pinot Gris, but they were almost always delighted by the routes chosen by the other winemakers. It was as if the Pinot Gris core was like a Christmas tree, and each winemaker had decorated it with personal ornaments that they all found interesting and pleasing. Pinot Gris, when grown in cool climates and produced by talented winemakers, is somehow able to absorb the stylistic styles of the winemakers while retaining its personal identity. That is pretty amazing, and this writer was amazed. **WBM**