

Reserve Pinot Noir Club™
Focus on
Stoller Vineyard

NW Big Reds Club™
Fielding Hills Cab 02

Sineann Old Vine Zinfandel 03 Five Star Merlot 02

**November
2004**

Stoller Vineyard : The First Three Years

Stoller 01
Chehalem 02
Gypsy Dancer 03

This month Avalon's Reserve Pinot noir Club focuses on one North Willamette Valley vineyard, Stoller Vineyard. We have three wines to taste, all made from the same vineyard's fruit, from three different producers, from three different vintages. Although the vineyard is not as well known as some of the older vineyards in Oregon, I believe that this vineyard will become a key one in the years to come. It's location at almost the center of the North Willamette Appellation and its soils and slope make it an accurate representation of Oregon's North Willamette Pinot noir vineyards.



Photo © Mike Haverkate

History

Stoller Vineyard is owned by Bill Cathy Stoller. The property as a whole is 375 acres, and encompasses the family turkey farm near where owner Bill Stoller grew up. When Bill and Cathy purchased the turkey farm from his cousin, they were already involved in the wine world as co-owners of Chehalem, and when they took over the farm it became apparent that grape vines were the best use for the property.

With the advice of Harry Peterson-Nedry (Chehalem co-owner), Patrice Rion (winemaker from Burgundy who has given them advice over the years), vineyard consultant Allen Holstein, and Joel Myers, they planted 10 acres each of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The vineyard now encompasses 121 acres, mostly planted to Pinot noir.

Vineyard Overview

Stoller Vineyard was planted with tight spacing, and a minimum density of 1250 vines per acre and a max of 2600 per acre. This European style tight spacing helps to stress the vines and encourage smaller clusters of intensely flavored fruit. The vines selected reflect the experience of Stoller's consultants and encompass both clones that were first

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A Tale of Three Wineries

Avalon's Big Reds Club features three up-and-coming wineries' most well known wines. If you've been a member of the Big Reds Club for long, you know how much I enjoy the wines of Fielding Hills. Mike Wade is an apple farmer gone winemaker, and his long career in farming really shines through. It's all about the vineyard, they say, and his is managed like the inside of a Swiss clock. People in the area use it as an example of the best. **The Fielding Hills Cabernet Sauvignon 02 \$33** received 93 points from Wine Spectator, who said:

"Has a wonderful, supple, generous core of mocha-scented blueberry, plum and spice flavors that fill the mouth and sashay around enticingly. A come-hither red with depth and persistence, it should continue to develop with cellaring. Drink now through 2010. 276 cases made. "



Mike Wade Punching down in his "Garagiste" Winery

Our second selection is **Sineann's Old Vine Zinfandel 03 \$38**, just released. The previous vintage receive 92 points from Wine Spectator, who said:

"Big and ripe, dripping with pure blackberry and plum flavors tinged with licorice and pepper, lasting forever on the rich finish. It's a bit hot, but what a range of flavors. Drink now through 2010. 700 cases made."

The 2003 shows as much or more of the "over-the-top" richness that characterizes the wines of Sineann, with an additional element of tighter controls over heat. It's a big hedonistic wine for lovers of huge fruit and oak flavors.

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**Patricia Green
Wine Club**
November 2004
2003 Preview

We aren't scheduled for a shipment this month, but are sending these wines to thank our PGC Club members for their patience with us.

Goldschmidt 03 \$50
Oregon 03 \$25

**Reserve
Pinot Noir Club™**

Stoller
PN 01 \$40

Chehalem
Stoller 02 \$39

Gypsy Dancer
Emily's 03 \$33

**Northwest
Big Reds Club™**

Fielding Hills
Cab 02 \$33

Sineann
Old Vine Zinfandel 03 \$36

Five Star
Merlot 02 \$32

**New
Discoveries
Club™**

Territorial
Pinot gris 02 \$15

Territorial
"T" 02 \$40

Dessert Wine Club™

Preston Port \$30

Badger Mountain Port
NSA \$20

Big Reds Club continued from page 1

Sineann Winemaker Peter Rosback has this to say about the wine:

"Our flagship wine. It is the oldest producing vineyard in the Pacific Northwest at nearly 100 years old. Every year it makes either the best wine we put out or very close to it."

"In 2003 we picked at 26 Brix, cropping at under two tons per acre. The wine is dark and immensely concentrated."

"To those who wonder if Zinfandel can be ripened outside of California, we offer this example. Not only does Zinfandel ripen on this old vineyard, it maintains balancing acidity to produce a wine that ages beautifully. This may be the best we've made yet. Didn't think we could do better than the 2002, but we may have done it."

Avalon's staff finds the Sineann Old Vine Zinfandel irresistible, right up there with the Owen Sullivan BSH as a favorite.



We continue to be impressed with the wines of **Five Star Cellars**. This very new winery with a young winemaker keeps producing, with little fanfare, some lush, crowd-pleasers. Above, winemaker Matt Huse (right) with his Dad in the Five Star tasting room. Matt learned winemaking at the Walla Walla Community College.

"We knew Matt had great potential," said Myles Anderson, co-owner of Walla Walla Vintners and advisor to the community college's viticulture program. "His parents had just started a winery and Matt showed the passion necessary to succeed in this business."

Why the name "Five Star"? The Huses searched for a name that wasn't already taken in a region with so many new wineries. Matt said he kept noticing words like, "five-start hotel," and "five-star restaurant," and checked to see if Five Star Cellars was available.

"We wanted to show that we are dedicated to quality, and five-star is the best," he said.

Fielding Hills Cabernet Sauvignon 02 \$33

A blend of red grapes from Walla Walla, beautifully balanced with nuanced black berry and fruit flavors, big finish, drink now for the fruit, or cellar for the layers of sagey herb, cedar, and oak that emerge now with decanting.

Wine Spectator rating 93 points.

**Sineann Old Vine Zinfandel 03 \$36**

Huge, gorgeous, from 120 year old vines on the Oregon side of the Columbia Gorge. Sineann's most popular, very limited wine. Great aromas, intensely flavored, with a deep, wild, gamey, dark streak that makes the wine something special. highly recommended. September 2004 release.

Made from 100 year old vines, this wine is one of Peter's most popular, and is in relatively good supply this year. A huge, massive, gushingly intense zinfandel.

Wine Spectator rating 92 points for 2002 vintage. Sorry we don't have the 03 review, but by the time it comes out, the wine is already long long gone.

Five Star Merlot 02 \$32

93 points, Wine & Spirits: "Just beautiful, essential Walla Walla fruit, from Seven Hills, Pepper Bridge, and Pheasant Run Vineyards, this wine has the smell of a chilly fall morning in Washington. It leads with an earthy spice, like sun-dried tomatoes and cedar, lining generous fresh cherry compote flavors. This is poised and elegant. 675 cases made."

Cedar, roses, and spicy white pepper nose, followed by big black cherry fruit with hints of vanilla cream, strawberry, and dark berries. Silky, smooth, thick mouth feel. Long long finish. A Yumm Ball.

95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

35% Seven Hills Winery,
38% Pepper Bridge,
27% Pheasant Run vineyards.

Cooperage- 100% New American oak.



New Discoveries Club

Focus on Territorial Vineyards

We featured Territorial last month when we focused on Southern Willamette Wineries, and now our New Discoveries Club gets to check out this interesting up-and-coming winery. Members can refer to last month's newsletter for the article on Territorial.

The winery is located in a funky artsy area of Eugene, Oregon, sort of the Berkeley of the NW, a university town with lots of anarchists, radical bike riders, and colorful characters.

Territorial Pinot gris 02 \$15

From the winery: "This wine is what a Pinot Gris, as in the grape, is all about. Pure varietal aromas welcome the palette to layers of pear and citrus. It is flawless, engaging and unhurried in the mouth, with a clean, lingering finish. On the strength of mature fruit and gentle handling, this wine is a monument to balance and varietal fidelity."



The only Pinot Gris to win gold at the Portland Wine and Arts Festival, 2004.

Territorial Pinot noir "T" 02 \$40

Territorial's best Pinot noir, the "T" reserve is a blend of grapes from Toad Hall and Bellpine Vineyards. Both vineyards are quite young, 6 years old, and the wine shows what can be accomplished with young vines in good location.

The wine was aged in all French oak, 33% new.

From the winery: "A dark, rare and richly concentrated reserve Pinot Noir. In no particular hurry, this stunning red delivers layer after layer of dark fruit, barrel spice, cedar, mint, chocolate and coffee. A blend of our six best barrels from a spectacular growing season. Gold Medal, Portland Wine and Arts Festival, 2004. 150 cases produced."



Dry. 13.9% alcohol. 3.48 ph, 5.7 grams/liter TA at bottling. Sourced from Bellpine Vineyards, Equinox Vineyard, Toad Hall Vineyards and Croft Vineyards. Pinot Noir clones 113, 115, 667, Wadenswil, Pommard and Jackson. Harvested 9/27 through 10/16, 2002. 72 hour cold soak followed by small-lot fermentation in open top vessels. Roughly 30% new French Oak.

NW Dessert Wine Club

As members of our Dessert Club know, the NW makes some excellent dessert wines and ports. Here are two little known ports with great flavor and excellent pricing and attractive packaging. Try them with chocolate or a good English cheese.

Preston Tennenreac Port \$30

This vintage port is made from 100% Cabernet grapes and aged in small oak barrels for 34 months. During fermentation, brandy is added, stopping the process. The unfermented grape sugar remains in the wine, making it sweet. The amount of sweetness varies with winemaker and winery. Port may be served at the end of a meal with dessert or with a cheese course. Cheeses such as Stilton, Huntsman and cheddar complement port.



Badger Mountain Port Organic and NSA \$20

Organic and **No Sulfites Added**. Ripe fruit fragrance combining black plum, figs, and nutmeg. The balanced mouth feel integrates flavors of plum, figs, and a hint of exotic spices with finesse and polish. Velvety tannins soften the harmonious finish of fruit, oak and spice.

Winemaker's Notes: "Ruby-style fortified wines are a favorite of mine, and this vintage provided fruit of tremendous ripeness and flavor, and it is reflected in the final product. The concentration of fruit character at harvest of 25.7 Brix enabled me to use 100% Cabernet Franc for the wine. I chose fermentation in the rotary fermenter to give a depth to the berry fruit appeal we seek in Cabernet Franc. To emphasize the desirable fruit qualities, I used *Prise de Mousse* yeast for fermentation. The fermentation was stopped by the addition of spirits at about 10% residual sugar, and put into new oak for barrel aging. This wine was bottled in April of 2003 after eighteen months in a combination of French and American oak barrels."

Patricia Green Cellars Wine Club

November Club—2003 Vintage Release

PGC Pinot noir "Goldschmidt Pinot noir 03 \$50

PGC "Oregon" Pinot noir 03 \$25
Details in the PGC Club newsletter.

About the Club:

=**Ten shipments** a year.

=**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 2004 Pinot noir futures- the 2004 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.

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Reserve Pinot noir Club continued....

...planted in Oregon in the 70's (Wadesvil & Pommard) and new, "second generation" clones (Dijon 113, 114, 115, 777, and 667). The vineyard has steep hillsides, rocky, low yielding Jory type soil, and the terrain bears a distinct resemblance to the famed Corton Vineyard in Burgundy, leading some winemakers to refer to Stoller as "Corton Hill".

The 2001 Vintage



The RPNC Club's representative Stoller wine from the 2001 vintage was made for Stoller by Harry Nedry– Petersen and Cheryl Francis of Chehalem Winery. The Stoller Vineyard Pinot noir 01 was the first release from the vineyard's winery and the grapes were harvested during the first week of October, 2001. The wine was made at Chehalem.

At the winery, the Pinot Noir grapes were destemmed and transferred to three and five ton fermenters, where they underwent a cold soak lasting five days. After the extended cold soak, the must began a fermentation lasting approximately 14 days, during which the caps were punched down three times daily. Once the primary fermentation had come to a close, the juice was pressed off and transferred to barrel. Harry and Cheryl chose a combination of medium-plus toast, tightly grained (Allier and Tronçais) French oak barrels, about 45% of which were new. Here the wines aged for twelve months, during which time they were racked only prior to bottling. 448 bottles were made.

Harry has this to say about the wine, three years after its production: "Deep ruby in color, the 2001 Stoller Pinot Noir offers up notes of rhubarb, black tea, and lavender in the nose. Deep and brooding in the mouth, with flavors reminiscent of chocolate covered cherries and pipe tobacco, this wine possesses a beautiful balance between fine tannin and sweet, rich fruit."

Here at Avalon we found the wine to be somewhat closed when we first tried it 18 months ago. A recent retasting showed very impressive changes, both in the more open and layered nature of the flavors, and in the now excellent balance. The nose of the 2001 is vibrantly fresh, with clean oak, hints of herbs, and red berry scents. The tannins are very fine-grained and well integrated, making it a silky, nuanced wine, more elegant than blockbuster. The finish goes on quite a long time, replaying the flavors of black berry, with subtle hints of spice and very subtly, mint. Quite lovely.



The 2002 Vintage

The RPN Club's 2002 example of Stoller Vineyard Pinot noir is **Chehalem Stoller Vineyard 2002 \$45**. Made from the second vintage of wine from Stoller, the wine has already received Kudos from Wine Advocate, with a 91+ rating and the following review::

"+. ...densely packed, plump, and satin textured, this is broad, lush decadent effort. Loads of expressive darks fruits are intermingled with spices...".

Harry had this to say: "The best Stoller Vineyards bottling we've done. Brilliant, deep purple/garnet colors, with red-black fruits on the nose (black! It's finally happening with maturity.); rich, dense blackberry fruit with the characteristic Stoller marker of slight herbal, chocolate, earth aromatics; three dimensional, rich, viscous, but with good acid structure and bright lift on the palate; fine tannin for aging (again, a sign of maturity). Very pleased."

The 2002 Chehalem Stoller Vineyard Pinot noir 02 shows how an additional year of vine maturity adds complexity and depth to wines made from the vineyard. Tasting the wine side by side with the 2001 Stoller, many similarities are clear, but the 2002 shows increased viscosity and roundness, and hints of herbs, chocolate, earth, and spice encircling a firm core of very deftly balanced tannins that are not as evident in the 2001 wine. Ah, the wonders of maturing, well managed vines.

The 2003 Vintage

The RPN Club's 2003 example is the **Gypsy Dancer Emily's Reserve 03 \$33**, made by Gary Andrus, famed winemaker who formerly owned Archery Summit and Pine Ridge in CA. The nose has sweet oak, red fruit, and a hint of red-hot cinnamon candy that is most pleasant. Gary is a master of oak. And this wine shows the "Gary Touch". Wow– he really does have the knack for making hedonistic, rich, lovely wines. This one is so fruit forward, just a lush blend of blackberries, blueberries, hints of blue plum, and that red-hot sweet cinnamon oak again. What an interesting evolution of the Stoller fruit. Of course, this wine was made by a different winemaker than the 01 and 02 wines, but even allowing for Gary's style, the "terroir" of Stoller Vineyard and the increased complexity of the 2003 vintage are clear. At left, Gary and family.



Summary

Well I hope you folks have as much fun as I have going through these wines. One thing is clear to me, Stoller Vineyard is developing into a fabulous vineyard. There are very limited amounts of the 2001 Stoller available from Avalon, and somewhat better supply on the other two wines. —Jean