

### Reserve Pinot Noir Club™

Soter Beacon Hill 02 \$50  
Bergstrom Estate 03 \$65

### NW Big Reds Club™

Latitude 46 Vinbication \$45  
Cote Bonneville Red 02 \$58

January  
2005

"I am utterly fascinated by the qualities of good Oregon Pinot noir," says Tony Soter, "they are different than anything we can do in California."

He should know: Tony Soter is one of the most respected winemakers in the business. His consulting clients have included such elite California labels as Araujo Estate, Niebaum-Coppola, Dalla Valle, Moraga Vineyards, Spottswoode, and Viader Vineyard—not to mention his own Pinot noir-focused creation, Etude Winery (recently sold to Beringer Blass).



James Cahill and Tony Soter at IPNC

And now Tony makes Oregon Pinot noir, with the help of winery manager James Cahill. Why Oregon?

"I wanted to make a wine that was different from what we've made in California," he explains. "In terms of tasting descriptors, California Pinots always sort of stay in the red spectrum: raspberry, strawberry—black cherry is as close as they get. Here in Oregon, the flavors are like what grows here: blackberries and blueberries. I find that a really fine and intriguing different expression of the variety, which really fascinates me."

Plus, he just likes Oregon. "I like the Oregon wine industry right now," he says, "it reminds me of being in the business in Napa 25 years ago. And, we have personal roots here because I was born in Portland and my wife was raised here from her second year."

For his Oregon Pinot noir, Tony wants to make "something a little more demanding of the drinker—a wine that will be age worthy in a kind of classic or traditional sense." Making Pinot noir in Oregon's cool climate is very different than in sun-soaked California—part of the region's appeal for Tony.

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Dubrul Vineyard is hot—as Club Members know from the Dubrul Vineyard-based Owen Roe wines we've sent you over the last three years. Now the vineyard owners have started their own small winery and have reserved one of the best blocks of the vineyard for making the **Cote Bonneville Carriage House Red 02**.

Located on a steep hillside overlooking the Yakima River, Dubrul Vineyard, site of a former orchard, was planted in 1992. The steep slope, high elevation, rocky soil, hot climate, cold nights, and careful vineyard management have combined to produce unusually high quality grapes.



Dubrul Vineyard, Above

The unusual soils are thought to contribute to the vineyard's high quality grapes. The history of how the site was created is complex and fascinating.

Over centuries, the west wind carried ash from the Cascade volcanoes to the Dubrul site. The volcanic ash mixed with flood deposits from Glacial Lake Missoula to form the soils covering the basalt promontory that hosts the vineyard. A sheet of silica-cemented hardpan was laid down and compacted. From the east, a series of cataclysmic floods burst from Glacial Lake Missoula, bearing rocks frozen in ice and mussel shells from the lake bottom. These floods scoured northern Idaho and eastern Washington, then raged through the Columbia Gorge, leaving varied soil elements behind.

In 1992, the owners planted six varietals on 45 acres. The vines have been nurtured using judicious deficit irrigation and a strict regime of late summer crop thinning. This results in consistent crops of small berries with a distinctive flavor profile unique to the location. David O'Reilly, of Owen Roe, has proven instrumental in suggesting vineyard practices for grapes he purchases from the site.

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### New Discoveries Club™

Mystic  
Barbera 02 \$29

Mystic  
Syrah 02 \$24

### Dessert Wine Club™

Belle Vallee  
Port \$45

**Big Reds Club continued from page 1****Latitude 46– Hidden Treasure**

Latitude 46 Winery takes its name from the latitude 46° north line that falls just south of the town of Walla Walla, Washington, and runs through the main viticultural regions of Washington. From the first wines I tasted from winemaker Chris Dowsett, we've been impressed with the rich, well-made wines at quite reasonable prices.

Chris says: "by blending wine from great sites, coupled with meticulous winemaking, I try to create wines of added complexity and nuance. Latitude 46 produces wine in the purest expression of Washington State winegrowing." I tend to agree.

Latitude 46° Winery is a small winery owned by four families. Chris combines hand crafting with the latest enological and viticultural methods to produce the best wines possible. The winery currently produces a dry Gewurztraminer from the Columbia River Gorge (it's wildly popular), Syrah and Grenache blends from various Columbia Valley Vineyards, and their Flagship blend of Washington State Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah: **The Vindication**.

The Vineyards used to create the wines of Latitude 46° are grown under Chris's supervision through long-term contracts. He may purchase grapes from 8-10 different vineyards in one season. The winery does not own its own vineyard.

Chris prefers to buy fruit by the actual row of vines, rather than by the ton. This method provides extensive opportunities to adapt the microclimate of the fruit to his desired endpoint. He harvests at the optimum level of flavor, not sugar.

The harvest time at the winery is an exciting period. Each lot of grapes is fermented separately. Reds are fermented in small ¼ ton fermenters and punched down by hand. These wines are pressed gently with a membrane press at the peak of flavor and tannin maturation.

Barrels are selected to specifically complement varieties and vineyards. White wines are fermented in neutral barrels to promote slight oxidative fermentation, without oak flavor addition. Blending is an exercise taken very seriously. Complexity, seamlessness, and sheer intensity are Chris's goals.

Chris handles all of the winemaking duties of the 1800 case production. He has spent over 20 years in the wine industry, both in the vineyards and cellars. At a young age, he worked in his family vineyards and winery. His education in Oregon and Australia prepared him for work experiences in California, Oregon, and Washington. A six year employment as Assistant Winemaker at Canoe Ridge Vineyard introduced Chris to the people and vineyards of the Columbia Valley.

**Cote Bonneville  
Carriage House Red 02 \$58  
(Dubrul Vineyard)**

This 2002 release is estate-grown DuBrul Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (70%), Merlot (22%), and Cabernet Franc (8%). The wine's heady perfume, rich mouth feel, and vibrant bright fruit are elegant, seductive, and expressive of that unique terroir.

It might be interesting to try the wine now, to see just what this new winery is all about. Or, hold it for 2-3 years to allow the wine to mature. We are excited about the possibilities for the future, and hope to continue to offer the Cote Bonneville wines, which are made in very tiny quantities.

**About the Label**

The Cote Bonneville label for their "Carriage House" Red blend features the carriage house on the property, which was standing when the owners' great grandfather Napoleon DuBrul built Côte Bonneville in 1902.

In 1973, the owners were married in the carriage house, which served as the chapel for the order of nuns living on the estate at that time.

Over many years, the current owners of Côte Bonneville, Roberta and Tony Michel, have meticulously restored both the house and carriage house to their original splendor. The cornerstone of the estate, found in the portico entrance to the house, is the logo of the vineyard, and is present on both front and back labels of the wine.

The beautifully restored 1935 Pierce-Arrow Limousine on the label was provided by Jim Day and Ralph Schmidt. While the carriage house and car were being photographed, the Michel's family cat, Noisy, paused to inspect the Pierce-Arrow.

**Latitude 46  
Vindication \$46**

This blend of 70% Merlot, 26% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Syrah is the winery's flagship wine.

**Vineyards:**

Conner Lee Merlot 22%  
Kiona Merlot 17%  
Katherine Leon Merlot 17%  
Charbonneau Cab- 12%  
Wooded Cab- 14%  
Kiona Syrah- 4%

Each vineyard's grapes were fermented separately in ¼ ton lots to maximize extraction. The individual lots were finished in 60% New French Bordeaux barrels, to complement the fruit with complex spice and toast. Blending wines of diverse regions results in a wine of great complexity with a seamless palate. The final blend was racked together after 18 months in barrel. The wine was bottled, unfiltered, in April 2004 and was released in Fall 2004.

The wine begins with hints of cocoa and toast in the nose, followed by full-bore classic Walla Walla style big red flavors. The wine is ready to drink, but could lay down for 5-8 years.



## New Discoveries Club

**Mystic Wines—  
Big Reds  
from Low Profile Winner**

Rick Mafit, winemaker and owner of Mystic Wines, has made delicious Big Reds in Oregon, from fruit obtained from vineyards on the Oregon side of the Columbia Gorge, for 21 years. Ah, but he's in Oregon, not Washington, and he makes Big Reds? He's trail-blazed a path that wineries like Sineann, Viento, and Owen Roe have followed to acclaim.



Rick introduced Peter and David to the vineyards he's used for his wines—vineyards with names like Dubrul, McDuffee, The Pines, and Hillside. Rick's wines are less expensive than many other wines made from the sites he uses, and the labels and bottles are simpler in style. But the contents are right up there in quality with the highest profile wines.

Rick uses lots of new oak in his wines, usually barrels made by Seguin Morel - a barrel that I love. When you try Rick's wines (and the wines of Viento, as well) the fruit flavors are enhanced with a core of spicy, cedary, but very well-integrated and balanced flavors that come from the Seguin Morel barrels.

**Mystic Syrah 02 \$24**

Of the two wines from Mystic, the Syrah 02 shows more of the Seguin Morel barrel flavor, adding depth and complexity to what is often a luscious, juicy, but simple wine.

The wine is made exclusively from a tiny vineyard, Smith Cerne, in the Columbia Gorge. The wine first impresses with a complex nose of cassis, black cherry liqueur, cedar, and intriguing hints of caraway and herbs. Flavors again are surprising - in a most pleasant way - not a juicy fruit bomb. There is much more structure here, almost Bordeaux like - the tannins are full yet there's not a hint of dryness, just cedary oak, black berry, black cherry, and touches of licorice. And, there's the hint of caraway seed again. A most pleasing wine, one that may interest even experienced and professional wine lovers. Something quite special. jy

**Mystic Barbera 02 \$29**

The nose is earthy, with cassis and black cherry liqueur notes. First impression of the flavors is of sweet, spicy, slurpy, ripe black fruits, but the taste shifts quickly in the mouth to hints of toast, warmth, charcoal, black currant, and finishes cleanly, with lingering hints of liqueur and toast. A very striking wine, quite different from Italian Barberas, with a full bodied hedonistic richness and dry tannins that call for great food. Another fascinating wine from Rick. jy



## NW Dessert Wine Club

**Belle Valle Pinot noir Port 375 ml \$45**

Pricey but really delish.

From the winery: "The unusually long 2002 summer was key in making this unadulterated Port-style Pinot Noir. This extended Vintage allowed us to keep the fruit on the vine through the end of October, reaching extremely high sugars (28Brix), while attaining remarkably complex flavors. The picking decision was driven by the start of dehydration, allowing raising to encompass 10-15% of the cluster. Barreled into mostly neutral French oak, the Port was left to age for eleven months, and then bottled on our own bottling line un-fined and unfiltered."



### Reserve Pinot noir Club continued....

"I've noticed the grapes taste really good here even when they are in the low 20s (brix, percentage of sugar). The physiological development of Pinot noir in Oregon is enhanced."

But, the same interesting character that the climate delivers in the wine poses major challenges for growing the fruit.

"I viewed getting the grapes ripe year in and year out to be the basic impediment to success in Oregon," Tony says.

To help achieve this, he considered three elements in his vineyard choice.

"One thought was that a low altitude site would ripen sooner than a higher elevation. Then, I wanted to get soil that was not characteristic of what other people have worked with to date. And third was to apply what I think I know about viticulture in terms of vine management, plant materials, and everything that goes into growing grapes."

He's happy with his vineyard choice. "This site with shallow, unirrigated soils, should produce a vine of smaller stature that stops growing sooner and hence enhances maturation. The low elevation should be warmer, and we'll be putting vines on rootstock, with Dijon selections and close spacing."

All of these things Tony believes, "should turn out to be incremental advantages in trying to get full maturation."

And so far, Tony is equally happy with the Pinot noir wines his site is delivering. "You can never really tell what you're going to get when you make wine for the first time from a vineyard," he comments.

"So I'm a little surprised that the wines I was looking to make—if you can pardon the phrase, a more 'masculine' style—seem to be coming out in that vein. I don't know how much I've pushed it that way," he muses.

He's learned that in good seasons, like the last three, his vineyard delivers wine that "is substantial and has a kind of beef and structure that I think is somewhat unusual for Pinot noir and very intriguing to me."

Oregon Pinot noir fascinates Tony in part because it challenges the twin muses of intellectual rigor and creative expression. It provides an ideal laboratory for exploring what Tony calls "the excellent dichotomy between what I narrow down to: the hand or the land—which speaks louder?"

The Soter Pinot noir 2002, made from grapes from just about as good as climate conditions get in Oregon, is Soter's second vintage sent to the Avalon RPN Club. We suggest laying the wine down for several years, and enjoying it through 2010.

### Soter Pinot Noir "Beacon Hill" 02 \$50

Tony Soter, winemaker, says: "The 2002 is a luscious wine. This great vintage has graced the wines with both ample structure and appealing opulence. The wine should improve with up to 10 years of cellaring, but the sheer decadence of its ripe brambly flavors and seamless balance make it a wine that should not be missed in the interim. Enjoy it today with roasted meats or barbecued Salmon and grilled vegetables."

**Parker 91 points:** "Hugely rich yet fresh aromas of black cherries, brambleberries, blueberries, and candied blackberries emanate from the glass of the 2002 Pinot Noir Beacon Hill. A bold, opulent effort, it slathers the mouth with layers upon layers of jammy black fruits. This concentrated, seamless effort is velvety-textured, plush, and reveals a long, harmonious finish that is heavily laden with ripe, ever so slightly bitter, sweet tannin. This wine should be drunk over the next 6-7 years."



### Bergstrom Estate Pinot noir 03 \$65

Josh Bergstrom shot into the wine world's consciousness with a series of highly rated Pinot noirs starting in 1999. His 2003's continue the trend. 2003 was a tough vintage, with way too much heat resulting in uneven ripening and high alcohol wines if the grapes over-ripened. But the Bergstrom Estate 03 shows balance along with a huge, over the top dark color and flavors.

Josh says: "The 2003 Bergström Vineyard Designate Pinot Noir has a monstrous personality with lush aromas so typical of the Dundee Hills: red cherries, raspberries and strawberry. The mouth feel is large and plush with gobs of mature red fruit notes and a decadently sweet frame."

This wine is made from Josh's own vineyard, which he has babied since planting. From the Family's own estate located in the Red Hills of Dundee, the Bergström Vineyard highlights what greatness can come from the volcanic soils that started the Oregon Wine Industry. The Bergström Vineyard is farmed biodynamically without the use of dangerous chemicals and the crop yields maintained in this vineyard site are by far some of the lowest in the world, with averages between 0.75-1.0 tons per acre every year (a mere 4-7 clusters per plant, or 1.3 bottles of wine per plant).

The 2003 Bergstrom Estate was harvested on September 24-26th, 2003 and after fermentation, was coopered in 100% new French oak for about 12 months.

Josh has several hard to maintain standards for the Estate vineyard. They include:

Bergström Winery does not use any pesticides, insecticides, or herbicides in its vineyards. **They use:**

- **natural, organic, elemental-spray solutions** to combat vine diseases like mildew and botrytis.
- **natural and indigenous predatory insects and bacterium** to control noxious pests.
- **compost and verma compost teas** instead of industrial fertilizers to feed our soils and young plants.
- **foliar sprays of kelp, fish emulsions, and pulverized plant and mineral elements** to help maintain the health of our plants during the dry summer months.

