

JANUARY WINES, 2008

All wines we taste and review are current releases and can be found and purchased locally, at the winery or on the web

PINOT NOIR!

Think you love **Pinot Noir** – the current “In”-fatuation” of the Wine World?
You'll see from the reviews that follow that Pinot styles differ – some amazing so – often resulting in striking differences, from light, floral and fruity to earthy and gamey.

GOT FOOD? YES, PINOT SYLES VARY, BUT THERE ARE GENERALIZATIONS

- *Cold cuts and smoked meats. Grilled salmon and other rich fish like halibut, snapper and tuna.*
- *Light meats, such as roast lamb, pork, chicken & game. Garlic polenta & gnocchi with light sauces.*
- *Anything with mushrooms, eggplant, beans. Goat cheese, other creamy cheeses.*

THE WINES!

WINES LISTED IN THE ORDER TASTED – TASTING REVIEWS FOLLOW

Wine A	■	2005 KASTANIA VINEYARD Reserve	Sonoma Coast	\$45
Wine B	■	2005 WILLOWBROOK	Sonoma Coast	\$48
Wine C	■	2005 RIDGEWAY FAMILY	Sonoma Coast	\$30
Wine D	■	2006 PAPAPIETRO PERRY Charles V'yd	Anderson Valley	\$49
Wine E	■	2006 BROGAN CELLARS	Russian River Valley	\$45
Wine F	■	2004 CEJA VINEYARDS	Sonoma Carneros	\$40

➤ *The prices listed are winery suggested retail prices.* ◀

“FAVORITE”

Wine F – 6 panelists liked it best

“BEST VALUE”

Wine F again – 6 panelists felt it was also the best value

“Breaking the code” ❖ Terms used in the reviews that follow:

Balance ➤ Refers to Fruit, Acid and Tannin. When they are all perceivable in equal amounts and one doesn't appear to be excessive or lacking, the wine is in “balance”.

Hot ➤ refers to percentage of alcohol. If the alcohol is noticeable, it's not in “balance” and makes the wine unpleasant or “hot”. This can be perceived in both aroma (think Vodka), and taste. – a bitter, peppery and very fruity – often a 'sweet', sensation, even in a 'dry' wine. It can also be more viscous – or 'full' bodied.

According to each individual taster's perception, every wine will have the following self-explanatory terms to describe the **Fruit**, **Acid** and **Tannin**.

Ideal (or “just right”)

'Slightly' excessive or **'Slightly' lacking**,

Excessive or **Lacking** (more than 'slightly')

'Very' excessive or **'Very' lacking** (definitely too much or too little)

Over The Top (“OTT”) (self-explanatory)

Each Tasting Panelist has selected their **Favorite (F)** and their **Value pick (V)** of this tasting.

You'll find this noted at the end of their summary comments.

ENJOY THE REVIEWS – ENJOY THE JOURNEY!



WINE "A"

2005 KASTANIA VINEYARDS
Sonoma Coast CA

Reserve

\$45
14.6 % alcohol

Hoot and Linda Smith were among the first to ignore "traditional wisdom" that said the cold, foggy weather of the "Petaluma Gap" would not support vineyards, and they first planted vines in 1995. Barrel aged 10 months in French Oak, this 2005 Pinot Noir is their first release – made from the same grapes they previously sold, and that went into wine served at the 200th anniversary of the White House.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

Donna **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal balance; **Tannin:** slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Typical Pinot aromas. Very nice mouthfeel / texture of middle weight silk, peppery on the finish. A bit too much tannin, but would probably be mitigated by food. Can age for 1 – 3 years.

Cory **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med - long finish
Well balanced wine that delivers what the fresh and seductive nose promises – like an inviting stroll through a cherry orchard. A tiny bit hot on the finish, but forgivable.

James M **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish.
First impression of lots of fruit. Liked this wine, but alcohol is noticeable and gives a peppery, 'hot' sensation.

Mary **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
This was an earthy Pinot – a little hot and bitter. Not particularly memorable, but drinkable.

James H **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Lacking / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Has a toasty, earthy aroma, but I find this wine very, very hot with slight bitterness in finish.

Rob **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Short finish
The nose was what I tend to like in a Pinot – strawberries, earth and leather, but it falls a little flat though gains more spice as it sits in the glass and opens up.

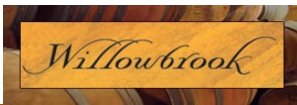
Jim A **Fruit and Tannin:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
A very nice pinot. A great finish that makes you want to savor it slowly.

Bill **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Long finish
Full fruit and spice in the nose, taste and the long finish. Full-flavored and a smooth mouthfeel. Good for friends and I'd recommend it. (F, V)

Von **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Long finish
Aromas of strawberry, cherry, earth and a little floral too. A classic Pinot that would go with a wide spectrum of food. Silky mouthfeel but just a little 'hot'. Fruit lingers in the finish.

GUEST PANELIST:

Linda **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Medium finish
Brief hint of caramel aromas. First sip didn't last, but second and third sip left a very nice flavor that I enjoyed. Great sipping wine by itself. (F)



WINE "B"



2005 WILLOWBROOK
Sonoma Coast CA

Kastania Vineyard

\$48
14.5 % alcohol

The grapes for this wine came from the same vineyard and were harvested at the same time as those that went into Wine A – Kastania Vineyards, but these are two very different wines – one more 'feminine', the other darker and more 'hedonistic'. The difference is winemaker style – primarily barrel source and yeasts. This Pinot spent 10 months in French Oak and only 302 cases were made.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full bodied, Med-long finish
A deep colored Pinot with strawberry and rose aromas. Based on the darker color, I expected more flavor and would have preferred more fruit. The finish was peppery and a little 'hot'.
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
Opulent aromas of cherry and kirsch. A smoky, fruity, pleasing pinot. Richer, showier style. The medium-long finish holds the fruit all the way through and invites you to take another sip.
- James M** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Med-long finish **(F, V)**
Dark ruby color, & raspberry aromas. Silky and smooth, with some vanilla. A fun, easy drink.
- Mary** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-long finish
Nice nose! I liked the fruitiness, the sour cherry finish. Strong tannins, but not over the top. A little 'hot' but I'm willing to overlook that.
- James H** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Long finish
Aromas of mahogany, incense and roses. Not my favorite style. The very long finish starts and slightly harsh and moves into strawberry.
- Rob** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Long finish
There's a whole lot of fruit and earth on the nose, and flavors of strawberries and dark cherries, but the balance is off and it seems a bit hot. Nice mouthfeel, but the finish has a metallic note.
- Jim A.** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
This wine is a little harsh and a little hot. It has a mellow mouthfeel, but the acid takes over.
- Bill** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Too much wood in the nose, taste and finish and not enough fruit. Acid is high and out of balance.
- Von** **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking **Acid:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Aromas of dark cherry, earth and mint. The wine becomes more interesting and complex as you sip, but there's some hotness and slight bitterness in the finish. Higher acidity good for food.
- GUEST PANELIST:**
- Linda** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Med-short finish
This wine begs for cheese or some food. Maybe a pasta with gorgonzola. I don't think I'd just sip on this one but I'd buy it for an Italian pasta party.

WINE "C"



2005 RIDGEWAY FAMILY
Sonoma Coast CA

Two Pisces Vineyard

\$30
13.9 % alcohol

Mike and Teela Ridgeway planted their Pinot Noir vines in 2001 on the southwest edge of Petaluma. They manage the vineyard themselves and this is their second extremely successful Pinot Noir release. The wine was aged 16 months in French Oak, using native yeast and 420 cases were produced. Winemaker, Dan Goldfield was named Wine & Food magazine's Pinot winemaker of the year in 2005.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
A very nice wine – with dark fruit aromas. Smooth, and with strawberries and roses, backed up by a little bit of earthiness and leather on the finish. (F, V)
- Cory** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Excessive / Medium body, Medium finish
Very fruit forward with cherries, strawberries and a hint of kirsch. The nose promises big fruit and big it is, though it fades a bit toward the finish where the tannins come through.
- James M** **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Short finish.
A definitely lighter style of Pinot. Light smoke on the finish but I didn't get much out of it.
- Mary** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Earthy, mushroom aromas. I felt everything about this wine was a bit over the top – both the positive and negative. It seemed hot, acidic, and had some bitterness.
- James H** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish.
Nose of roses and mahogany. A drink-now, simple and light Pinot. Medium finish with a bit of strawberry.
- Rob** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Lacking / Medium body, Med-short finish.
Did not evaluate this wine.
- Jim A.** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All three are excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
A very dry wine that's somewhat flat and quite astringent.
- Bill** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
Excellent nose – spicy, fruity and complex. The wine is light and balanced – slightly tannic but pleasant.
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med=long finish.
Great nose – strawberries, cherry and roses. Silky mouthfeel and the fruit lingers in the finish. A great sipping wine with a peppery character. Good with food, but just a bit hot.

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Lacking / Med-light body, short finish
Did not evaluate this wine.



WINE "D"

2005 PAPAPIETRO PERRY Charles Vineyard \$49
Anderson Valley CA 14.5 % alcohol

Ben Papapietro and Bob Perry both came from families where homemade wine was common. They worked for Burt Williams of Williams Selyem, helping with harvest and learning about making wine.. Their first commercial wine was produced in 1998, and this Pinot Noir marks the first release from a vineyard in the center of Boonville, in the Anderson Valley, Mendocino County. The wine spent 11 months in French Oak – 750 cases.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

Donna **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish
Aromas of tasted bread, then candied fruit. A lot of fruit – a little bit of strawberry -- earthiness in finish. Enjoyable – an easy drinker.

Cory **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Medium finish.
A friendly, light-bodied Pinot that carries all the classic flavors and Pinot aromas. Would be a good introduction to the varietal for those unfamiliar with it.

James M **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med- long finish
Fruity – strawberry jam aromas. Finish becomes a bit hot.

Mary **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-short finish
Nice Pinot. It has that sour cherry I identify with Pinots, but not over the top. A little bitter in the finish but not objectionable.

James H **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Ideal / Med-light body, Medium finish.
This has a spicy aroma that's unusual for Pinots. A bit tannic and rough, but finish shows strawberry.

Rob **Fruit:** Slightly lacking; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-light body, Medium finish
Not much fruit in nose – more earth and spice. Not a favorite – light and lacking fruit.

Jim A. **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish
At first the wine seems quite acidic. This wine gets better and better with repeated sips.

Bill **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish
I wouldn't recommend this wine. The tannin dominates because of diminished body and fruit.

Von **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** lacking / Med-light body, Med-short finish.
A light style Pinot in both aromas and flavor. Lacked interest as a Pinot and the finish became flat and a bit cardboardy.

GUEST PANELIST:

Linda **Fruit and Tannin:** Slightly lacking; **Acid:** Ideal / Light body, Med-short finish
Not a wine I would probably buy. Despite the fruity, berry aromas, the wine is very light and has a bitter finish.



**BROGAN
CELARS**
PINOT NOIR
2006
SONOMA COAST
alcohol 14.1% by volume
PRODUCED & BOTTLED BY
BROGAN CELLARS
HEALDSBURG, CA 95448

WINE "E"

2006 BROGAN CELLARS

Russian River Valley CA

\$45

14.1% alcohol

Owner and winemaker Margi Wierenga was a teenager when her father, Burt Williams, started making the first Williams Selyem wines in a bathtub in a basement beneath their garage in the late 1970s. For several years she worked at her father's winery as a volunteer before taking a paid position in 1993. In 1998, she decided to follow in her father's footsteps and start her own winery. This Pinot spent 11 months in French Oak

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Medium finish
Earthy and gamey aromas. This wasn't a typical Pinot to me, but it was a pleasant wine.
- Cory** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Medium finish.
Nice nose of cherry and white pepper. This wine seemed a bit 'hot' for my tastes and the acidity was a little out of balance (food friendly?) but not unpleasant.
- James M.** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med- light body, Med-long finish.
Got a lot of fruit in the nose and that carried through to the flavor along with some musky-ness.
- Mary** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Medium body, Medium finish
Had earthy aromas, but the flavors were mostly fruit-driven. The finish was a little 'hot' with some bitterness.
- James H.** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Med-light body, Medium finish.
Aromas of strawberry and toast. The lack of balance made the wine seem awkward and there was a roughness to it, plus a hotness that gave way to some bitterness in the finish.
- Rob** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid and Tannin:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish
Very ripe strawberries, with leather and spice in the nose. This wine has most things right. Nice mouthfeel, but the acidity was a little high. Needs food and should soften with a age.
- Jim A.** **Fruit and Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Medium body, Med-long finish.
A nice, all-round Pinot. The flavors were complex and varied – the surprises that are unique to a good Pinot.
- Bill** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
A well balanced and fruity wine. The fruit was apparent in the nose and the lingering finish.
- Von** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
Great aromas – lots of cherry and dark fruit, plus earthy notes. To me, this was a bigger, more complex Pinot. Great for both food and sipping. Lots of flavor – made me want more.

GUEST PANELIST:

Linda **Fruit:** Very excessive; **Acid and Tannin:** slightly lacking / Med-light body, Med-short finish
“Aromas of vanilla, with a mustiness. The fruit was very predominant – bordered on sweet.



WINE “F”

2004 CEJA VINEYARDS

Sonoma Mountain

CA

\$40

13.9 % alcohol

The trademark of Ceja vineyards is a bell with the Latin inscription: *vinum* (wine), *cantus* (song) and *amor* (love). This is a family owned and run winery. Coming from third generation winegrowers, with vineyards in Napa and Sonoma, Amanda Ceja is clearly in love with her heritage, the wines, and how well they pair with her native Mexican food. The grapes for this Pinot come from Carneros, spent 20 months in French Oak – 925 cases.

PANEL EVALUATIONS AND COMMENTS

- Donna** **Fruit and Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Medium body, Med-long finish
Strawberry, earthy, smoky nose. A well-balanced wine, good flavors and silky texture.
- Cory** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Medium finish.
Aromas of nice sweet cherry and a little smoke. This wine is lovely and has the structure to stand up to almost any food you could think of – from stew, to salmon, to lamb. (F, V)
- James M** **Fruit:** Ideal; **Acid:** Slightly excessive; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-light body, Medium finish.
Smoke and brown sugar for the aromas. Needs food but I think this wine is fun and enjoyable.
- Mary** **Fruit:** Slightly excessive; **Acid:** Excessive; **Tannin:** Ideal / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Classic pinot nose of strawberry and cherry. Easy, drinkable wine. (F, V)
- James H** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-short finish.
Definitely “Pinot” aromas. Fruity, delicate and balanced with a toasty finish. Representative of what Pinot characteristics should be – a nice wine. (F)
- Rob** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Medium body, Med-long finish
“Old world” Pinot – more classic in style. I like it and I can see it going well with gamey foods. It keeps growing on me. (F, V)
- Jim A** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-full body, Medium finish
Delightful first impression. More body than most Pinots. Fruity, almost sweet style, so best as a sipping wine – but very nice at that. (F, V)
- Bill** **Fruit:** Lacking; **Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly excessive / Med-full body, Med-long finish
Did not evaluate this wine.
- Von** **Fruit:** Excessive; **Acid:** Ideal; **Tannin:** Slightly lacking / Med-full body, Long finish
Nice stuff happening – I like it! A food-friendly, more classic style Pinot, it's well balanced, with a silky mouthfeel. Fruit lingers in the finish and makes me want more. (F, V)

GUEST PANELIST:

- Linda** **Fruit, Acid and Tannin:** All ideal and in balance / Med-light body, Medium finish
I like this wine – it's spicy and tasty with a finish that lingers from spice to a musty spice. I would definitely buy this wine! (V)

AND FINALLY...

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO...

THE ONGOING SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE GIVEN THE PANEL THE NECESSARY BOOST TO KEEP IT FLYING!

Linda and Donna, owners of **PELICAN GALLERY** in Petaluma who continue to so graciously offer their beautiful gallery for our tastings. Linda is our much appreciated, ongoing guest panel member.

**SEE YOU NEXT MONTH FOR MORE
WINES TO EXPLORE,
MORE WINES TO ENJOY!**

