

Reserve Pinot Noir Club™
Vineyard Focus Continues
Bergstrom Cumberland, Maysara Delara,
La Bete Bruncker Hall

This year, Avalon is focusing on the vineyard— how the grapes are grown, the influence of soil and environment on the taste of the wine, just how the weather conditions each year change the developing fruit in the vineyard and create the phenomenon called “vintage”. This month, we examine three pinot noirs and the vineyards behind the wines.

David Eliason of La Bete Winery made our single vineyard **March Selection La Bete Bruncker Hall Pinot noir** from the 12 year old Bruncker Hall Vineyard, located in the Eola Hills, just due south of Cristom and Witness Tree. The vineyard was planted by Grant Bruncker and Elizabeth Hall, a pioneering aviator, when they moved to Oregon from the Bay area in the early 90's to fulfill their dream of owning a vineyard. A 25 acre site, the vineyard is planted to all Dijon clones. 80% is planted to Pinot noir, mostly Wadenswil clone, with some 114, 115, and Pommard clones as well. The remaining 20% is planted to Chardonnay. Ownership recently changed, and the vineyard is now managed by Matt Novak of Results Ltd for an owner who lives out of the area.

The vineyard faces south to southwest, and the soil is sandy and related to the Laurelwood type. The vineyard has drip irrigation, which was used in 2003 to minimize shock and “raising”— the shriveling of the grapes on the vine due to extreme heat.

David says that the vineyard is not super vigorous— in general, it does not overproduce, and the yield is self regulating, a positive trait that keeps harvest levels from going to high. (If too much fruit grows on the vines, it may have diluted, light, color and flavor).



Single Vineyard wine = Still a Blended Wine!

David makes the Bruncker Hall Pinot noir the way many single vineyard wines are made. The various pinot noir clones are harvested separately, fermented and aged separately, then blended together to make the best wine. In the case of the Bruncker Hall Pinot, Davis works with about 60% Wadenswil clone fruit, 20% 114 clone, and 20% 115 clone. Each brings different qualities to the wine.

Wadenswil clone Pinot noir tends to have an earthy, blueberry flavor profile, with a tendency towards a hollowness in the mid palate— by itself, it shows fascinating blue fruit but does not finish with much structure. The 114 clone, the hardest part of the vineyard to get to ferment and turn properly into wine, is worth the effort, as it adds that backbone missing in the Wadenswil. The 114 clone adds texture and tannin to the final wine. Together, the single vineyard Bruncker Hall Pinot noir shows Johns' take on the best presentation of the vintage from this vineyard.

Maysara “Delara” Pinot noir 01 is made by Jimi Brooks (whose Brooks “Janus” 01 we sent to the RPNC last fall). Jimi is both winemaker and vineyard manager for the Momtazi vineyard and its companion Maysara Winery. He has the chance to make Pinot noir from fruit whose viticulture he has managed— a definite advantage and a characteristic of many of the best Pinot noirs in Oregon and across the world.

Continued on page 4

NW Big Reds Club™
Focus on Betz Family Winery
Pere De Famille, Clos du Betz
Owen Sullian Red Table Wine

No one in the wine industry thought Bob Betz would slow down after he retired last year from Chateau Ste. Michelle, the largest winery owned by the largest wine company in the Northwest.

He said he would slow down, clean out the garage, plant more basil and spend more time producing wine from his small Woodinville winery, Betz Family Wines.

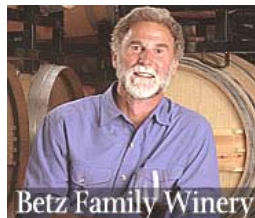
But Bob Betz has an internal source of fuel that continues to fan a fire in the wine industry, and his latest crop of wines is no exception. Instead of slowing down, Betz is working to take his wines to grander level, while educating and mentoring those who follow in his footsteps.

“I guess I’m busier than ever,” said Betz, who admits his plate is full with his new batch of wines, a new video, consultant work and worldwide travels. (He recently completed a wine cruise to the Caribbean and has another one planned with Chateau Ste. Michelle to Italy in May).

“I’ve been very blessed and I know it,” he added.

Awards, Awards, Awards

After 28 years in the wine industry (at Stimson-Lane) you would think Bob Betz would be impervious to winning awards and honors.



No so, especially now that he has launched his own small winery and spends more time doing the work that drew him to the industry in the first place.

“There is something to be said about knowing every barrel—it’s one of the few advantages small wineries have,” Betz said recently. “I know, by tasting, what is occurring in every barrel, and which ones will be my problem children.”

Betz still spend a small amount of time as a consultant to Stimson-Lane, keeping track of the collaborations with other winemakers, such as Marchesi Antionori of Italy (Col Solare) and Ernest Loosen of Germany (Eroica).

But the passion has turned to his own fine-tuning of wines, something he missed as he was moved up the ladder at Stimson-Lane.

It’s like Captain Kirk and Jean-Luc Picard moving from the bridge to a desk job—there is just something missing about the thrill of being in the on the front lines.

Continued on page 2

March 2004
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NEW IN APRIL
Patricia Green Cellars
Wine Club

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- ▶ First priority on wine
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Reserve
Pinot Noir Club™

Maysara
 “Delara” 01 \$45

Bergstrom
 “Cumberland” 02
 \$33

La Bete
 “Bruncker Hall”
 \$30

Northwest
Big Reds Club™

Focus on Betz
 Betz Family Winery
 Pere de Famille 01 \$50
 Clos du Betz 01 \$30

Owen Sullivan
 Red Table \$20

New Discoveries
Club™

Gypsy Dancer
 Pinot gris 02
 Owen Sullivan
 Red Table Wine \$20

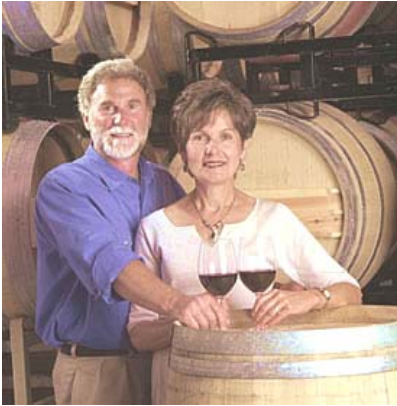
Dessert Wine Club™

L'Ecole #41
 Lt Hvst Semillon
 Dessert Wine 02 \$22

Big Reds Club continued

Continued from page 1

With his entry into small wineries, Betz was named Artesian of Year for 2003 for Wine & Spirits Magazine. His Syrah (sold mostly at the winery) was selected as one of the top Syrahs in Washington (a great feat, since so many are on the market) by the same magazine.



Steven Tanzer, The International Wine Cellar, put Betz Family Wines in a short list of Washington Superstars.

"The superstars in my tastings this year (2003) which were conducted mostly in Washington, will come as no surprise to wine lovers who track this states wines, are: Andrew Will, Betz Family Winery, Cadence Winery, Cayuse Vineyards and Quilceda Creek Vintners."

It is high praise indeed for such a short time as a small winery, and one that has Betz glowing with the pride of a newcomer, albeit nearly 30 years in the business. In addition, a recent book published in England, with a global analysis of the wine industry—The Wine Report 2004—named Betz Family Winery to first place in its list of "Up and Coming" wineries from the Northwest, and placed the winery second in its Cabernet Sauvignon Pere de Famille second to Quilceda Creek.

"I like the company we're in," Betz said.

On the Horizon

Betz has small amounts of Petit Verdot and Grenache in the barrel. He has not decided what he will do with the juice, but barrel tastings show great potential.

Right now, both Bob and Cathy have another production seeking their attention: they just became grandparents for the first time. Their daughter, Carmen Severns, who heads up the winery's sale and customer service, gave birth recently to Jake Severns—the couple's first grandchild.

The new grandparents expect to give the new mother some time off from winery work.

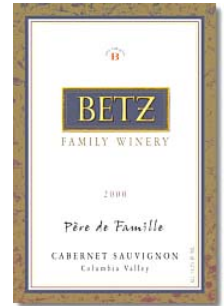
Chances are, they will take a little time too.

"He is perfect," said the beaming grandfather. "Life just doesn't get any better than this."

The Wines

Betz Pere de Famille 01 \$46.99

Stephen Tanzer says: "Medium red-ruby. Very cabernet on the nose, with currant, graphite, fresh herbs and pepper showing, along with a suggestion of white chocolate. Dense and powerful, with flavors of dark berries, minerals, licorice and herbs. Serious, firmly tannic wine that's not at all overly sweet. Like the Clos de Betz, this was bottled in May and will almost certainly merit a higher score as it harmonizes in bottle. (The fruit component here is even stronger than that of the very suave 2000 bottling.)



The winery says: "This is a wine for Cabernet lovers. It's the highest percentage of the variety that we've ever blended into our Père de Famille, and the wine shows it. Starting with the deep red/black core it shouts Cabernet. Aromas of ripe currants, dried strawberry and black olive further reflect the variety. There are also hints of black cherry, vanilla and leather. It's expansive on the palate with plenty of black fruit character, and subtle wood, toast and smoke. I like the way this wine opens in the mouth, at once expansive and muscular but also penetrating, indicating some early drinking pleasure and yet strong aging potential.

This wine's "Cabernet-ness" is easily understood by looking at the varietal blend and the vineyards used. At 81% Cabernet Sauvignon and 4% Cabernet Franc it clearly is dominated by these structured, penetrating varieties. The 15% balance is Merlot, with its supple, gentle hand playing a role in the overall mouthfeel.

In addition, a full 70% of the grapes coming from Ciel du Cheval and Klipsun Vineyards on Red Mountain, the long even ripening season clearly blessing these warm sites. Twenty three percent comes from Alder Ridge Vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills. Moderated by the nearby Columbia River, this warm site increases the deep berry notes in grapes because of additional time on the vine. The final 7% of the blend is from the Boushey Vineyard in the Yakima Valley; we depend on this fruit to bring a delicacy and balance to our blends.

Betz Clos du Betz 01 \$29.99

Stephen Tanzer says: " Good full red. Currant, black cherry, licorice, meat, graphite and smoky oak on the nose. Sappy on entry, then tight and minerally in the middle, with the wine's acids and oak currently keeping the fruit under wraps. Densely packed but a bit youthfully awkward today. The firm, persistent finish offers a suggestion of green tea. (A retaste of the 2000 version turned up a suaver, more harmonious wine that is nonetheless a bit less dense than this impressive young 2001; on my most recent tasting, the 2000 merited 91 points.)Rating 90+

The winery says: "In our blending sessions we were surprised at how much Cabernet Sauvignon enriched the Merlot base; it added complexity and weight without detracting from Clos de Betz's traditional suppleness. The final blend ended up 44% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Cabernet Franc, with the 50% majority made from Merlot. Vineyard selection was fundamental to this decision.



In 2001 our lots of both Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon from the Seven Hills Vineyard in Walla Walla developed a rich, ripe, supple mouthfeel. The Cabernet was plumper and less currant-like than normal and combined seamlessly with the Merlot. The final blend of the Clos de Betz depended heavily on this sweet fruit character, with 57% of the fruit coming from Walla Walla. Alder Ridge Vineyard played a strong supporting role, especially in the Merlot fraction, making up 22% of the blend. Eleven percent Yakima Valley fruit added soft tannin and berry-like aromas, and Red Mountain grapes played a minor role at 10% of the final wine.

Clos de Betz is a ripe mouthful of wine, with lots of viscosity and still plenty of tannin to give it backbone. Aromas of very sweet cherries, licorice and chocolate have an added dimension of spice. Chocolate and cola flavors mingle with ripe berries and cherry on the palate. As with so many Washington Merlots, this vintage is capable of growing more complex with age, and would reward a few years in the cellar.

Owen Sullivan "Red" Table Wine \$20

New Discoveries Club

Gypsy Dancer Cellars

Christine Lorraine Vineyard Pinot Gris 02 \$20

Gary Andrus, founder and former winemaker for Archery Summit is back in Oregon with a new winery. Dividing their time between Oregon and New Zealand, Gary and wife Christine Lorraine purchased Lion Valley Vineyards last summer and renamed it Gypsy Dancer Estates. Their first two wines have just been released.



This Pinot gris echoes Archery Summit's Vireton (made by Gary when he owned Archery Summit) with its hint of Chardonnay fruit in the mid palate and well balanced acids.

VINEYARD The Christine Lorraine Vineyard is one small block adjacent to Gary & Christine's Vineyard, which surrounds the winery, located on the backside of Bald Peak in Washington County, Oregon. The vineyard is planted one meter by one meter and is organically grown. Although the vineyard is planted predominantly to Pinot Noir, this three acre parcel of Pinot Gris and Chardonnay was retained for Christine's love of the blend.

WINEMAKING Clusters were hand-sorted first in the field, and then upon arrival at the winery. The wine was made primarily with Pinot Gris, but a small percentage of Chardonnay was blended in to add breadth on the palate. Using indigenous yeasts, the Christine Lorraine Vineyard Pinot Gris was fermented on its skins in traditional Alsatian-style neutral oak ovals. Stylistically, fermenting and aging in oak rather than stainless steel adds complexity to the wine. The wine was bottled in December.

WINE The Christine Lorraine Vineyard Pinot Gris displays the depth of fruit and texture derived from such closed spacing in the vineyard. It displays a round mouth full of crisp citrus and tropical fruits and a balanced acidity. It is a great white wine for red wine drinkers because of its complexity; Christine simply describes the wine as "Delicious!" This is the only white wine produced by Gypsy Dancer Estates.

Owen Sullivan "Red Table" 01 \$20

Baby brother to the wonderful Owen Sullivan BSH we shipped to Big Reds Club members last month, this wine gives a lot of the same huge, meaty, full bodied, broad shouldered qualities of the BSH. Dark ruby color, delicious dark fruit flavors, a touch of anise and surprisingly long finish. The winery is no longer a well kept secret, and price increases have been announced for the next vintage, but there's still a little of this bargain wine that we wanted to share with you!



NW Dessert Wine Club

L'Ecole #41

Late Harvest Semillon 02 \$20

(next month you'll be getting a \$60 wine so I'm just sending this one to even out the cost)

This luscious sweet golden nectar shows intense floral aromas of orange blossom and honeysuckle, and enriches the mouth with a thick viscosity of ripe pear, pineapple, and butterscotch.

From the winery: "Harvested December 16, 2002. The regular Seven Hills Vineyard Estate Semillon was harvested September 16th at 24 Brix. We left one acre to hang for an additional 3 months, hoping for a little shrivel and a good freeze. While botrytis never appeared, the grapes concentrated through shrivel to less than an equivalent 2 tons/acre. The grapes were partially frozen and whole-cluster pressed, resulting in a 45 Brix concentration, and a 100-gallon per ton yield. The juice was fermented and aged in a new Seguin Moreau Chateau Margaux barrel."

Below, the tasting bar at L'Ecole #41, one of the nicest tasting rooms in the NW.



Patricia Green Cellars Wine Club

Ten shipments a year starting April 2003.

Four different exclusive "cuvees" selected by Patty and Jim for the club- special barrels expressing aspects of terroir, winemaking, soil, varietal. Available only to Club members.

Newsletter with each shipment containing stories about the wines, insights and anecdotes about the vintage, the winemaking process, Patty's and Jim's evaluations of the wines in the shipment.

First priority on purchase from Avalon of her hardest to get wines- Balcombe 1B, Goldschmidt, Notorious, Bonshaw, etc. Some are very limited, but the Club will get what there is available.

First priority on very limited 2003 Pinot noir futures- the 2003 crop level was down about 15-50% depending on the vineyard, and the wine will go quickly.

Theme shipments exploring Balcombe Vineyard, The Estate Vineyard, Soils, Food Matching, PGC and the influence of Burgundy, Blending, and more.

Call Jean to signup!

Reserve Pinot noir Club continued.....

Jimi does not focus on making wines from a single vineyard, although the Maysara wines are made from 100% estate fruit. He tries, with each Pinot noir, to express the best of a particular style or vintage. He says:

"I try to approach each block (of land) individually. I am not a believer in single-vineyard designates. I think a wine is richer, more complex and more complete in blending. That is the artistic process, after you've captured the essence of the land in the grape."



The Momtazi vineyard property has five different types of soils, vineyard blocks with warmer days and cooler nights, rolling hills and sloping terrain. Currently there are 175 acres planted with Pinot noir covering a range of clones and root stocks. Jimi manages the vineyard using low impact and organic farming methods and are exploring biodynamic methods.

The Momtazi Vineyard— Fast Rising Star

It took seven years for Mo Momtazi to find a chunk of land in the Willamette Valley that reminded him of his childhood, where his grandparents grew crops on lush farmland in Northern Iran. Northern Iran?

Despite the fact that most Americans picture Iran as a desert with mounds of sand, a dry, arid climate, and no water, Northern Iran, near the Caspian Sea, has thick forests, green valleys, and a picturesque mountain range. It is an area where Momtazi's grandparents grew tea, rice, wheat and wine grapes.

"I always wanted to get into agriculture, like my grandparents," said Momtazi, a design engineer by day, and winery owner/grape grower by day and night. "I remember the tastes and flavors of my childhood and for the most part, my grandparents didn't interfere with Mother Nature.

His grandparents refused to use chemicals and fertilizers in the soil or on the plants.

"I wanted to do the same."

Momtazi found his dream farm just west of McMinnville in 1997 and began planting grapes in 1998. His first intention was to grow and sell grapes on the 522 acres, and slowly build a winery-Maysara Estates.

Wine industry insiders say Maysara is a sleeper, but word of mouth is spreading quickly in the Northwest. Some of the best Oregon wineries are using Maysara fruit, including La Bete, Bergstrom, and Penner Ash.

Bergstrom Cumberland Pinot noir 02 is a blend of wine made from grapes from Hyland, Bergstrom, and Momtazi vineyards. Hyland is one of Oregon's oldest vineyards and is definitely a treasure of the Oregon Wine Industry. Bergström Winery manages five acres of vineyards there. Farmed by Jack Trenhaile, this 33 year-old vineyard sits high up on a hillside surrounded by old-growth fir trees and rolling hills of witches' broom. These old self-rooted Pommard, Wadenswil, and Coury-clone vines produce some of Oregon's most ageworthy Pinot Noirs. The Bergstrom vineyard will be covered in depth when we send out the "Bergstrom Estate" 02 to RPNC members this spring.

The Wines

La Bete Brunker Hall Pinot noir \$30

90 points in Wine Spectator! Wine Spectator says:

"On the light side, but pleasantly packed with spicy, distinctively fresh flavors. Strawberry, raspberry, rose petal and peppermint open up and become quite rich on a gentle frame. Finishes soft and appealing. Drink now through 2005. 50 cases made. (HS)"

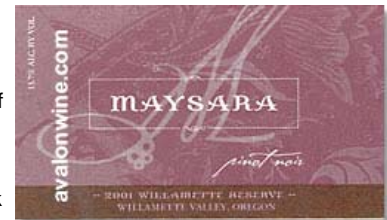


Opening up beautifully (this wine was rather tight when first released) the Brunker Hall shows lots of the blueberry fruit typical of the Wadenswil Clone, balanced by a big well integrated backbone of fine grained tannins and hints of mint, herbs, and roses in the nose and the long finish.

Maysara "Delara" Pinot noir 01 \$46

All about terroir- the scent of herbs, mint, bittersweet chocolate and ground coffee, with subtle hints of violets. The flavors are of black berry and black plum with a soft, full mouth feel, unusual

and very pleasant herbal notes, licorice and anise, and hints of Chinese five Spice. Tannins are polished and fine grained, beautifully integrated with the balanced acidity. Deep, dark, berry, woody, earthy, ageable. Shows what everyone is saying about the Momtazi vineyard is right- it's a remarkable vineyard.



Bergstrom "Cumberland" Pinot noir 01 \$33

Another beautiful Pinot from Josh, Burgundian flavors and lovely hints of violet and rose petal. Nuanced, yet very full bodied, with blueberry, plum, and sweet spice flavors. Velvet in the texture and violets in the nose. Yumm.

From the winery: "The 2002 Cumberland Reserve Pinot Noir is one of the reasons why I love my job. This is the wine that I always wanted to make—traditionally crafted Burgundian nuances and a sense of terroir matched with New World depth and flare. This wine will excite you and entice you, show you everything and sometimes keep to herself, hiding her potential for a different day. But that's why we love Pinot Noir, the iron fist in a velvet glove. Enough said."

Previous 2001 vintage Wine Spectator rating 92 points. At right, Josh and Caroline Bergstrom.

