

## Reserve Pinot Noir Club™ Focus on Cristom Vineyard & Winery

By Christina Kelly

Cristom is the product of Paul Gerrie, a Pennsylvanian engineer who came to Oregon in 1991 to attend the International Pinot Noir Conference and check out Oregon wineries. He initially hired a consultant, Mike Etzel, (who later opened Beaux Freres) to look for vineyard acreage.

"The moment I stepped off the plane, I knew I would love Oregon," said Gerrie, who named the winery after his grown children, Christine and Tom.



Gerrie purchased the 90-acre Pellier Winery and immediately began searching for a new winemaker. He learned about Doerner through the wines of Calera, based in Hollister, CA.

Doerner was looking for a new position, after 14 years with Calera. He admits he never intended to be in the wine business, after graduating with a biochemistry degree from UC Davis. But fate and a job offer took him to Calera, where he produced Pinot Noir, Viognier and Chardonnay.

After Gerrie made him an offer, Doerner moved to Oregon and said he was happy to be in a small winery where he got to make wine and perform all the tasks of a small business.

"I like doing a number of different things," said Doerner, 46, who grew up in Oakland. "I like experimenting with yeast trials and whole cluster trials. I am a generalist. I like a lot of different things and wine is only one of them."

Although Doerner, who is single, has many interests and hobbies, he recently backed away from one of his favorite activities-motorcycles. A few months ago, Doerner was riding his motorcycle through McMinnville when an elderly man driving a truck hit Doerner and sent him flying at least 25 feet, landing on his right wrist. The motorcycle caught fire and burned to metal parts.

The pins holding his wrist together were removed this week, and Doerner swears he won't get on a motorcycle again. Given the nature of the accident, the winemaker said he came inches from death.

"I don't know why I'm suppose to be here, but apparently I am suppose to be on this earth," Doerner said. "I feel very fortunate. Since the accident, I've had other job offers, but I think I am suppose to be right where I am."

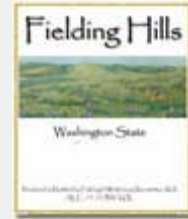
Gerrie agrees that Doerner belongs with Cristom and recently made him a partner.

"I think he is a fabulous winemaker," Gerrie said. "I couldn't have picked a better person. Our palates are similar and we both believe that our job is to make the best wines we can."

## NW Big Reds Club™ Focus on Fielding Hills

By Jean Yates

Fielding Hills Winery makes a very small amount of very very good wine from their vineyard in Mattawa, Wa. Winemaker and co-owner Mike Wade is an experienced farmer whose family orchards surround the winery. The winery, in an orchard in East Wenatchee, is a very basic barn with temperature control and a sweeping view of the Columbia River Valley below. The region is called the Columbia/Cascade Area.



The winery produces about 450 cases a year of three different wines, all red. The Cabernet Sauvignon 00, tasted in August 2003, is amazingly complex and sophisticated- this is a wine from two year old vines! The terroir of the site is already shining through, and flavors of bittersweet chocolate, roasting coffee bean, rich berry and plum, are richly layered on a supple backbone of tannins that signal that this wine will age well for up to 10 years.

I was blown away. This is what I live for, sitting around in a warehouse/garage/barn with a nice family, trying their wine, tasting and just knowing that they have what it takes. Fielding Hills has it!

The next vintage from Fielding, the 2001 wines, was released in October, and we have a limited amount to sell. I tasted them in August and they are wonderful. The Cabernet Sauvignon 01 shows more terroir and structure than the 00, as the grapes mature, and has even more of that wonderful ripe, rich, dense complex palette of flavors than the 00. It is fairly closed, and will benefit from 3-5 years of cellaring, or decant 12 hours before serving.

The Riverbend Red has already received a 90 point rating from Wine Spectator, and is one of those "feel good" wines that is just easy to drink and love. Not as complex and cellar worthy as the Cab, the Riverbend Red has plush and bright fruit flavors and hints of the vineyard's intense roasting coffee and cocoa bean terroir. Subtle spice, licorice, and anise notes complete the profile.

We will also have a small amount of their Merlot 01. Wine Press NW had this to say about the 00 vintage: "Shows complex aromas of black pepper, black cherries and vanilla with lingering flavors of raspberries, sweet spices and oak." We agree.

October 2003  
541-752-7418

### Reserve Pinot Noir Club™

Focus on Cristom Winery  
Cristom

Louise PN 01 \$44

Cristom

Jessie PN 01 \$44

Cristom Vineyards in Salem, OR is well known for crafting silky Pinot Noir with power, finesse and weight.

Jezebel

PN 2002 \$20

Second label for Sineann, in a joint effort with Daedalus, this wine is just a delight. Drink now and enjoy!

### Northwest Big Reds Club™

Focus on Fielding Hills

Fielding Hills

Cab 00 \$30

Fielding Hills

Merlot 01 \$30

Fielding Hills

Riverbend Red 01 \$30

An exciting new winery in the Columbia Cascades, less than 500 cases made in 00/01, big, rich wines from a new region with tremendous promise.

### New Discoveries Club™

Tyrus Evan Claret \$33

Owen Roe Sinister Hand \$20

Two big reds this month from outstanding producers.

### Sweet and Dessert Wine Club™

Townshend

Huckleberry Blush \$16

Mountain Meadows

Agave Mead \$15

Wild huckleberries make the Townshend special, and the agave mead is a new and surprisingly pleasing taste sensation.

## "Columbia Cascades" the next hot vineyard region?

Fielding Winery Shows Tremendous Promise-  
Vineyards already Producing Outstanding Wine

A new wine region has appeared amongst the rivers, lakes, and mountains of North Central Washington. Bordered by the towering Cascade Mountains on the west and sagebrush covered hills on the east, vineyards and their attendant wineries are rapidly appearing throughout the area.

The Columbia Cascade region is a new viticultural area developing in North Central Washington. Although there were wineries in this region before prohibition, it was not until 1980 that grapes began to reappear in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains and along the region's lakes and rivers. Currently there are over 800 acres of vinifera grapes and fifteen wineries, with more vineyards and wineries in development.

Winemakers across Washington and the Northwest are purchasing grapes from the new vineyards of this exciting new region. There's something about the "terroir" here that allows winemakers to produce impressive wines. As Walla Walla's available vineyard land gets snapped up, Mattawa and the Columbia Cascade Region offer enticing opportunities.

According to those in the know, great wines are coming out of a new wine region, the "Columbia Cascades". Publications including Wine Press NW and Wine Spectator have given 90+ and "Outstanding" scores to wines from the region.

### The Wahluke Slope

Known for its "time-stood-still" natural heritage and haunting, isolated beauty, the Wahluke Slope is unique in its rich natural and cultural heritage. Because the existence of the Hanford Nuclear Site kept developers and irrigators away for the last 50 years, the plant and wildlife of the 134-square mile slope across the Columbia River from Hanford's reactor areas appears as it did decades ago, and as it exists virtually nowhere else in the American West.

Roughly translated, the word Wahluke means "soaring up like birds" in the language of the Wanapum Indians, a small band of Native Americans who camped along the slope to catch Chinook salmon, steelhead and other fish in the Columbia River. Today, the 51-mile stretch of river that runs from about the Vernita Bridge to Richland is known as the Hanford Reach. The Reach produces more fall Chinook salmon than any other regional spawning bed. And now it may start producing a lot more wine grapes.



## The Wines

### Fielding Hills Riverbend Red 01 \$30 Wine Spectator rating 90 points

The Riverbend Red has already received a 90 point rating from Wine Spectator, and is one of those "feel good" wines that is just easy to drink and love. Not as complex and cellarworthy as the Cab, the Riverbend Red has plush and bright fruit flavors and hints of the vineyard's intense roasting coffee and cocoa bean terroir. Subtle spice, licorice, and anise notes complete the profile.

### Fielding Hills Winery Merlot 01 Wine Spectator rating 89 points

Outstanding Merlot that combines plush, appealing fruit with a strong backbone perfectly integrated with Fielding's characteristic toasted cocoa bean/espresso bean and black fruit flavors. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BY AVALON.

Wine Spectator rating 89 points: "Ripe, round and generous, offering chocolate-scented blackberry and currant flavors nicely balanced with a kick of lively acidity. Drink now through 2006." H.S.

Blend: 76% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, & 4% Syrah  
Vineyard/Source: Riverbend and Beverly Vineyards, both near Mattawa, WA

### Fielding Hills Winery Cabernet Sauvignon 00 \$30 Wine Spectator rating 91 points

Wine Spectator says: "Ripe, rich and spicy, with coffee and olive overtones to the dense core of black cherry and blackberry fruit, all of which echoes beautifully on the plump finish. Drink now through 2010. H.S."

We say- The Cabernet Sauvignon 00, tasted in August 2003, is amazingly complex and sophisticated- this is a wine from two year old vines! The terroir of the site is already shining through, and flavors of bitter-sweet chocolate, roasting coffee bean, rich berry and plum, are richly layered on a supple backbone of tannins that signal that this wine will age well for up to 10 years.

I was blown away. This is what I live for, sitting around in a warehouse/garage/barn with a nice family, trying their wine, tasting and just knowing that they have what it takes. Fielding Hills has it!

The next vintage from Fielding, the 2001 wines have now been released. I tasted them in August and again in October and they are wonderful. The Cabernet Sauvignon 01 shows more terroir and structure than the 00, as the grapes mature, and has even more of that wonderful ripe, rich, dense complex palette of flavors than the 00.



Mike Wade punching down Syrah, October 4, 2003.

## New Discoveries Club

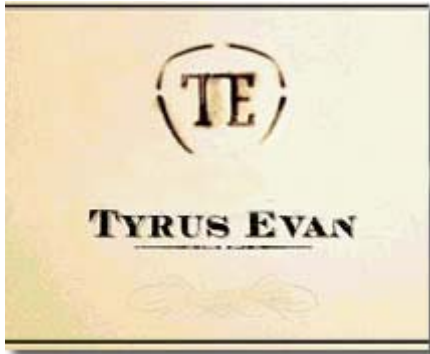
### Tyrus Evan Claret \$33 Owen Roe Sinister Hand \$20

Two big reds this month from outstanding producers.

#### Tyrus Evan Walla Walla Claret 01

New label from Ken Wright Cellars, made from Washington State fruit.

A dark wine, blended from Walla Walla grapes, a tad closed but opening with aeration to show blue and black fruit flavors, spicy notes of anise, cinnamon, and pepper, and finishing with a lovely long complex dance in the mouth. Have with grilled lamb, with a side of grilled Walla Walla onions.



#### Owen Roe "Sinister Hand" Syrah Grenache Blend \$20

A new affordable wine from Owen Roe, rather limited. The word is out on this wine and it has been racing out the door.

David often says- it's what's inside the bottle that counts, and he's done a great job on that account here. The wine is a delightful medium-full bodied fruity red that makes me smile when I drink it. Really, you cannot be depressed and drink this wine. It's "exuberant"!



## Dessert Wine Club

### Townshend Huckleberry Blush \$16 Mountain Meadows Agave Mead \$15

Wild huckleberries make the Townshend special, and the agave mead is a new and surprisingly pleasing taste sensation—.

#### Townshend Huckleberry Blush \$16

The huckleberries come from Northern Idaho, a stone's throw away from Spokane. He doesn't use a splash—he uses 75 percent huckleberry juice. Huckleberries sell for about \$30 per gallon retail, and Townshend buys for his port, and two blush wines—one sweet and one semi-dry.

This is his semi-dry blush wine, and the huckleberries shine through the crisp white wine to make a very special treat.



#### Mountain Meadows Agave Mead \$15

Known in olden times as Nectar of the Gods, Mead is a natural wine made from honey.

Agave Mead (semi-dry) is made from organic Agave Nectar and honey. Enjoy with grilled foods. Substitute for Tequila for a light Margarita.

Mountain Meadows Mead is a unique family-owned micro-winery located in a small town in California's northern Sierra Nevada Mountains. They specialize in Meads and fruit wines made with honey, and have been in commercial production since 1996. They produce their Meads from scratch, using premium honeys and local mountain spring water.



## Cristom's Winemaker Speaks

"We set out to make great wines at Cristom, and we are succeeding, one harvest at a time. -"

The wee hours; middle of the night in the middle of a cold Oregon harvest. A single spotlight burns in the fermentation room at Cristom. Great silver fermenting tanks glisten and groan under the weight of tons of black grape must. For eight days now, the Pinot Noir has idled. Native yeasts...off to a slow start.

But this night, a figure in jeans and a work shirt climbs the steps to the ramp above the tanks and peers into the vats. They are full of grapes and finally, they are beginning to warm.

With one stroke, the man plunges a long steel shaft into the cake, punching the skins and seeds, and stems down into the darkness of the juice below.

Aromas of a naturally occurring fermentation explode upward from the tank, almost potent enough to throw the man's head back. He heaves the punch down tool back into the cake of grape skins. Lush, warmed blackberries, cinnamon and flowers burst up and out of the blackness. A new wine is born.

"That is a very gratifying moment," Steve Doerner says. It is a characteristic understatement that belies a guy whose entire adult life has been one long and passionate dance with the heartbreak grape. "But it is equally gratifying to sip wine you really like at dinner and see other people pleased by your work."

There is an old saw in the world of wine that says that great winemakers are both scientists and chefs. It is an unusual combination of world views: blending careful, methodical techniques with a flair for rich, unforgettable aromas and flavors. It embodies Steve's long-standing love affair with Pinot Noir.

"My initial interest in wine came from a scientific curiosity," he says. He earned a degree from the University of California at Davis in biochemistry in 1978. "But my mother's side of the family is French. We always had wine at dinner growing up. It was always there." And by the early 1980s the quest of crafting up fine wines from the most fickle of grape varieties had become Steve's lifelong calling.

"I had no preconceived biases about winemaking. I just wanted to do things in what I considered to be a traditional manner," And Steve did. From the outset he went where most others in the industry refused to go by eschewing laboratory yeasts to work by encouraging indigenous yeast or native yeast fermentations.

Today, nearly two decades later, native yeast fermentations are a hallmark of Cristom wines ... and a key to their complexity, elegance and true varietal character.

"We don't handle the wines if we don't need to," Steve says. "and that includes filtering. We are gentler - the way it's been done for centuries."

His is an Old World approach to a new site on the edge of Oregon's vast Willamette Valley. "We have a longer growing season than California where I began making wine," Steve says. "Part of the reason Oregon has been so successful is that we have an almost marginal climate here. It's cool. And that allows us to slowly get them ripe without as much sugar."

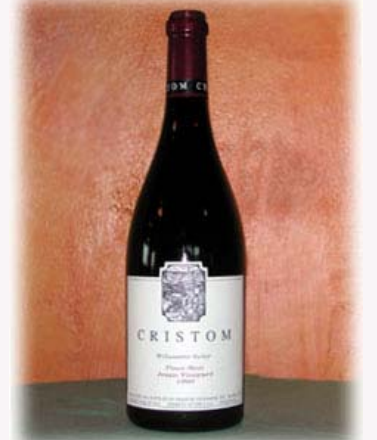
By late October Steve's hands are stained red from all the juice. His hair is a little disheveled ... beard untrimmed. The harvest is in. The new wines are running into barrels. There is time to assess what the year has brought.

"I like wines with a lot of weight and body, but more importantly finesse. If you can make a wine with masculine qualities of weight and flavor and with a feminine quality of finesse then that's the epitome of a great Pinot Noir."

## The Wines

### Cristom Pinot Noir Jessie Vineyard 01 \$42

From the winery: "This is the fourth release of Pinot Noir from this estate vineyard, and it is a selection of our favorite barrels from the Jessie vineyard. We began planting the Jessie vineyard in 1994 at a density of 2300 vines per acre. Today this vineyard consists of Dijon Clones 113, 114, 115, 667, and 777 as well as the Pommard Clone. The site has an east, southeast slope and is comprised primarily of Nikia soil which is volcanic in origin."



**WINEMAKER'S NOTES** This very dark, ruby colored Pinot Noir has great fruit expression along with a bit of a floral note on the nose. The floral impression continues on the palette but is then combined with an explosion of ripe, dark fruits. There is quite a bit of weight to the wine, but it has a very smooth texture. A fair amount of acidity and just a touch of tannin and oak contribute to a very long, satisfying finish. This wine has all the ingredients to be quite age worthy and should improve for another eight to ten years. Steve Doerner, Winemaker

### Cristom Pinot Noir Louise Vineyard 01 \$42

From the winery: "This is the oldest of our estate Pinot Noir vineyards that we began planting in 1993 to new clones and at high density. It is a selection of our favorite barrels from the vineyard. The vineyard now consists of Dijon clones 113, 114, and 115 along with the Pommard clone all planted at 2300 vines to the acre. The site has a southeast slope and is comprised primarily of Ritner soil which is volcanic in origin."

**WINEMAKER'S NOTES** This big, rich, garnet colored Pinot Noir has deep aromas of very ripe blackberries, plums, and black cherries along with hints of chocolate and toasted oak. The flavors are very rich and complex with lots of sweet ripe fruit, including cassis and blackberries along with vanilla from the oak. This wine has a silky smooth texture with fine tannins and firm acidity to match. Although this is a relatively big extracted wine, there is no mistaking it's Pinot Noir silkiness. It should age gracefully for a decade or more. Steve Doerner, Winemaker

### Jezebel Pinot Noir 02 \$20

New effort from Peter Rossback (Sineann) and Pam Walden (Daedulus). Hedonistic, huge, sensuous, so user friendly these wines are going to be your new best friends.

Jezebel was a powerful, sensuous, in your face kinda gal and so is this wine.

Starts with a distinct and appealing buttery, oaky nose, flavors of gushing black raspberry, black fruit, big, big, big.

Nothing subtle or nery here, just a blatantly user friendly, drink me up and smile kind of wine.

Super toasty oak and rich fruit make this wine stand out from the crowd of under \$20 Pinot noirs.

