

## Varietal Focus:

*Pinot**Lance Cutler*

**MOST WINEMAKERS LOVE WINE** and will gladly discuss vineyards, production methods and aging regimens, but there is nothing quite like talking to a Pinot Noir winemaker. Pinot Noir is more than just another varietal; it is seductive and ephemeral and attracts a fiercely independent, opinionated breed. Winemakers often refer to Pinot Noir in feminine terms, like voluptuous, alluring and ravishing. There is a love/hate relationship, and they are just as likely to curse it as to praise it. The legendary **André Tchelistcheff** is credited with saying, “God made Cabernet Sauvignon, whereas the devil made Pinot Noir.”

Pinot Noir is one of the oldest grape varieties, dating all the way back to the ancient Romans. The origins of the variety are disputed, but it has been grown successfully in many parts of the world for centuries. Most famously, Pinot Noir is grown in Burgundy, France on the Côte d’Or and produces some of the world’s most elegant and expensive wines. After France, Pinot Noir is best recognized from Oregon and California, but it is grown in New Zealand, Italy, Switzerland and dozens of other countries. It can be used in the production of Champagne and sparkling wines and is sometimes turned into Rosé but usually is fermented as red table wine.

Pinot Noir is prone to mutation, and there are hundreds of different clones with more than 50 officially recognized clones in France alone. It likes cool climates and well-drained soils. It buds and ripens early, which make it susceptible to spring frosts and make warm climate sites unsuitable. Every vineyard affliction affects Pinot Noir, including leafroll virus and Pierce’s disease. It is sensitive to light exposure, over-cropping, excessive heat and certain soil types. Pinot Noir produces tight bunches, with relatively small berries and thin skins. It tends to ferment rapidly at high temperatures and often has difficulty with color retention.

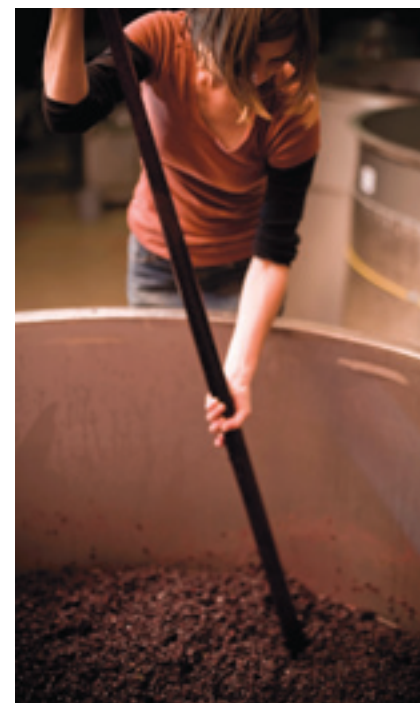
Pinot Noir exhibits a wide range of aromas and flavors, including cherry, raspberry, blackberry, currant and plum. In addition, there’s often a floral character, like rose petals or violets, and an earthy component of mushroom,

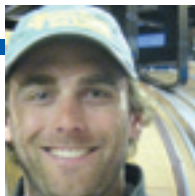


ANDREA JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** In these varietal reviews, writer Lance Cutler, a winemaker for more than 30 years, focuses on a single grape variety through interviews with distinguished winemakers from distinctive regions producing the selected varietal. To accomplish this, he travels to each region, meets the winemakers, visits some of the vineyards and conducts a tasting, featuring wines from the selected wineries. Winemakers talk about what clones and rootstocks are being used, what soil types they are planted on and how microclimates influence the variety. They also discuss what they are doing to best express their terroir, to determine which fermentation techniques lend themselves to which styles and to delineate the unique characteristics of each variety.

We believe these reviews will be of interest to winemakers around the country. We hope that discussions raised, during these tastings, will allow us to identify regional characteristics within each variety. The first varietal focus, featuring Syrah, was published in February 2011. Following this review of Pinot Noir, Cutler will focus on Chardonnay.





# Noir



truffle or leather. It's because of Pinot Noir that the concept of terroir exists. Pinot Noir flavors seem to definitely be influenced by soil type and climate. Coldest climate vineyards show a spicy flair. Sites with sedimentary soils tend to black fruits and bigger tannins while sandy soils exhibit lush, full-bodied fruit compote. Whatever the soil, Pinot Noir seems to do best on hillsides. In the Côte d'Or, the most elevated vineyards are most often designated Grand Cru. Everyone, from Oregon to the Sonoma Coast to New Zealand, has taken to planting on hillsides.

In the winery, Pinot Noir can be a bit cranky and sensitive. Cold soaks have become common in hopes of extracting more flavor and setting the color. Fermentations often run hot and fast. The wine doesn't like to be bandied about, so gentle punchdowns are often preferred to pump-overs. More producers prefer gravity flow to pumps. Pinot Noirs are often aged on their lees without racking and are often aged in barrel for no more than one year.

For this varietal focus, we selected four recognized but distinctively different regions: Anderson Valley, Mendocino County, California; Willamette Valley, Oregon; and Sonoma County, Santa Barbara County, California. We

then selected three different winemakers from each of the four regions, who state their winemaking goals and give detailed accounts of their viticultural, fermentation and aging practices.

During a series of tastings, each winemaker tasted all 12 of the wines. Each gave his or her impression on each of the wines to help readers assess how successfully individual winemakers were able to achieve their goals and which methods, in both the vineyard and at the winery, translated into the desired results.

Tasting notes begin with the comments of the winemaker then other winemakers from the same region. Comments from winemakers of the other regions follow.

The featured winemakers include: **Jason Drew** of **Drew Family Cellars**, **Jim Klein** of **Navarro Vineyards**, **Doug Stewart** and **Ryan Hodgins** of **Breggo Cellars**, **Harry Peterson-Nedry** of **Chehalem**, **Dick Shea** of **Shea Wine Cellars**, **Ken Wright** of **Ken Wright Cellars**, **Ted Lemon** of **Littorai Wines**, **Ross Cobb** of **Cobb Wines**, **Eva Dehlinger** of **Dehlinger**, **Jim Clendenen** of **Clendenen Family Vineyards**, **Justin Willett** of **Tyler Winery** and **Adam Tolmach** of **The Ojai Vineyard**.

## Anderson Valley

This coastal region of Mendocino County, California, has a long history of agriculture, most famously for apples, pears, peaches, prunes and hops. In the mid-1960s pioneering wineries, like Navarro, **Edmeades** and **Husch**, planted vineyards and started making wine. In the 1980s Anderson Valley had a major expansion of wineries, and the focus shifted to Pinot Noir and Alsatian white varieties. Currently, Pinot Noir is the major variety, accounting for half of all planted acreage. There are 1,200 acres of Pinot Noir planted on 77 properties. Cool marine air influences the valley and contributes to a wide diurnal range, with daily high and low temperatures sometimes ranging more than 40 to 50 degrees. This contributes to relatively high acid development, along with fully ripened fruit. Most of the better vineyards are planted along various ridgelines, and Anderson Valley Pinot Noir is often distinguished by its cherry and black cherry aromas and flavors.



## Drew Family Cellars

### Monument Tree Vineyard 2007 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (13.8% alc.)

**Jason Drew** studied Agricultural Ecology with an emphasis on viticulture at **UC Santa Cruz**. He worked as vineyard manager at **Carmenet Winery** in Sonoma and Navarro in Anderson Valley before heading to Australia with his wife, **Molly**, for graduate studies in Oenology at the **University of Adelaide**. Returning to the United States, he worked at several wineries, including **Joseph Phelps**, **Luna** and **Corison** before settling in at **Babcock Vineyards** as associate winemaker. He founded his eponymous winery in 2000 and focuses on single-vineyard Pinot Noir from premier coastal appellations.



#### According to Drew:

“I believe less is more when it comes to intervention, so I proceed with a gentle approach. Deciding when to pick is paramount. I focus on structure rather than fruit weight, and I think waiting for full physiological ripeness is too late. Wine doesn’t finish on the vine; it is still evolving in the winery, so I try to pick while the flavors and structure are still blossoming. I think that vineyard location is critical, and I prefer bench lands, hills and ridge-top vineyards. Organic growing is an ideal of mine and a strong factor in selecting vineyards.

“Monument Tree Vineyard is in Philo on hilly bench land at 400 feet elevation and was planted in 1999. Sandy loam soil provides good drainage but with enough clay soil to provide good water retention. Yields at Monument Tree run about two tons per acre. The vineyard is planted in equal portions of three clones: 114, 115 and 667. The soils are not fertile, which generally translates to smaller crop size, meaning smaller and fewer clusters, along with smaller berries. This allows for more concentration and intensity at lower sugar levels with a better acid ratio and allows me to pick at lower sugar levels while enjoying the benefit of firmer tannins, greater acid and lower alcohol levels.

“These grapes were harvested at 23.7° Brix. They were fermented in open-top 1/2- and 1 1/2-ton fermenters. I used 15 percent whole cluster with 30 percent stems. There was a seven-day cold-soak, and fermentation started with native yeast. The fruit was punched down gently one to two times daily. After 20 days on the skins, the free run got drained to tank and back-blended with press fractions. I mixed the wine with lees and then sent to barrel via gravity, using about 30 percent new tight-grained French oak. The wine was gravity-racked twice during its 11-month elevage in barrel. The wine was bottled unfiltered and unfined.”



## Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Drew:** *This wine shows dark cherry, raspberry and mulberry with some earthiness in the aromas and flavors. The wine is in balance. I think the stems and whole clusters lend this wine its bones and serve as sort of a skeleton. The structure (the tannin and acid) handles the fruit weight. There are firm tannins and good backbone in the consistent finish. The wine needs more time.*

**Klein:** *There is plenty of cherry fruit, which is typical of Anderson Valley. It's a bit tannic and alcoholic. I think it has a ways to go before it opens up. There is some earthiness, but I think that is related more to cellar treatment than vineyard.*

**Stewart/Hodgins:** *This wine is aromatically alive with a lovely sour cherry that I love. It's intentionally tannic on the attack, which I also like. It's structured for longevity and needs more time, but it is gorgeous wine.*

**Dehlinger:** *It's expansive on the nose with dried herb and leather, in addition to fruit. There is a soft acidity. It's round up-front, with more tannic structure coming later.*

**Lemon:** *It's well made with a firm, extracted style. There's some character that I put as lees-driven that imparts a lactic, malty stylistic comment to the wine. I get some alcohol from it in the finish.*

**Cobb:** *I get dried herbs and spice with flashy, expressive cherry cola. It's soft and crisp. It's very well crafted. I also get a bit of alcohol, but it's just beautiful wine.*

**Wright:** *This wine is viscous and round, with great depth. There is lots of red and black fruit with a slight reductive character. It's very youthful with a lot of evolution to come. I like it.*

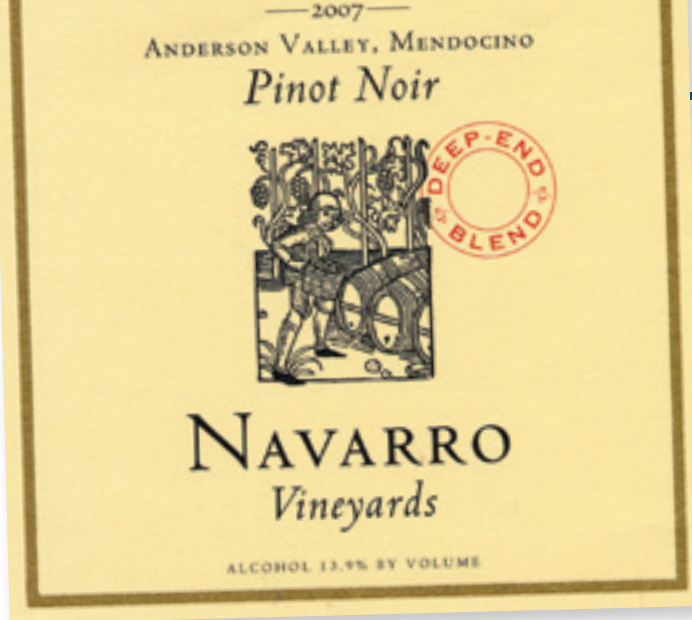
**Peterson-Nedry:** *It's beautifully balanced with ruby-red fruits and oak. Although bright fruit is not in the forefront, the wine is sweet and juicy.*

**Shea:** *I'm getting a nice floral character along with red cherry and blueberry fruit. There's some black fruit as well. Very pretty wine.*

**Clendenen:** *This is very ripe but with good acidity and some nice minerality. It's a powerful style with some cooked fruit character. It's well made wine but not my style of Pinot Noir. I prefer something more elegant and ephemeral.*

**Tolmach:** *It's plummy and a bit pruny with lots of acid, tannin and wood. The ripeness muddles the flavors. If it were less ripe, it might show better.*

**Willett:** *It's overtly ripe with slightly oxidative aromatics. It's broad in the mouth with a slightly grainy finish. This is not what I'm trying to do, but it is well crafted wine.*



## Navarro Vineyards

### Deep End Blend 2007 Anderson Valley Estate Pinot Noir (13.9% alc.)

**Jim Klein** views himself as a winegrower more than a winemaker. After graduating from **UC Davis**, he worked making wine in the Santa Ynez Valley, New Zealand, Napa Valley and the Golan Heights in Israel. He joined **Navarro Vineyards** in 1992 and won the title of winemaker of the year from the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 2002. He chose to live on the ridgeline above the Anderson Valley to get a feel for how the weather affects the grapes every day of the year. With loads of experience, he has developed definite ideas about how to best bring out the character of his estate-bottled Pinot Noirs.



#### According to Klein:

“This wine is 100 percent estate-grown from four distinct blocks, ranging from 300 to 1,200 feet in elevation. Depending on the block, grapes were planted between 1995 and 1999. Navarro’s lower elevation vineyards typically see higher daytime peak temperatures and lower nighttime temperatures. Vineyards at higher elevations are more influenced by marine onshore flows. In this blend, our lower elevation selection is Pommard (UCD 4) on 101-14 rootstock. Our upper elevation selections were Dijon 777, 667, 115 and 114, primarily on 3309. Pinot 667 consistently produces a ripe profile, and Pinot 115 generally has the fruit-forward black cherry flavors we consider to be a signature of Anderson Valley Pinot Noir. Today’s rootstocks don’t seem to handle water stress, so we irrigate throughout the season.

“For this Deep End Blend, we are looking to make a darker, more brooding wine than our Méthode à l’Ancienne. We want a big, ripe, softer style. We picked the fruit at 24° to 25° Brix using night hand-harvest. We destem 100 percent but with the rollers set wide to allow for mostly whole berries, and we use no SO<sub>2</sub> at the crusher. We use no whole clusters because I think they lend an herbal quality, especially in cooler years.

“After a cold-soak, this wine fermented in macro bins with peak temperatures hitting 78° F. Our yeast choice is Bordeaux red, which gives good mouthfeel and color and finishes dependably. At 3.5° to 5° Brix, we dump bins directly to the press, separating free run from press fractions. The day our Pinot goes dry we rack off heavy lees, screen seeds and skins and go directly to barrel. We inoculate with malolactic bacteria, approximately 30 to 45 days later so ml doesn’t finish until late February. We add SO<sub>2</sub> after ml and do a rack and return in April. Lots are selected and blended just prior to the next vintage. We lightly egg-white fine and bottle unfiltered.”

## Winemakers’ Tasting Notes

**Klein:** *This wine has rich, robust flavors and tannins but still shows cherry fruit aromas typical of Anderson Valley. There is dark cherry fruit in the mouth with a bit of earthiness and some sweetness on the palate. It’s not overtly acidic. There is oak for structure and sweetness, but it’s not oaky. Alcohol and tannin support the wine without dominating it. 2007 was a really good vintage, and this wine shows that.*

**Drew:** *I really like the subtleties of this wine. There’s a perfume character with cherry and earth. It is expressive and expansive on the palate and long on ripe fruit without being too ripe. I like that the wine isn’t overdone, and the oak is well integrated.*

**Stewart/Hodgins:** *I think this would be a great food wine paired with most anything. There is a softness on the palate with a savory black cherry finish. Oak is pronounced in the aroma, which is not a usual Navarro characteristic, but it’s fine in the mouth. I think he nailed what he was trying, and it still has the classic Anderson Valley cherry character.*

**Lemon:** *An attractive aroma of dark, black cherry with a hint of green leaf tobacco. There is good aroma volume. A lot of fruit presence in the mouth, especially dark raspberry. There is good weight and sweetness. This is well made wine.*

**Cobb:** *It’s floral with a beautiful cherry creaminess. There is some subtle spice mint. I’ve had a lot of wines from Navarro, and this is my favorite from the site.*

**Dehlinger:** *Nice acid. The wine is well textured and succulent, with raspberry and some floral character. It’s very nice and flavorful.*

**Peterson-Nedry:** *I get some very exotic aromas of banana, melon and cranberry. It’s bright, fresh and elegant, with loads of balance between the fruit and acid. It needs time and could use a bit less oak.*

**Shea:** *I’m getting some orange peel with candied red cherry in the aroma that carries over to the flavor. It has good acid balance*

**Wright:** *This wine is heavier with more oak than the Drew. It’s good, well made wine with a bit of heat on the finish.*

**Clendenen:** *This is a different style than normal for Navarro. It seems ripe without being physically mature. I like the mouthfeel. The aromatics are bombastic and large scale, and there is some humus that I like. It’s sweet but with decent acidity.*

**Willett:** *It’s very ripe. I like the mouth more than the aromatics. It’s broad in the mouth and has an earthy clay note which I like, but it doesn’t have the vibrancy I associate with Pinot Noir.*

**Tolmach:** *It’s a bit ripe on the nose and fairly rich in the mouth but with a lightness of body that I like. It’s a generous ripe style and my favorite of the flight.*

## Breggo Cellars

**Donnelly Creek Vineyard  
2007 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir  
(14.7% alc.)**

**Doug Stewart** was raised in Sonoma and traveled through the Amazon before he decided to start his winery in the Anderson Valley in 2005. He owns 200 acres in the Anderson Valley and has just started planting his own vineyards, but to start **Breggo Cellars** he focused on setting up contracts with the top growers in the area. Working with consulting winemaker **Ryan Hodgins**, they focus on crisp, intense white wines and cool climate Pinot Noir. Breggo Cellars was acquired by Cliff Lede in 2009, and Hodgins was promoted to winemaker in June 2010.



Doug Stewart

### According to Stewart/ Hodgins:

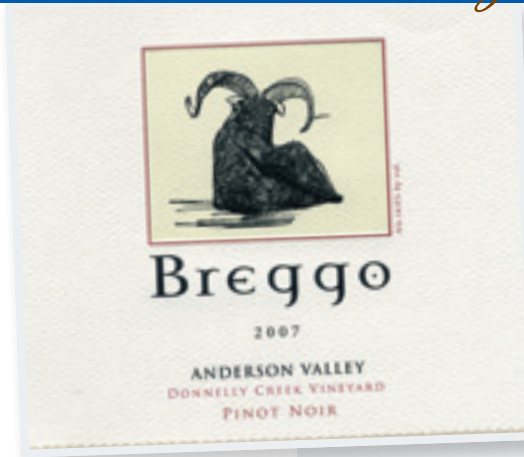
“Our philosophy is to make wine as gently as possible. We want to make wines we like, and we like the bolder, riper fruit side of Pinot Noir. We believe that the hotter the fermentation and the longer the juice sits on the skins, then the greater the extraction. All of our growers have a long history in farming Anderson Valley Pinot Noir.



Ryan Hodgins

“**Donnelly Creek Vineyard** is a steep terrace. These grapes come from a cobbled riverside with about two feet of loam on top of rock boulders. Drainage is very good, and the vineyard supports large yields. We harvested about four tons per acre here. The selection includes three clones although 80 percent is Pommard, with the balance split between Martini and Stang. Donnelly Creek produces classic, ripe, cherry-flavored Pinot Noir. We pick at full physiological ripeness with brown seeds and lignified stems. In 2007 that meant between 24° and 25° Brix.

“We destemmed into small fermenters and cold-soaked for five days. We warmed the fermenters and allowed a spontaneous fermentation to begin. We punched down one to two times a day, depending on how quickly the fermentation progressed and the cap temperature. We tend to get the cap temperature into the low 90s F. Once the fermentation is complete, we seal up the fermenters for an extended maceration, lasting three to seven days, so total time on the skins is usually between 17 and 24 days. Fermenters are drained by gravity and pressed in a basket press. Free run and press fractions were separated, and the wine settled in a tank for two days before it was barreled down using 60 percent new oak. Donnelly Creek tends to have more tannin so we use more new oak than on some of our other Pinots. We inoculate for malolactic and keep the cellar at 65°F until ml finishes, usually in January. We add SO<sub>2</sub> and then do very little. The wine was radically reductive, but by May or June that corrected itself. The wine was not racked until blending preparatory to bottling in August.”



## Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Stewart/Hodgins:** *The wine is a bit muted aromatically right now. It enters the mouth softly and then explodes in the mid-palate, classically ripe cherry fruit. The tannins are fairly aggressive but should smooth out with time.*

**Klein:** *This is a successful wine. They use the tannin and lees to great advantage, creating a creamy sweetness full of red cherry in the mouth.*

**Drew:** *I like this wine more and more as it opens up. There is spiciness and some minerality, maybe from the roots going down into those boulders. There is great sour cherry flavor along with some exotic spice, and the tannins are expansive.*

**Cobb:** *There are toasty aromas with graphite and mineral overlying some cherry and strawberry notes. There is a nice glycerol sweetness on the palate and nice oak, but I find the finish a bit short.*

**Dehlinger:** *This wine highlights the attractive attributes of oak barrels. It's round and sweet, intense and polished.*

**Lemon:** *There is a nice barrel presence with cherry tones and good tannic structure.*

**Shea:** *It's a bit raw and oaky with spice, smoke and big tannins. I get cranberry and cherry with some raspberry, but it is a bit overwhelmed by oak.*

**Peterson-Nedry:** *Dark and masculine with black cherry fruit, some floral character and spice from the oak. It's a horizontal wine that's a bit imbalanced.*

**Wright:** *It has a very engaging nose that is complex and makes me think. On the palate, the first hit is oak with some underlying low-level VA, but it remains very complex throughout.*

**Willett:** *There's lots of dark red fruit with some dusty, almost resinous, wood. There's a full mouthfeel of Pinot Noir. It's slightly grainy and tannic, but I like the wine.*

**Clendenen:** *I find it ripe, and the alcohol is obtrusive. It's sweet, ripe and forward, coats the mouth and is huge. Maybe some high pH. It's not my style.*

**Tolmach:** *It's got pleasant medium body with an oaky, pleasant aroma and high acidity, but the sense of alcohol is just too high.*

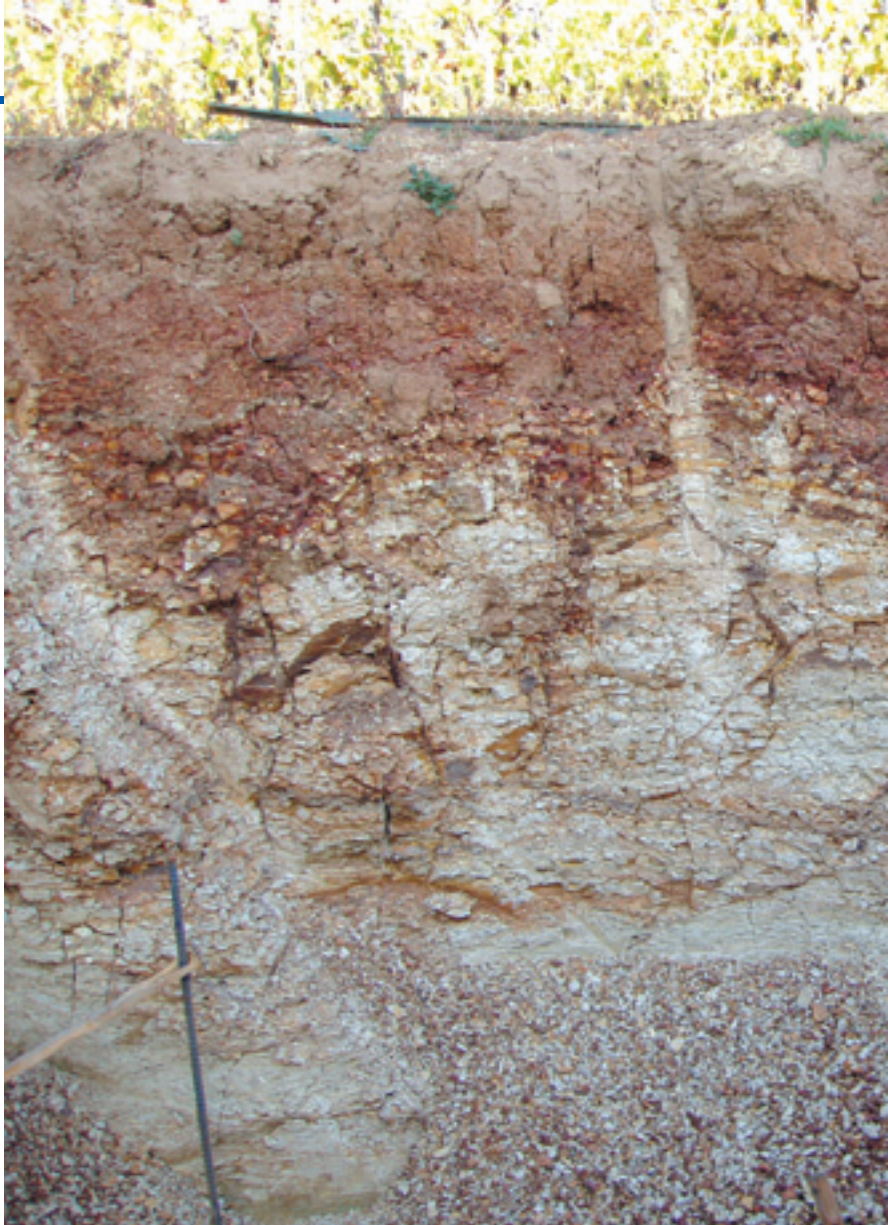
# Pinot Noir



## Willamette Valley

The Willamette Valley is Oregon's largest grape growing region and acts as its Pinot Noir heartland with close to 400 wineries. Pinot Noir accounts for more than half of the vineyard acreage, totaling more than 10,000 acres. Much has been made of the fact that the Willamette Valley sits at 45 degrees latitude, the same as the Burgundy region in France, but more important is the Coastal Range that buffers the valley from harsh coastal influences. Most vineyards occupy hillsides and are planted between 200 and 700 foot elevations. The wide valley and the hills, along with a wide variety of soil types, micro-climates and geological differences, have allowed winemakers to create six sub-appellations. The focus of these sub-appellations is terroir, especially soil type, where many winemakers believe the sedimentary Willakenzie soils produce dark fruit character with an earthiness and structured tannins while the volcanic Jory soils tend more to red fruit, spice and softer wines. In any case, Oregon is passionate about its Pinot Noir, from the winemakers to the restaurateurs to the consumers.

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## Chehalem

### Reserve 2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (13% alc.)

**Harry Peterson-Nedry** is the founder, winemaker and managing partner of **Chehalem**. His interest in wine began as a hobby but soon escalated with the planting of his 55-acre Ridgecrest Vineyards in 1980, the first vineyard in what is now Ribbon Ridge AVA. **Peterson-Nedry** founded Chehalem in 1990, brought in partners **Bill** and **Cathy Stoller** in 1993, and now, after 20 years, works with winemaker **Mike Eyres** and assistant winemaker **Wynne Peterson-Nedry** to craft Chehalem wines. Peterson-Nedry is very active in the Oregon wine industry, serving his second term on the **Oregon Wine Board**. He also serves on the board of **WineAmerica**, helped to establish **Oregon Pinot Camp**, co-authored the AVA petition for Ribbon Ridge and has worked as an ambassador for Oregon wines all over the world.



MARY HINCKLEY

#### According to Peterson-Nedry:

“The Ribbon Ridge, with its Willakenzie soils series (Wellsdale et al.), exhibits both volcanic and ocean sedimentary structures with ocean sediment laid over basalt flows. Sitting at 420 to 680 feet, the Ridgecrest Vineyard dates back to 1982 and was planted on our own root systems using 70 percent Pommard and 30 percent Wadenswil clones at about 725 vines to the acre. For our second planting in 2000, we used grafted vines with 667, 777, 115 and Pommard, planted at 1,400 vines to the acre. The vineyard is dry-farmed. We crop-thin assiduously and leaf-strip on the eastern sides, aiming for 2- to 2 1/2-tons per acre. 2008 was one of our coolest growing seasons, with harvest starting about two weeks late on September 30 but without significant rainfall. The crop load was 1.3 to 2.1 tons per acre.

“To us, Pinot Noir is more about finesse, elegance and complexity rather than power, massive fruit and tannin. We focus on an elegant rather than an extractive approach. All of our grapes are cold-soaked after adding somewhere between 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> (for impeccably clean fruit) and 100 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> (for challenging fruit). Ridgecrest usually goes eight to 10 days before starting its native fermentation. We used an average of 11 percent whole cluster fermentation, from multiple ferments with varying levels of whole cluster, which gave us blending flexibility to obtain the right structure, as well as giving a range of flavors and spices. Our acids tend to be high, but we will add acid, before cold-soak, if needed. The wine was fermented in four- to five-ton fermenters and reached peak cap temperatures of 92° to 93° F. A full range of coopers was used, ranging from the elegant **Sirugues** through rich **François Frères** to bacony **Gillet** or **Rousseau**. Malolactic completes in barrel, and SO<sub>2</sub> is maintained at 15 to 20 ppm after that. We aged the wine for 10 months, using 41 percent new oak. We normally cross-flow filter anything above 15 NTUs. This Reserve bottling is blended from selected barrels from our oldest vineyard with a ‘feminine’ character in mind.”

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## Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Peterson-Nedry:** You get the spice with herbal character of whole cluster fermentation on the nose. There is bright, juicy fruit of red cherry and raspberry along with some bramble and earthiness. It is supple and silky but showing a bit rough right now. The tannins are fine, and there is good acidity, which points to a wine that should age well.

**Wright:** There is high-tone red fruit with some rhubarb and an attractive, subtle mushroom character. It has very attractive texture and lots of complexity.

**Shea:** This is an elegantly styled wine. It shows spicy raspberry, rhubarb and hibiscus with a bit of herbal character that speaks of well done whole cluster fermentation. There is great acidity and a lacy tannin structure.

**Stewart/Hodgins:** It's interesting wine with lots of different things going on. It's a bit off in the nose but has very decent fruit, given the vintage.

**Drew:** I like the wine. It's provocative and complex. I like the structure and the weight, which isn't heavy but still shows complex earthy notes along with red fruits and a consistent finish. It's an elegant wine.

**Klein:** It's a pretty successful wine. Everything falls into place. There's a bit of soy/oxidation in the nose, which I assume is from the rain. The fruit is rhubarb and cranberry and a bit tart, but there's a sweet mid-palate that works nicely.

**Tolmach:** I get some reduction, possibly from the screw cap. There is high acidity, and the wine is tightly strung. It's very young and needs some time. It's the polar opposite of the Shea.

**Willett:** It has a nutty, cashew aroma. It's very young. There's light red fruit. I think the level of acid disrupts the balance. This is the thinnest wine so far.

**Clendenen:** This is bright with ripe, red fruits and plenty of acid. The wine carries the acidity and will become more complex. The oak is well integrated. With time, this will be a nice, complex, well textured wine.

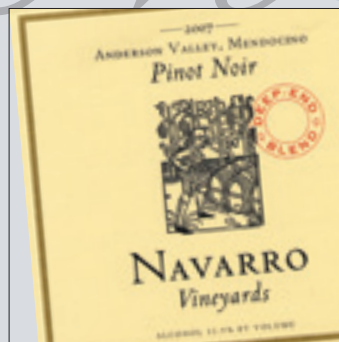
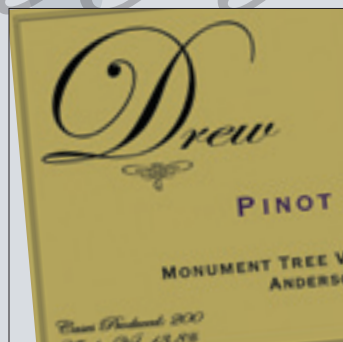
**Dehlinger:** It's earthy with lovely lavender aromas and some hints of tar that mimic reduction. The wine has an incredible minerality in the mouth.

**Lemon:** There is some fresh herbal character that I associate with whole cluster. It's not fat but has good weight. There's a green tannic structure that will likely improve with time.

**Cobb:** I note that this bottle comes under screw cap, and I pick up tar, toast and some reduction to start. Then there is bright carbonic-like cherry fruit and almost hidden fruit purity. There's good mineral mid-palate and good tannins. There's a one-dimensional aroma that will likely improve. It's beautiful wine.

# The Pinot Noir Data Sheet

## Anderson Valley



<b>Wines</b>	Monument Tree Vineyard 2007 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (13.8% alc.)	Deep End Blend 2007 Anderson Valley Estate Pinot Noir (13.9% alc.)	Donnelly Creek Vineyards 2007 Anderson Valley Pinot Noir (14.7% alc.)	Reserve 2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (13% alc.)
<b>Winery/Vineyard</b>	<b>Drew Family Cellars, Monument Tree Vineyard</b>	<b>Navarro Vineyards</b>	<b>Breggo Cellars, Donnelly Creek Vineyards</b>	<b>Chehalem</b>
<b>Winemaker's goal</b>	Focus on structure with more concentration at lower sugar with better acid ratios and lower alcohol	Produce a darker more brooding style than our Méthode à l'Ancienne	Bolder, riper fruit style with maximum extraction	Produce a wine of finesse, elegance and complexity
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Jason Drew</b>	<b>Jim Klein</b>	<b>Doug Stewart and Ryan Hodgins</b>	<b>Harry Peterson-Nedry, Mike Eyres</b>
<b>State, County</b>	CA, Mendocino County	CA, Mendocino County	CA, Mendocino County	OR, Yamhill County
<b>AVA</b>	Anderson Valley	Anderson Valley	Anderson Valley	Ribbon Ridge
<b>Vineyard Location</b>	Northwest side of valley near Philo	3 miles west of Philo	Across Anderson Creek in Boonville	On ridge between Yamhill and Newberg

### Vineyard Data

<b>Predominant Geology (soil type)</b>	Silty clay loam, 2 to 3 feet deep	Clay loam	Steep terrace, cobbled riverside, 2 foot loam atop boulders	Willakenzie volcanic and ocean sediment over basalt flows, silty clay loam
<b>Elevation</b>	400 feet	300 to 1,200 feet	400 to 500 feet	420 to 680 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	8x5 feet	10x6-foot lyre, 4x7-foot vertical shoot position (VSP)	8x5 feet	6x10 feet, 4x8 feet
<b>Exposure</b>	Southeast	Western with Southern	South - Southeast	South
<b>Clones</b>	Equal 114, 115, 667	Lower block UCD4, upper Dijon 777, 667, 115, 114	80% Pommard, Martini and Stang	70% Pommard, 30% Wadenswil then graft 667, 777, 115
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	Dry-farmed, rare minimal irrigation	Irrigated	Irrigated	Dry-farmed
<b>Farming (organic, biodynamic, traditional)</b>	Organic	Sustainable, non-certified organic	Certified sustainable	Sustainable

### Winemaking Data

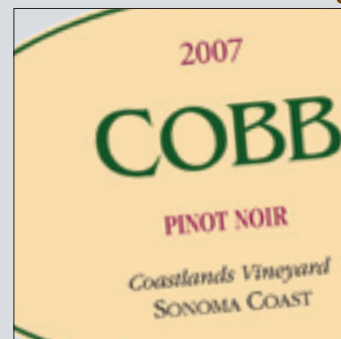
<b>Cold-Soak?</b>	7 days	Yes	5 days	8 to 10 days
<b>Fermentation/Whole Cluster?</b>	15% whole cluster, 30% stems, on skins 20 days	Destem 100%	No stems, no whole clusters	Whole cluster, percent varies, separate free run and press
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	88 to 90 degrees	High 78 degrees	Low 90s	92 to 93 degrees
<b>Punchdown Methods</b>	Punchdown 1 to 2 times daily	Punchdown twice daily	Punchdown 1 to 2 times daily; more if hot	Pump-over cold-soak, punchdown twice daily; high temp pump-over
<b>Oak Program</b>	30% new French oak, 70% seasoned French oak	50% new, French oak	50% new, French oak	41% new, French oak, multiple coopers
<b>Barrel Aging</b>	11 months	11 months	10 to 11 months	10 months
<b>Racking</b>	Free run to tank, back blend with press, then 2 gravity racks	Rack and return in April	Once at bottling	Usually not until bottling
<b>Filtering</b>	Unfiltered and unfined	Light egg white fine, bottle unfiltered	Unfiltered	Cross-flow filter above 15 NTU



# Willamette Valley



# Sonoma County



Vineyard Block 7 2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (14.8% alc.)

Savoya Vineyard 2008 Pinot Noir (13.5% alc.)

Thieriot Vineyard 2007 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (13.6% alc.)

Coastlands Vineyard 2007 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (13.0% alc.)

**Shea Wine Cellars,  
Shea Vineyard Block 7**

**Ken Wright Cellars,  
Savoya Vineyard**

**Littorai Wines,  
B.A. Thieriot Vineyard**

**Cobb Wines,  
Coastlands Vineyard**

Get a range of red, blue and black fruit with silky tannins

Produce a supple, well textured wine with good structure and backbone that is age-worthy

All about individual vineyard terroir and ageability

Trying to make complex, lower alcohol expressions of Pinot Noir

**Drew Yoit**

**Ken Wright**

**Ted Lemon**

**Ross Cobb**

OR, Yamhill County

OR, Yamhill County

CA, Sonoma County

CA, Sonoma County

Yamhill-Carlton

Yamhill-Carlton

Sonoma Coast

Sonoma Coast

7 miles from Newberg

Southeast of Yamhill

Ridge between Occidental and Bodega Bay

4 miles from the ocean

Marine sediment over fractured sandstone, shallow soil

Willakenzie compressed and highly degraded marine sediments

Goldridge with gravelly loam

Uplifted marine terrace soils with Kneeland and Yorkville clay loam

475 to 550 feet

450 feet

900 feet

900 to 1,200 feet

5x7 feet

6.5x4 feet with VSP

9x3 feet, 8x4 feet

6x9 feet and vertical cane-pruned

South

Southeast

South

Southwest

100% Wadenswil

25% 115, 23% 777, 22% Pommard, 14% 667, 12% Wadenswil, 3% Cruz Chard

Pommard, 114, 828. Calera, Swan and Archery Summit

25 clones, mostly Pommard 4, Mt. Eden 37, Martini 13/15 and 2A

Dry-farmed

Dry-farmed

Irrigated

Dry-farmed, very occasionally irrigated

Sustainable, certified USDA best practices

Non-certified organic

Non-certified organic and biodynamic

Certified sustainable

8 to 10 days

5 days

3 to 5 days

Under CO<sub>2</sub> 3 to 5 days

100% destem

Partial vary, 14-15 day fermentation

Destem, whole cluster, depending on vintage

Destem but up to 20% whole cluster

86 to 92 degrees

90 to 92 degrees

80 to 90 degrees

90 to 95 degrees

1 to 3 times daily, delestage on wood tank

Punchdown twice daily

Pump-over to begin then punchdown

1 to 3 times daily

73% new, French oak

40% new, French oak

30 to 40% new, French oak

20 to 40% new, French oak

9 to 10 months

Lees stirred

16 months

17 months

Settle in tanks, post press, rack to barrels

Just for bottling

No racking

One rack in May or September

Coarse filter

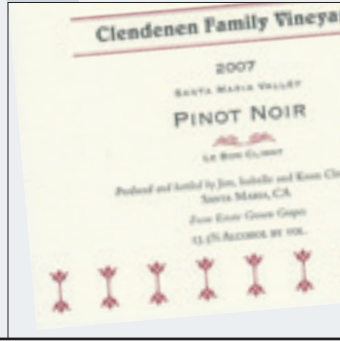
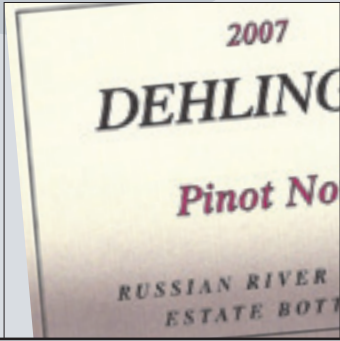
No

Unfiltered

Unfiltered and unfined

# Sonoma County

# Santa Barbara County



Estate Bottled 2007 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (14.9% alc.)

Estate Bottled 2007 Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir (13.5% alc.)

Presidio 2007 Santa Barbara County Pinot Noir (14.1% alc.)

Fe Ciega Vineyard 2007 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (14.0% alc.)

## Dehlinger

## Clendenen Family Vineyards

## Tyler Winery, Presidio Vineyard

## The Ojai Vineyard, Fe Ciega Vineyard

Show darker fruit and more spice, earthiness and structure than our Goldridge Pinot Noir

Looking for balance and something that is distinctively Santa Maria but Burgundian in style with no additions and less than 14% alcohol

Looking for balance with earlier picking, less new oak and less alcohol

Looking to control boisterous fruit with more acid and less alcohol

### Tom and Eva Dehlinger

### Jim Clendenen

### Justin Willett

### Adam Tolmach

CA, Sonoma County

CA, Santa Barbara County

CA, Santa Barbara County

CA, Santa Barbara County

Russian River

Santa Maria Valley

Santa Rita Hills

Santa Rita Hills

Guerneville and Vinehill roads

Just west of Santa Rita Hills

End of Sweeney Rd., 8 miles east of Lompoc

Red sandy clay loam

Fine sandy loam, well drained

Sandy soil

Clay loam with shale fragments

220 to 240 feet

350 to 500 feet

150 feet

350 feet

10x8 feet

3x6 feet to 3x8 feet

3x7 feet

4x8 feet

Varies with rolling hills

Top of Mesa

South

South

Pommard and Swan with less Martini and Dijon 777

100 percent clone 667

100% 115

Pommard, 115, 667

Dry-farmed

Irrigation is mandatory

Irrigated

Irrigated

Traditional

Sustainable

Certified organic and biodynamic

Sustainable

4 days

4-day cold maceration with 2 pump-overs daily

4 days, 45 to 50 degrees

5 days

Varies. 5% with this wine

Destem

Destemmed

Destem, no whole clusters

88 degrees

90 degrees

85 to 90 degrees

High 95 degrees

1 to 4 times daily

Twice daily

Punchdown 1 to 3 times daily

3 times daily until 10°Brix then once a day

François Frères, Remond, Rousseau, 45% new

100% new, French oak

Typically 30 to 40% new

35% new, French oak

16 to 18 months

18 to 20 months and 1-year bottle age

10 to 14 months on lees, rack then 2 to 5 more months

15 months

Rack for final blend and again at bottling

After ML and before bottling

One rack to blend, another to bottle

At bottling

Unfiltered

Unfiltered and unfined

Unfiltered and unfined

Unfiltered and unfined

## Shea Wine Cellars

### Vineyard Block 7 2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (14.8% alc.)

**Dick Shea** was a successful Wall Street broker when he first started looking at property in the Willamette Valley. Eschewing the popular Dundee Hills region, Shea pioneered growing grapes on land with sedimentary soils over fractured sandstone when he planted his vineyard in 1989. The resulting grapes emphasized the earthiness in Pinot Noir grapes and made Shea Vineyards a legendary Oregon property that sold Pinot Noir to 20 well known Oregon wineries and several others in California. In 1996 Shea and his wife **Deidre** decided to start **Shea Wine Cellars** and create their own expression of Shea Vineyard terroir. Currently, 25 percent of Shea Vineyard grapes go to Shea Wine Cellars.



#### According to Shea:

“We were growers for 10 years before we started making wine. Our vineyard is a warm site in a cool climate. Our soils are extremely shallow and well draining, and our fruit ripens significantly earlier than the average for the Willamette Valley. Our soil is marine sediment, and we dry-farm because we feel that allows our unique terroir and the vintage to best express themselves. The vineyard is south-facing and steep at 475- to 550-foot elevations. Wadenswil clone is a good performer here, and it is planted in a five-foot by seven-foot configuration. We harvested two tons to the acre.

“We destem 100 percent and cluster sort. We use a long cold-soak of eight to 10 days, layering dry ice into the grapes. We add some

enzyme as needed, warm up the must and inoculate with Asmanhaussen yeast. We didn't add acid to this wine, but we will when necessary. The wine ferments in two- to three-ton fermenters for another nine to 10 days.

We punchdown one to three times daily and perform a delestage on our wood tank. We press according to the tannin profile just before the cap falls around one to two degrees balling. We finish fermentation and settle in tanks before racking the wine to French oak barrels where it ages for nine to 10 months. We used 73 percent new oak.”



## Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Shea:** We like silky tannins and a range of red, blue and black fruit. This Block 7 is spicy and floral with complex bramble, spice, berries and plum, not cherry. There is lots of color and tannin, but the tannin is polished.

**Wright:** I love this wine. It has great density and a seamless texture that is incredible. There are lush dark blue and black fruit flavors with some attractive earthiness. This wine is even denser than normal and should dramatically improve with bottle age.

**Peterson-Nedry:** Lots of lovely blackberry and blueberry fruit. It's rustic with style and loads of extraction. It's just a baby. It needs time, lots of time.

**Klein:** I'm blown away by how big this wine is, especially for an Oregon Pinot. It's a lovely wine, big and warm. There are big, jammy, blackberry flavors with a lot of oak. It reminds me of some Russian River Pinots.

**Stewart/Hodgins:** The aromas come across a bit flat to me, but the wine is big and thick and coats your tongue. It's meaty with ripe fruit flavors and plenty of oak. It warms you up and has big tannins.

**Drew:** It really coats the mouth with thick, blackberry jam flavor. It's got some butterscotch notes. I think it's almost over-extracted. I enjoy the wine, but it seems atypical of Oregon Pinot Noir.

**Clendenen:** This has lots of black fruit and even some licorice. It's the closest we've had to cooked fruit, and it borders on jammy. This is not my style.

**Willett:** This is the ripest wine so far, slightly raisiny. If wines can be described as going from glossy to a matte finish, then this is a matte finish. It's broad with no real length.

**Tolmach:** The wine is clean but comes across as heavy. It's a bit over-ripe and too soft. It's more typical of California than Oregon.

**Lemon:** It couldn't be more different from the Chehalem. There's lots of blackberry, raspberry and new wood. It's very dense and extracted. I think it is well made for the style.

**Dehlinger:** It's very extracted with a firm structure. I get cherry, vanilla and cola notes. I find the overall wine to be a bit blunt and harsh.

**Cobb:** Flashy dark blackberry. It's dense and sharp with lots of oak toast. There's an oily sweetness. It's a very showy wine.

## Ken Wright Cellars

### Savoya Vineyard 2008 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (13.5% alc.)

**Ken Wright** graduated with an enology degree from UC Davis and then spent eight years as winemaker, first for **Ventana Vineyards** in the Salinas Valley and then for **Talbott Vineyards** in the Carmel Valley before he founded **Panther Creek Cellars** in 1986 in Oregon, focusing on vineyard-designated bottlings. After selling Panther Creek in 1994, he started **Ken Wright Cellars** in 1994, and vineyard-designated bottling became a core philosophy. Wright is actively involved in the Willamette Valley. He helped organize the valley's six new AVAs, wrote the federal application for the Yamhill-Carlton District and served as the first president. He was recently awarded the VINI Award for a lifetime of service to the wine industry and the Oregon community at large.



#### According to Wright:

"I think the whole key to winemaking lies in the vineyard, and by that I mean farming each vineyard site into nutritional balance. We analyze the nutrition of the vines and the soil as well as checking the microorganisms in the soil. Depending on the initial deficiencies, it may take years to correct the issues. When we have tailored the nutritional balance of the soil and vines to the site, we get better expression in the wine.

"We purchased Savoya Vineyard in 1998. Elevations run 325 to 450 feet. The site is southeast-facing. We're on Willakenzie soil with compressed and highly degraded marine sediments. We planted the vineyard in 1999, using 6.5-foot by 4-foot spacing with vertical shoot position trellising. Clonal selections are as follows: 25 percent 115, 23 percent 777, 22 percent Pommard, 12 percent Wadenswill, 14 percent 667 and 3 percent Cruz Chardonnay. This vineyard typically produces fruit with thinner skins that give less tannin. Acidity provides the structure. We usually harvest 2 1/2 tons to the acre.

"Picking decisions are based on the development of the berries. I'm looking for seed color change, separation of the seed from the pulp and some separation of the pulp from the skin. There is a point when you taste the fruit in the field that you involuntarily say, 'WOW!' When you are saying 'wow' nine out of 10 berries, it's time to line up a picking crew. Savoya usually has blueberry, raspberry and cola notes. It tends not to be as spicy or floral as our other sedimentary sites.

"We picked into shallow bins and used a long sorting line to remove any damaged fruit. The grapes were de-stemmed but not crushed to 1 1/4-ton bins. We laid in 15 percent whole cluster and layered with dry ice to chill to 45° F. We cold-soaked for five days because I'm trying to get an aqueous-based extraction without the presence of alcohol. On the sixth day we added nutrition and raised the temperature to 70° F before starting fermentation. We fermented with peak temperatures reaching 90° to 92° F, punched down twice daily and pressed before the cap dropped. Press and free run juice may or may not be combined, depending on vintage. Pressing normally takes place 14 to 15 days after the onset of fermentation. After settling in tank, the wine was racked to French oak barrels, using 40 percent new barrels. Malolactic occurred naturally in barrel without inoculation. Lees will be stirred, particularly in low pH years when reduction can be more prevalent."

#### Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Wright:** I'm getting blueberry, cherry and raspberry with nuances of chocolate. The wine is supple and well textured. There is relatively high acid, which is typical for us and helps provide good structure and backbone. This wine will be slow to evolve but should be beautiful down the road.

**Shea:** This wine shows bright red fruit with cherry and rose hip aromas and flavors. There's an earthiness that adds to the complexity. It's round and pleasing in the mouth with a long finish.

**Peterson-Nedry:** There's a red and blue fruit flavor combination without being overly extracted. I'm getting finely structured tannins. There's a perfect balance between the wood, the acid and the tannin.

**Drew:** All of these wines are very different from one another. This wine seems awkward. It's not polished and focused. It seems very ripe to the point of stewed fruit with some molasses.

**Klein:** There's some burnt sugar on the nose with tart and tannic fruit flavors. It's a bit angular right now. I think it needs time.

**Stewart/Hodgins:** Generally, I love Ken Wright's wines, but this one is a bit reduced in the nose and mouth. It's well structured with good weight and balance, but I'm not caring for the flavor and aromatics.

**Tolmach:** There's a leafy nose which I find beguiling. It's fruity but not overtly so. There is plenty of acid and a bit of grip in the finish. I like it.

**Willett:** I like the weight of the wine. There is some acid poking out on the back side. There is some savory, dried leaf character with medium red fruit and tart red fruit flavors.

**Clendenen:** I get red fruit, cola and some sap aromas. It's ripe in the mouth but not aromatically. The fruit is not carried by the acidity, which makes it a bit simple right now. It doesn't coat the mouth as much as it fills the mouth. It's good wine that needs more time.

**Lemon:** There are green notes with a rich, dense palate. Stylistically, it sits somewhere between the Chehalem and the Shea. The tannin needs time to resolve itself.

**Cobb:** Showy wine. There is some reduced herbal/subtle leafiness. It's crisp on the palate with dry tannins.

**Dehlinger:** It's a bit reductive but attractive. I get floral, rose and earthy notes. There is zingy, refreshing acidity, but it's not aggressive. There is a sense of lushness with good weight.

# Pinot Noir



## Sonoma County

Sonoma County has a long history with Pinot Noir and one of the state's largest plantings with more than 10,000 acres. Pinot Noir is planted in all parts of the county, but we focused on the cooler, western and coastal regions. **Joseph Swan** and **Tom Dehlinger** pioneered Pinot Noir production back in the 1960s in the Russian River Valley. The foggy nights, cool mornings and warm sunny days led to ripe and elegant wines. Primarily planted to Goldridge and Franciscan soils, these Pinots show black cherry with crisp acid along with substantial tannins. More recently, adventurous souls have ventured farther west into the true coastal zone. Diverse geology includes a wide range of soil types, from marine sediments to volcanic, as well as dramatic climatic variations, depending on elevation and fog intrusion. Sonoma Coast Pinot Noirs are distinguished by their complex spicy character and backbone of high acidity.



PHOTOS BY DEHLINGER

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## Littorai Wines

### Littorai B.A. Thieriot Vineyard 2007 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (13.6% alc.)

**Ted Lemon** began his career studying at the **Université de Bourgogne**. He apprenticed at several famous Burgundian estates before becoming the first American hired as winemaker/vineyard manager of a Burgundian estate: **Domaine Guy Roulot** in Mersault. He's worked as winemaker and consultant for many prominent wineries, like **Howell Mountain Vineyard, Green and Red Vineyard, Chateau Woltner** and **Archery Summit**. Along with his wife **Heidi**, he started his own **Littorai Wines** in 1993, focusing on wines from carefully selected sites where yields and ripening conditions are marginal.



#### According to Lemon:

"This vineyard sits on a ridge between Occidental and Bodega Bay at about 900 feet elevation. The site is marginal, meaning that it is cold and wet, especially in the spring, and we're lucky to get two tons to the acre. The vineyard was planted in 1994 with several different clones, including Pommard, 114, 828, Calera, Swan and a selection from Archery Summit. It's south-facing and farmed using only organically-certified materials and using Biodynamic principles. It's on vertical trellis with two different spacings: 9-foot by 3-foot and 8-foot by 4-foot.

"We determine picking by a combination of taste, flavor and numbers, generally picking less ripe than typical, usually in the 23° to 24.5° Brix range. We sort and destem the grapes, add 25 to 40 parts SO<sub>2</sub>, chill them to 50 to 55° F and then turn off the cooling. We use whole cluster, depending on vintage. The higher the pH, the less whole cluster we use. We make every effort to avoid additions of any kind, so both primary and secondary fermentations are carried out by native strains. Our Pinots ferment in one- to three-ton stainless steel and wooden open-topped fermenters. Fermentation runs two to four weeks with top temperatures in the 80- to 90-degree range. We primarily punchdown during fermentation, but we will pump-over early in the fermentation to help aerate the wine and get the yeast off to a healthy start.

"The wine is pressed in a bladder press, and the press fraction is separated from the free-run juice. The free-run wine is racked to French oak barrels, using 30 to 40 percent new oak. The wine sits in the barrels for 16 months with no racking. We maintain SO<sub>2</sub> at 10 to 25 free. The wine is bottled unfiltered and often unfinned directly off of the original lees. Our wines are made to live full and complete lives. We like to see them blossom, become complex and then slowly decline into senility."



## Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Lemon:** This 2007 is an excellent representation of the site, and it's very distinctive. There is an orange zest note, some white pepper and an intriguing note of antique armoire, a descriptor usually reserved for Bordeaux. This combination of pepper and antique tones makes the wine sound unlike classic Pinot Noir. It is more driven by site than variety. There is good acidity and moderate tannin with good length. It is dense, rich and structured. This is a good candidate for aging seven to 10 years.

**Dehlinger:** There is a nice, earthy, smoky component. The tannins are delicate, and there is plenty of acidity for this wine to age.

**Cobb:** There are beautiful aromas of white pepper and mahogany. I get leafy earth, spice and raspberry in the flavors. It's delicious with a subtle sweetness and crisp acid. I also think this wine could go 10 to 20 years.

**Drew:** I like the structure of the wine. The acids are in tune with the tannins and the fruit, but it's not a polished wine yet. There is some typical coastal spiciness, but there's a reductive blurring that mutes the brightness.

**Stewart/Hodgins:** There's a very spicy aroma. I don't get much in the mid-palate until the end, and then there is more spiciness than fruit.

**Klein:** There's some nice sweet fruit although it's a bit hot. It's straightforward and a bit tart, possibly from being under-ripe. I taste some pretty strawberry, which I associate as the Littorai signature.

**Peterson-Nedry:** This wine has unique aromas. They are mature with leather and orange spice. The wine is fully extracted with a balanced palate and fine tannins.

**Shea:** It seems a bit shy on the aromatics, almost as if there's a bit too much SO<sub>2</sub>. There are spice and pepper aromas, and then the wine explodes on the palate with rich flavors.

**Wright:** The nose is advanced, almost tea-like more than straight fruit. It reminds me of some of the older California styles, like Calera and Chalone.

**Tolmach:** I'm kind of a fan of this wine. I like the floral perfumed aromas. There may be a touch of reduction, but I like it. It goes down nicely with good acidity. It's not overly alcoholic. The tannins and acidity poke out a little. It's a young wine that needs time to come together.

**Willett:** I like this a lot. The aromatics are fresh. The wine is balanced, and I like the acid level. It's not overdone or over-extracted. It's pretty wine.

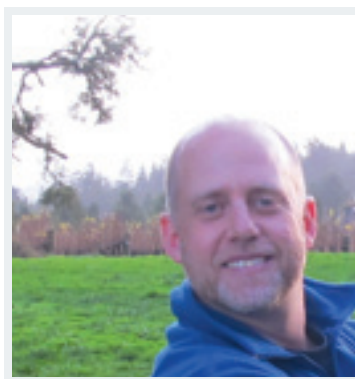
**Clendenen:** This is balanced at a high pitch. It was picked right and executed well. It has rich entry, a rich middle and a rich finish.



## Cobb Wines

### Coastlands Vineyard 2007 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir (13.0% alc.)

Ross Cobb acquired a degree in agro-ecology and sustainable agriculture. That landed him a job with **Ferrari Carano**, running a soils lab and doing winery research. He did a stint at **Bonny Doon** and then moved to **Williams Selyem** as viticulturist and enologist. Ross went to **Flowers Winery** as assistant winemaker in 2000, advancing to winemaker in 2004. While working at these wineries, Ross was helping his father develop their **Coastlands Vineyard**. They started producing limited amounts of **Cobb Wines** in 2001. Their primary goal was to produce complex, lower-alcohol expressions of Pinot Noir. As Ross explains, “My dad was a marine biologist, and I’m a soil scientist. It was inevitable that we have coastal vineyards.”



#### According to Cobb:

“Coastlands Vineyard is my father’s vineyard. It was completed with two major plantings: one in 1989 and the other in 1998. We’re between 900 and 1,200 feet, about four miles from the ocean. The soil type is uplifted marine terrace soils with Kneeland and Yorkville clay loam. Everything is vertical cane-pruned, planted to 6-foot by 9-foot spacings, producing low yields, usually less than two tons per acre. There are 25 different clones, mostly Pommard 4, Mt Eden 37, Martini 13/15 and 2A, planted on AXR-1, 5C and 101-14. We do a lot of canopy work, leaf-pulling both sides, shoot-thinning and green dropping two or three times each season.

“We determine when to pick by flavor, usually coming in somewhere between 22° and 24° Brix. The flavor seems to progress, from grassy to strawberry to cherry, and I like to pick on that cusp as it goes from strawberry to cherry. We’ll also wait for acids to drop from 10 g/l to 9 and pH to rise a bit from 2.9 to 3.2.

“We de-stem but use up to 20 percent whole cluster. We add 30 to 40 parts SO<sub>2</sub> at the crusher and cold-soak under CO<sub>2</sub> for three to five days. Fermentations start with native yeast, but we add W-S Bayanus yeast during vigorous fermentation to guarantee finishing, especially if the outside temperatures are cold. Fermentation temperatures typically start at 65° F and top out at 90° to 95° F range. We ferment in one- to three-ton open-top bins and punch-down one to three times a day. As fermentation winds down, we blanket with CO<sub>2</sub>. I like to go very dry and taste every day. I like to press while still fresh, just before the cap sinks. I use a basket press and combine the press fraction with the free-run juice. We use 20 to 40 percent new French oak and leave the wine on lees, maintaining 12 to 22 parts SO<sub>2</sub> after finishing malolactic. In May or June, I’ll do a ‘dirty’ rack, going back to barrel on light lees. The wine is bottled unfiltered and unfined.”

## Winemakers’ Tasting Notes

**Cobb:** I want this wine to reflect the vineyard unmasked by too much oak or enological technique. There is white pepper, plum, spice, cherry and some earthiness. The wine is delicate with light tannins and crisp, integrated acidity. There is a silky, crisp feel on the palate due to good acidity and low pH, which I think adds to longevity.

**Lemon:** There is structured tannin that is soft in the mouth and builds on the back end. The acidity is good. There is a lovely fruity, alpine strawberry character along with raspberry and red rose. It shows a deft balance between richness, acidity and tannin.

**Dehlinger:** There is black tea, light cherry and a bit of tar. It has the firmest acidity of the three wines in this flight.

**Drew:** I get plum and mulberry with decent depth, but it disappears. The fruit is interesting, but the hard tannins are difficult to work through. There’s a bit of funk in the nose. There is a common spicy, almost tomato element, that I found in the Littorai as well.

**Klein:** I think this is true coastal Pinot Noir, probably planted at the very edge of ripening. There is a light raspberry with a tannic and hard mineral edge.

**Stewart/Hodgins:** There’s spicy, red fruit in the nose. It’s spicy but simple. It’s bright with lean acidity, but it doesn’t wake up my mouth and doesn’t have focus.

**Wright:** This is spicy and briary. It’s got some unusual spice with a dark overlay. There is a subtle herb/anise layer of flavor, but it is not lush on the palate.

**Shea:** I get lots of spice, pepper, clove and cinnamon. I suspect some whole cluster, carbonic maceration that led to some floral, bubblegum flavors.

**Peterson-Nedry:** There is lots of sour cherry, and it is tart on the palate. There’s pepper, spice and black tea with some underlying raspberry. It’s a bit hot in the finish.

**Clendenen:** I get truffles and licorice in the nose with concentrated ripe aromas and flavors. The ripe aromas don’t seem consistent with a wine that is just 13 percent alcohol. I like the balance in the mouth, but the finish has some acidity and tightness.

**Tolmach:** It tastes and smells as if it was made from very ripe fruit. There is a plum, slightly pruny side. The mouth is tart and tannic without showing alcohol.

**Willett:** The aromatics are very ripe. I prefer the mouthfeel and flavors. It’s very acidic, given the aromatics.

## Dehlinger

### Estate Bottled 2007 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (14.9% alc.)

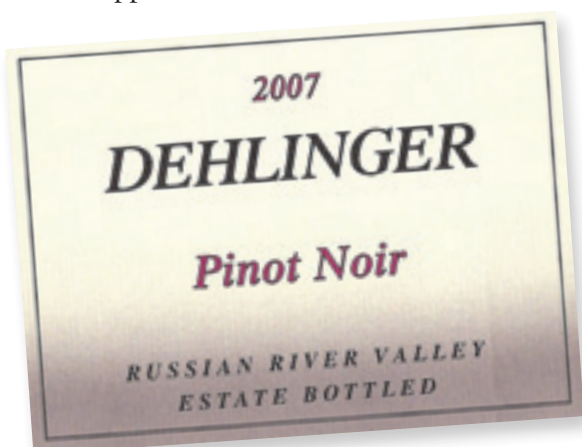
**Eva Dehlinger** was born and raised in Sonoma County, where she grew up on her family's ranch outside of Sebastopol. After studying Earth Systems science at **Stanford University**, she was attracted to work in fermentation science. She narrowly escaped a career in beer; but after studying brewing at UC Davis and passing the IBD Brewing exam, she chose a life dedicated to wine instead. She was attracted to the agricultural connection of winemaking, the site and vintage variation of grape growing and the scenic beauty of Sonoma County's Russian River Valley. Dehlinger has found a good fit in her current position. She has now spent three vintages apprenticing under her father, **Thomas Dehlinger**, in wine production and ranch management.



#### According to Eva Dehlinger:

"This estate-bottled Pinot Noir is selected from four hilltops of our 17-acre Pinot Noir vineyard. Our clones are primarily Pommard and Swan with lesser amounts of Martini and Dijon 777. The hilltops tend to have better drained soil, which produces flavorful and concentrated grapes. We pick the hilltops separately and make the wines separately. Then we determine the final blend after the wines have spent several months in barrel. We want this hilltop blend to show dark fruit, along with more spice, earth and structure than our Goldridge Pinot Noir.

"We harvest the hilltops separately, going by flavor and waiting for the tannins to lose some green quality. That usually means sugars in the 24.5° to 26.5° Brix range. We pick at night and sort in the vineyard. The grapes are cold-soaked for four days and then inoculated with RC212 or L2226 because we want to ensure a very dry wine. In some years we include a percentage of whole cluster grapes. This 2007 contained about 5 percent whole cluster on average. During fermentation, we punchdown the cap one to four times daily, which we think helps structure and ageability. Fermentation temperatures top out at 88° F. After fermentation, we keep the wine on the skins for a week to help soften the tannins. Then we press, settle overnight and rack to French oak barrels, using 45 percent new oak sourced primarily from François Frères, Remond and Rousseau. We age in barrel on light lees for about nine months, when we rack, to make our final blend. Then it goes back into barrel for another seven or eight months. Malolactic is uninoculated, and sulfurs are maintained at 20 to 25 ppm free."



## Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Dehlinger:** 2007 was an excellent vintage for meeting our goals. The wine shows dark fruit and cherry, along with some nice spice. There is some earthiness, but there is also good fruit clarity. Barrels lend some additional spice and vanilla but not too much. The structure is firm, and the wine lends itself to further development with age.

**Cobb:** I get a very pleasing old-vine sappiness in the nose, along with earth, spice and cherry. The oak is subtle with well integrated vanilla notes. The wine is full in the mouth with a bit of sweetness and a long finish.

**Lemon:** I get a hint of black tea with fresh raspberry and a sweet, attractive confectioner's note from the oak, rather than any char. There's a long finish with gentle tannins.

**Stewart/Hodgins:** It's got some pleasant spice but doesn't take my head off like the other two. It's plush all the way through. Not over-ripe, just delicious. I love the finish.

**Klein:** This is the Russian River Valley. The fruit is riper and darker with more stone fruit character and some chocolate. There is blueberry and chocolate in the mouth and a long lingering finish. It's less acidic without the herbal character of the two coastal wines.

**Drew:** It's certainly softer and riper than the other two wines with lower acid. It's in balance but not perfectly in balance. I like the structure, but the finish loses focus. It doesn't have a consistent follow-through.

**Peterson-Nedry:** There is a blue tinge to the fruit that I'd associate with low pH. There is ripe fruit with green tea on the nose. Nice fruit with plenty of tannin, alcohol and wood with a nice texture on the finish.

**Wright:** The nose is warm and inviting with a fruit profile of red and blue fruits. It's not exactly balanced, and the tannin and alcohol are a bit prominent. Aging should help this wine.

**Shea:** There's some Russian River bramble character with blackberry and some stone fruit. There is a good deal of rusticity on the nose and palate. It is a well executed style.

**Willett:** This wine has dark fruit aromatics. It's dense with blue/black fruit, and it's a bit hot. The alcohol extends into the finish.

**Clendenen:** There is dark fruit on the entry with good concentration. It's a bit atypical of my Pinot profile. The finish seems a bit dilute because of the acid/tannin balance. It enters stronger than it finishes.

**Tolmach:** This shows typical ripe California Pinot Noir. It is well executed in every way but is showing too much alcohol right now.



# Pinot Noir

## Santa Barbara County

A group of unique circumstances has made grape growing in Santa Barbara County more than viable. Most of the vineyards in California are protected from coastal weather by coastal mountains that run north/south. Santa Maria and Santa Ynez valleys have transverse ranges that run east/west, exposing the valleys to the ocean. This brings cool breezes and fog in from the Pacific, resulting in moderate summer temperatures with cool evenings and mornings, which allow a slow ripening of grapes, even at this very southern latitude. Soils, even on the hillsides, are mostly decomposed oceanic floor, usually with some limestone components, and are well drained. The area remains a major producer of vegetables, but vineyards now occupy a sizeable amount of territory. Currently, 4,700 acres are planted to Pinot Noir, accounting for 25 percent of all the grapes grown in the county. There are several growing areas, but the best known for Pinot Noir are the Santa Maria Valley and the Santa Ynez Valley with its Sta. Rita Hills designation.



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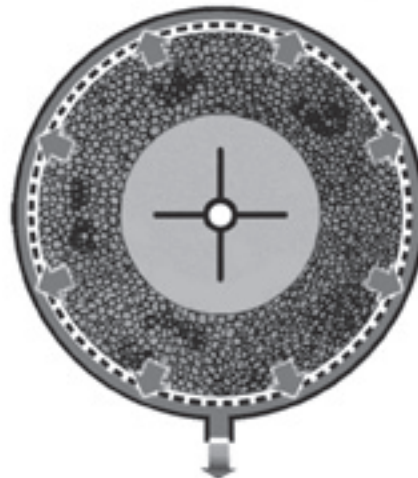
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## Clendenen Family Vineyards

### Estate Bottled 2007 Santa Maria Valley Pinot Noir (13.5% alc.)

**Jim Clendenen** graduated UC Santa Barbara in 1976, having studied law, but stays in Burgundy and Champagne proved too beguiling, and he decided to make wine instead. He worked at **Zaca Mesa**, starting in 1978, and in 1981 made wine in France and Australia as well. He started **Au Bon Climat** in 1982 with ex-partner **Adam Tolmach**. Clendenen is a champion of classically-styled wines, including his Burgundian-style ABC wines as well as Italian and other French varietals. He is a tireless road warrior and has won numerous awards, including the *Los Angeles Times*' Winemaker of the Year in 1992 and the same accolade from *Food and Wine Magazine* in 2001. For the past 10 years, in addition to his other projects, Clendenen has produced wine from his family's Clendenen Family Vineyards in Santa Maria Valley.



#### According to Clendenen:

"In 1998, after 16 successful years with my Au Bon Climat brand, I purchased land for my own estate vineyard. A period of intense research and conversation with vineyard experts led me to plant 100 percent clone 667 on riparian rootstock in 3-foot by 6-foot to 3-foot by 8-foot spacings. I wanted to produce a wine that could be seen as the nexus between Burgundy and the New World. I wanted something that would be balanced and distinctively Santa Maria Valley but Burgundian in style, using no acid or sugar additions, no water ameliorations and to come in at less than 14 percent alcohol for sure.

"In spite of all the research, conversation and advice, I discovered that the riparian rootstock served to devitalize the vines. The yields from my estate are insufficient. Irrigation is mandatory. The vines never fill out the canopy. They always have to struggle to ripen. The good news is that the grapes never get over-ripe. In fact, I have to wait as long as possible for the acid to drop. I've selected this wine because it is exactly what I like. It's earthy, spicy and complex. It is not fruity with unadorned fruit.

"We make our picking decisions by observing the ripening progress of our vines. We take readings to check acid and pH progress. We get lots of hang time here because of all the fog in June and July. We observe the canes and shoots and wait until the vine shuts down its growth phase. We don't go by 'taste.' I think the whole notion of tasting to decide when to pick is absurd.

"When we pick, we sort in the field. We gently de-stem into five-ton jacketed fermenters, adding about 20 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. I'm against using dry ice, but we pick when temperatures are very cool so we can hold the grapes for a four-day cold maceration during which we pump-over twice a day. I prefer pump-over at this stage so we don't get seed release from punching down. Fermentation starts with native yeast, and then we inoculate and use enzymes where necessary to be sure of finishing fermentations. We punchdown just twice a day during peak fermentation so as not to get too extracted.

"We press directly into 100 percent new barrels without any settling. We keep the free run and press juice together and barrel-age for 18 to 20 months. Malolactic occurs in the barrels. When finished, we do a racking and add 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. The wine gets an additional year of bottle age before release."

#### Winemakers' Tasting Notes

**Clendenen:** *This wine is full of red fruit, earth, dry leaves and humus aromas. There's some citrus peel and rose petal as well. This is not a fruit-driven wine. There is less raspberry and a bit more cherry flavor. It's dense and concentrated without being heavy, and it has good acidity.*

**Tolmach:** *It is strikingly non-fruity in every positive way but still retains plenty of fruit character. I think there is an earthy barrel influence that reduces the overt fruitiness. It's dense wine, and the oak helps to show it.*

**Willett:** *This is a classic example of Santa Maria wine. It has a real sense of place. It is fresh and vibrant without overt fruit. There is an earthy, savory side. It is firm on the backside with well integrated wood, especially considering that this is 100 percent new oak.*

**Klein:** *I get blueberry and violets in the nose. It's big, tannic and tart with lots of oak. It's certainly different from his Au Bon Climat wines.*

**Drew:** *There's some of the trademark Santa Maria tomato nose. It's a wine of big tannins and big oak, and the tannins are hard.*

**Stewart/Hodgins:** *There is a very distinctive cooked character, which I associate with Santa Maria Pinot Noir. I'm not a fan.*

**Lemon:** *I get some earthy root beer, leaning toward Band-Aid. There is a forest floor dimension. Very sweet and rich with tannins but light on its feet. I don't see this wine as having the structure for aging, but I trust Clendenen for longevity based on his other wines.*

**Dehlinger:** *Oak dominates with some reductive notes. It's toasty and savory with refreshing weight.*

**Cobb:** *Oak is apparent, and it is definitely good quality wood. Later it will become more integrated. There are caramel, toast aromas with some leafiness underneath. There is some cigar box/forest floor flavor. This is my favorite of the three.*

**Wright:** *It's earthy with more oak than the Tyler. There is some underlying volatility, giving volume and aged-like complexities to the aroma.*

**Shea:** *There is an amazing level of development. The wine tastes older than it is. I like the spice, cola and root beer notes. There's some VA, bramble and briar flavor with plenty of oak.*

**Peterson-Nedry:** *This is not my favorite style. It's too volatile without enough fresh fruit. It's broad with wood tannin but has nice spice on the palate with a persistent finish.*



## Tyler Winery

**Presidio 2007 Santa Barbara County  
Pinot Noir (14.1% alc.)**

**Justin Willett** was born and raised in Santa Barbara. He has a degree in History of Art and Architecture from UC Santa Barbara, which he figured qualified him as a winemaker. He started his **Tyler Winery** in 2005 while working at **Arcadian Winery** where he was mentored by **Joe Davis**. He served as assistant winemaker at Arcadian for two years and left in 2007 to focus solely on his Tyler wines. With the 2010 vintage he is producing 1,500 cases of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, using grapes exclusively from Santa Barbara County.



### According to Willett:

“When it comes to Pinot Noir, my biggest interest is to produce a balanced wine. I’m moving to picking earlier, using less new wood and having lower alcohols. This Presidio vineyard is certified organic and Biodynamic. The section I use has sandy soil and is planted in a 3-foot by 7-foot configuration entirely to Clone 115. Generally, I’m trying to fight fast ripening and high sugar. I try to leave more leaves and more fruit, which helps hang time. We’ll tunnel or hollow out the vine but leave enough to protect the fruit. The 2007 vintage produced a very short crop, .7 tons to the acre. The wine is a power wine, highly concentrated and dense. These grapes were harvested around 24° Brix. Now I am harvesting between 22° and 23.5° Brix. I think the lower sugars allow me to produce a wine that has better flavors and more charm.

“When we pick the grapes, we cluster-sort by hand. The grapes are destemmed into 1 1/2-ton fermenters, and 10 to 15 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> is added. I cold-soak for four days around 45° to 50° F, using dry ice. Then I inoculate with yeast and usually run a 10- to 11-day fermentation with temperatures reaching 85° to 90° F. I punchdown one to three times daily to help with extraction and temperature management. I press around 0° balling and go directly to barrels on gross lees. This wine has two-thirds new oak as it was only a three-barrel lot, but typically I use 30 to 40 percent new wood. After primary fermentation, I’ll inoculate for malolactic. When malolactic finishes, there is a 50 ppm addition of SO<sub>2</sub>. Wine sits on the lees for 10 to 14 months. Then I’ll either rack from barrel to barrel or into a tank to blend and then back to barrel for an additional two to five months. Then I adjust the SO<sub>2</sub> and bottle unfiltered and unfiltered. The wine gets another four to six months’ bottle aging before release.”

## Winemakers’ Tasting Notes

**Willett:** *I get cherry and dark fruit aromas, along with some briny mineral character. It’s not too oaky. It’s dense, not grainy with bright acid. In the mouth the wine is juicy with medium red to dark red fruit and hints of mandarin and blood orange.*

**Tolmach:** *It’s fat and rich with an intriguing herbaceousness. There is present acid. I get lots of savory flavors. It’s ripe but not too ripe. It is a bit flat.*

**Clendenen:** *The wine has good minerality. I find these micro-yields tend to be herbal and too ripe at the same time, which I don’t like. I like the purity of fruit and minerality of this wine. It’s very indicative of the Santa Rita Hills vineyards. It’s not hot. I like it very much.*

**Stewart/Hodgins:** *Once again, there’s that Southern California character, but this also has some black pepper spice, which I like. There’s lots of ripeness as well. This is a wine of big layers as opposed to things you have to tease out. The palate is enjoyable, but I don’t think I could drink much.*

**Drew:** *It’s solid, well made wine, but it’s big and pretty hard. There’s a hard candy signature. It’s a fatiguing wine.*

**Klein:** *There’s some reductive character. I get leather, clove, violet and cinnamon, but it’s a pretty hard wine.*

**Cobb:** *There is lots of high-tone fruit with cherry spice and mineral toast. There are some herbal, mint flavors. It’s a bit short on the palate, and toasty oak dominates.*

**Dehlinger:** *This has an unusual tar character, which I find intriguing. There are tar, green sage, herbal aromas. It’s very intense wine but with smooth tannins.*

**Lemon:** *There is some kind of floral potpourri in a very elegant style. It’s rich, soft and plush, but alcohol is dominant in the finish.*

**Wright:** *I get bright, strawberry shortcake aromas. It’s dark with high acid. The tannins are harsh, and the wine is a bit too raw. This wine needs time.*

**Shea:** *There is some tomato-leafy-herbal component in the nose. It’s sort of a cooked strawberry compote flavor. There are some pithy tannins but an overall softness to the wine.*

**Peterson-Nedry:** *It’s a different color, more brick than purple. I get eucalyptus tones and plenty of wood. There is some white pepper and bright fruit. The wine is soft with moderate tannin that dries the mouth.*

## The Ojai Vineyard

### Fe Ciega Vineyard 2007 Sta. Rita Hills Pinot Noir (14.0% alc.)

**Adam Tolmach** grew up in Oxnard, California. He graduated from UC Davis in 1976 and went to work at **Zaca Mesa** where he met Jim Clendenen. Tolmach and Clendenen partnered up to create Au Bon Climat in 1982. Additionally, Tolmach started production of his own **Ojai Vineyard** brand in 1983. By 1991, Tolmach had left Au Bon Climat to focus on his Ojai Vineyard which now produces 6,500 cases per year. He purchases grapes from some of the coolest districts in Santa Barbara County and says he is trying to bring together European sensibilities of balance and finesse with the exuberant fruit of California's coastal vineyards.



#### According to Tolmach:

“Over the years, my winemaking style has evolved. I used to like riper fruit. I think we needed that in the days of California sprawl, but drip irrigation and vertical trellising changed that. I think we are getting better fruit these days, and I find myself picking slightly less ripe each year. I generally prefer Burgundy wines to boisterous California Pinot Noir, so I'm looking for less overt fruit, more acid and less alcohol. This Fe Ciega Vineyard wine is going in that direction.

“I wasn't really looking for more grapes when **Rick Longoria** asked me to visit his Fe Ciega Vineyard, but I just fell in love with the site. It's got Pomard clone, 115 and 667 planted to 4-foot by 8-foot spacings. The land is relatively flat and tilts south. Yields run 2 1/4- to 2 3/4-tons per acre; and while some may see that as a high yield, I find that a bit of extra tonnage in our climate makes more elegant wine. The vineyard requires careful farming. It's vertically trellised, and we'll manage the vines to get speckled light on the clusters. We perform a green drop when 95 percent colored. We use cautious irrigation and have well lignified shoots at harvest. This vineyard consistently gets ripe but not overripe.

“To determine harvest, I use visual clues, pH and sugar tests and some tasting. I don't want to see growing tips. I like some yellowing leaves. I try to pick before the grapes shrivel. For this wine that meant 23.5 to 24.5° Brix, but my preferred numbers seem to get lower and lower as time goes on. We'll hand-sort if needed, but this vintage was fine as is. The grapes were fully destemmed and fermented in 1 1/2- to 3 1/2-ton fermenters. We added 30 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> and then cold-soaked five days inside a 45° F warehouse using dry ice. Fermentation went with native yeast, and we got cap temperatures up to 95° F. I try to extract more from the fruit early, rather than later, so we punched down three times a day in cold-soak and during early fermentation and then just once a day once we reached 10° Brix. Altogether we had 14 days' skin contact.

“I pressed before dryness around 1° balling to a tank for overnight settling, combining the free run and press fractions. From there the wine went into barrel, using 35 percent new French oak. Malolactic goes in the barrel and is not inoculated. The wine aged for 15 months without racking and with no SO<sub>2</sub> additions until bottling. We racked the wine to tank, added 35 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> and bottled the wine unfiltered and unfiltered. Then we bottle-aged it for a year before release.”



#### Winemakers' Notes

**Tolmach:** *There is a brackish, earthy aroma typical of the vineyard, along with some plum. This has a little less animal character than some other vintages. There is a savory finish with good acid. I'm pleased with this wine, but for future vintages I'm moving to pick earlier to bring even more freshness and clarity to the finish.*

**Clendenen:** *This is big, rich and concentrated. It's fully ripe and extracted with lively acid. It's earthy and not jammy, but there's plenty of natural plum and plum pit along with some saline notes. It's not fruit-driven, and I like it. It's very balanced.*

**Willett:** *I like it a lot. It's savory with minerality. It's a dense wine with nice acidity to carry the weight. It has an earthy character instead of jammy fruit, and it has great balance.*

**Klein:** *There's black fruit that's not overly acidic, and it is without the green elements of the other two wines. It's my favorite of the three.*

**Drew:** *It's big, rich and busty but slightly stewed. It's my favorite of the flight. I like it but not a lot. This region is a tough place to make wine.*

**Stewart/Hodgins:** *It's the most balanced of the three and lacks the reduction, hotness and acidity of the other two. It's pleasant with full rich fruit but doesn't have the tannin or acid for finish structure.*

**Cobb:** *Pretty aromatics. It's lush with pretty, sweet strawberry aromas. Sweet on entry but drying on the late palate. It's a bit short with a mid-palate pucker.*

**Lemon:** *This has that same lees/lactic character I found in the Drew. There is some green tea but low fruit, and the wine is rich and soft. There is not a lot of tannin. It's approachable now.*

**Dehlinger:** *It's malty with cherry fruit and raspberry in the background. There are dynamic tannins, but they're soft. This wine is concentrated and tight. I'd like to return to it in two hours.*

**Wright:** *Nice red and blue fruit with some reduction on the palate. It's pleasant but a little monochromatic for me.*

**Shea:** *I get orange peel aromatics with focused berry and substantial tannin. There is a lingering compote finish.*

**Peterson-Nedry:** *There is opulent black cherry with blue/black cassis aromas. There is a great core of sweet fruit and chewy, but fine tannins. It's my favorite of the flight.*

# Conclusion

At the core of these varietal focus articles is the idea of terroir. How is it expressed? How is it preserved? Do different varietals express terroir in different ways? In the first study, we looked at Syrah; and while terroir had a lot to do with determining the finished wines, decisions and techniques used in the winemaking appeared to carry equal weight in those wines. Pinot Noir was different. Regional differences were more apparent as were similarities of the wineries within a given region.

All three of the Anderson Valley Pinot Noir wines used in this study were made using quite different cellar techniques, yet all three retained a distinctive cherry or black cherry character. The Sonoma Coast wines were much spicier than the Russian River wines, but all three shared more similarities with one another than they did with wines of other regions. The Oregon wines seemed to share a solid black fruit character while the Santa Barbara wines were almost juicy with ripe fruit flavor, sometimes drifting to plum.

For Pinot Noir, French Burgundy remains the apex, and most Pinot Noir producers use it as their model. However, each winemaker has a different version of what fine Burgundy (and therefore fine Pinot Noir) encompasses. Almost all of our winemakers use the mantra that their wine is “Burgundian” in style. Having tasted these wines several times, I now believe they mean that, given the unique aroma and flavor profiles provided by their specific vineyards, the finished wines remind them of certain Burgundy wines in style. I don’t think they are trying to duplicate Burgundy in Oregon and California.

All of our winemakers believe good acidity is essential to producing fine Pinot Noir. That helps explain why Pinot Noir is planted in cooler regions. In the Willamette Valley where terroir conditions are variable enough to support six different regional sub-appellations and late rain is a constant threat for all, winemakers turn their focus to soil type and elevation. In Santa Barbara, winemakers are looking at increased yields as a way to tame vigor and moderate alcohol. On the Sonoma Coast, many of the vineyards are only marginally able to ripen, especially in rainy or cooler vintages, like 2010.

That soil, location and climate directly affect the character of Pinot Noir can be seen not just in this tasting and report but by the fact that so many Pinot Noir producers choose to make and sell wine from a variety of designated vineyards. They will often venture out to other regions to produce wines of different character. Jim Clendenen produces wine from the Anderson Valley and Russian River, as does Ted Lemon. Jason Drew produces wine from Sonoma Coast and Sta. Rita Hills. Ken Wright produces multiple Pinot Noirs from Willamette Valley’s different sub-appellations.

Pinot Noir carries with it a subtlety and elegance. Perhaps it is because of Pinot Noir’s subtle charms that we can more easily discern specific elements that link it to soil type and place. Even in vintages when it is powerful, it wields that power carefully and with grace. Pinot Noir can challenge any winemaker, but the complex rewards of well made Pinot Noir more than compensate for those challenges. There is an understated complexity about Pinot Noir that is rooted in terroir as directly as the vines themselves are rooted in soil. For those of us enamored with Pinot Noir, the distinctions from one region to another provide us with a cornucopia of diverse flavors that should keep us entertained for a lifetime. **WBM**

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