



Avalon Wine Club News

July 2003

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Reserve Pinot Noir Club Raptor Ridge and Antica Terra

This month, the Reserve Pinot noir club features wines from two very small wineries with different approaches to winemaking and highly rated wines.

Scott and Annie Schull have built Raptor Ridge into a promising new winery that is already releasing excellent Pinot noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Gris. The winery is nestled atop a heavily forested ridge in the Chehalem mountains 25 miles southwest of Portland. The winery shares its twelve acre estate with families of Raptors (buteos and accipiters). These birds of prey such as Redtail Hawks, Kestrels and Sharp-Shinned Hawks constantly watch over their every move. Hence the name- Raptor Ridge. The winery produces about 1000 cases a year, sourcing grapes from some of Oregon's most respected vineyards.



Winemaker Scott Shull is personally involved alongside growers and field hands in pruning, trellising, cluster counting, cluster thinning, leaf pulling, quality monitoring, and all harvest decisions. Uniquely- during harvest, Scott is in the field picking fruit alongside seasonal workers, and personally transports the wine grapes back to Raptor Ridge where he oversees the "crush." Family and friends are involved in processing the fruit into fermentation vats while Scott personally adjusts nutrients, inoculation, fermentation processes, and wine handling procedures.

In contrast to Raptor Ridge, who purchase fruit for their wines, our second Pinot noir comes from Antica Terra, a winery that produces wine from its own vineyard.



Antica Terra was founded a decade ago with the purchase of a rugged 28 acre parcel in the Amity Hills region of the Willamette Valley. The vineyard sits on a gently sloping hillside of well drained soil, underlain by sandstone and siltstone, formed from old alluvium- "la antica terra". A variety of Pinot Noir clones were densely planted in 1990, and the vineyard significantly expanded in 1999 (they planted over 10,000 vines).

Yields are kept low to develop concentrated flavors, as well as to hasten ripening before the fall rains. The first release of Antica Terra was in 1994 and the 96 Pinot Noir was the first commercial release. Current production is extremely limited at less than 1000 cases a year..

Antica Terra is owned by Marc Peters and Marty Weber. Marc Peters and Faustina Ash moved to Oregon from New York in 1989. Marty and Ana Weber followed in 1990. Both had long time interests in wine and winemaking and were friends since college.

Marty Weber is a first vice president and investment portfolio manager with Smith Barney's Portland office. Marc Peters, a botanist, works in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Section. They share a vision of growing and producing world class Pinot Noir and like to think their early vintages represent small steps towards that vision. We sure think so!

Northwest "Big Reds" Club Forgeron and Betz Family Winery

In 1991, Marie-Eve Gilla came to the United States from France to work in an Oregon winery for a few months as an intern.

She did not plan to stay long, but 12 years later, Gilla is still in the Northwest, introducing wines from Forgeron, a new Walla Walla, WA winery.



In the summer of 2000, the petite, almost elfish Gilla struck out on her own, with a group of investors (mostly from the Walla Walla Valley) to create Forgeron, a boutique winery producing Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and a little Zinfandel. Forgeron is the French word for "blacksmith." The winery is located in a renovated, turn-of-the-century blacksmith shop.

Gilla believes that crafting wines of distinction will showcase vineyards where the grapes are grown. She produces one blend of different varieties from various vineyards—the flagship of the winery. When the fruit allows, she will produce single-vineyard varieties and a varietal blend, with emphasis on complexity, fruit and oak integration.

"I like more elegance in my wines," Gilla said. "I will be on the side of more fruit and less oak with a long finish."

Forgeron showcases fruit from some of the best vineyards in Eastern Washington, including Klipsun, Dubrul, Pepper Bridge, Sundance, Kiona, Cougar Hill and Boushey. Gilla has recently purchased grapes from a new vineyard, Les Collines, at the foothills of the Blue Mountains in Walla Walla.

Betz Family Winery He holds the rare designation of Master of Wine, works for the largest winery corporation in the Northwest, and is generally adored by most who meet him. Bob Betz, formerly vice president of winemaking research at Stimson-Lane (the parent company of Chateau Ste. Michelle, Columbia Crest, Col Solare, Northstar and Snoqualmie wineries to name a few) is at the top of the pinnacle, where few can match his feats. He has been part of a team that has helped raise the wine scores to new highs.



Like most winemakers, Betz wanted his own personal and unique wine. His work at Stimson-Lane removed him from the day-to-day practices of winemaking.

"I wanted to make sure my fingers stayed purple," Betz said. "I didn't want to get away from the fundamentals of winemaking. I love the actual act of making and blending wines and I missed it."

Thus began Betz Family Winery in 1997, a company with family connections. Cathy Betz, Bob's wife, is president of the winery, and his daughter, Carmen Severns, heads up sales and customer service, among other duties. The couple's other daughter Carla is an aspiring LA actor/rock musician who returns frequently to help with winery activities. Assistant winemaker Ross Mickel, although not officially related, is like a son, says Cathy Betz.

Reserve Pinot Noir Club™
Raptor Ridge
Meredith Mitchell 01 \$38
Antica Terra 01 \$35
"Dollar Bills" 01 \$13

Northwest Big Reds Club™
Betz Pere de Famille
Cabernet Sauvignon 00
Forgeron Syrah
Forgeron Cabernet 01

Northwest New Discoveries Club™
Mystic Zinfandel 01 \$22
Mystic Syrah \$21
Dollar Bills Only \$13

Northwest Dessert Wine Club™
Winters Hill Golden
Nectar Late Harvest
Honeywood selection

Reserve Pinot Noir Club– Raptor Ridge and Antica Terra

Raptor Ridge Meredith Mitchell Vineyard Pinot Noir 00



Wine Spectator gave this wine 90 points and says: "Rich in flavors, silky in texture, and persistent through the finish, this one centers on distinctive, tangy raspberry and red currant flavors that never let up as the finish peaks. Drink now through 2006. 190 cases made. (HS)"

Susan Meredith and Frank Mitchell's Vineyard is located 10 miles South-West of McMinnville, Oregon in the Coastal Mountain range. Soils are a thin Willakenzie variety, with broken basalt scattered throughout. For over a decade these Pomard clone vines have been pruned cordon style, rare in Oregon's cool climate. Resulting crop yields rarely exceed one ton per acre. Low-yields, rocky soil, and pronounced ripeness contribute to a jammy intensity.

The winemaking:

The winery's foggy ridge is ideally suited to a cool winemaking regime, important in capturing delicate aromas and flavors. Fermentations were carried out with strains of yeast isolated from famous Italian regions: Barolo and Brunello Montalcino. Freshly destemmed grapes completed a four-day cold soak in their own juices, each tank was then inoculated with a different strain of commercial yeast to promote complexity of flavor, aroma, and proper color.

Fermentation began on day five, with punch downs occurring every four hours around the clock. After a 92F fermentation temperature spike, wines were pressed at the end of a two-week primary fermentation. The new wine was settled for an additional two weeks, inoculated for secondary Malo Lactic fermentation and kept warm in the tank, reaching 15.6% alcohol.

Wines were then drained to barrels and cellared for 11 months in a selection 50% new French oak, with the balance being a range of cooperage from one to six years of age. The finished wine was racked once, and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

In The Kitchen:

Our 2000 Meredith Mitchell Pinot noir is bold enough to enjoy with hearty beef, lamb, or venison dishes, paired with winter vegetables.

Antica Terra Pinot Noir 01



Wine Spectator says: "Rich in flavor, yet light on its feet, with elegant structure that lets the black cherry, blackberry, and white pepper flavors mingle harmoniously on the finish. Tannins are present, but become submerged with subsequent sips. Drink now through 2008. 150 cases." H.S.

From the winery: "Although some are saying the 2001 vintage lacks the "guts" of the '98, '99 and '00 vintages, this will undoubtedly vary from producer to producer. We are quite pleased with the complex fruit and spice character of our 2001 Pinot noir, and attribute much of it to paying meticulous attention to detail in the vineyard. As a result, we feel we have put forth a Pinot noir reminiscent of past vintages. The wine has a dark ruby color with a bouquet of ripe cherries, rose and cinnamon, and offers sappy, vibrant cherry and blackberry flavors with chewy tannins and mineral overtones. This is a wine that can be enjoyed young, but also has the concentration and structure to age gracefully.

Marc and Marty's wines are handcrafted from Antica Terra Estate and purchased fruit. This wine is a blend of grapes from their Estate vineyard, Temperance Hill, and Croft Vineyard. A dark, muscular wine, brooding and complex.

Antica Terra began a decade ago with the purchase of a rugged 28 acre parcel in the Amity Hills region of the Willamette Valley. The vineyard sites on a gently sloping hillside of well-drained soil, underlain by sandstone and siltstone, formed from old alluvium- la antica terra. A variety of Pinot noir clones were densely planted in 1990, and the vineyard was significantly expanded in 1999. Yields are kept low to develop concentrated flavors, as well as to hasten ripening before the fall rains.

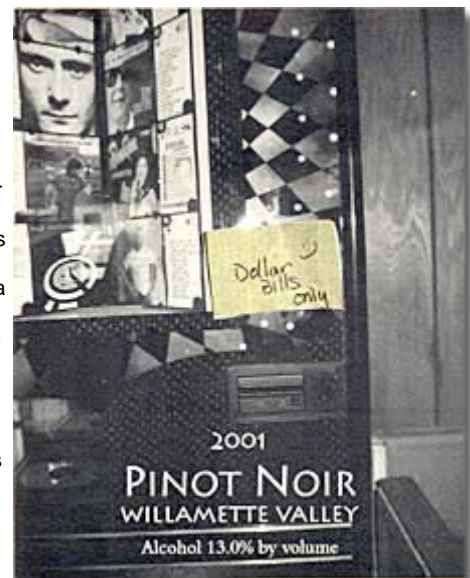
The first vintage of Antica Terra was 1994 and the 1996 Pinot noir was the first commercial release. Current production is extremely limited.

Antica Terra is owned by Marc Peters and Marty Weber. Marc Peters and Faustina Ash moved to Oregon from New York in 1989. Marty and Ana Weber followed in 1990.

Bonus Bottle: Patricia Green Cellars "Dollar Bills Only" Pinot Noir 01 \$13

PGC second label, photo is of the jukebox at Lumpy's, a dive of a bar in Dundee where Patty and Jim have been known to hang out. This is Temperance Hill juice and is a wonderful single vineyard wine at a ridiculous price. The glut is making for some really crazy deals. This is one of the best!

Nose of candied Bing cherries, buttery vanilla, and spice. Excellent backbone around which layers of black cherry, red cherry, blackberry, cassis, white pepper, hints of fennel, cardamon, clean saddle leather, finish goes on and on. Rich, lovely body and very ageable. What a great deal from PGC!



Big Reds Club— Forgeron Cellars and Betz Family Winery

Forgeron Cellars Syrah 01 \$38 Cabernet 01 \$38

After earning her masters degree in enology and viticulture at the University of Dijon, Marie-Eve Gilla received practical training at local Burgundian wineries and vineyards.

She came to the West Coast for what was to be a brief internship. Now after ten years of making premium wines here, she's come to fully appreciate the incredible growing conditions we enjoy in Eastern Washington.



Forgeron's wines are big and hearty, and will probably peak around 5-8 years from now.

Description of the **Cabernet Sauvignon** from the winery:

"This wine opens with nice aromas of dried fruit, blackberry, and roasted coffee beans. A full, complex mouth feel framed with nice tannins shows blueberry, coco and elegant vanilla flavors. An interesting characteristic is the very long and intense aftertaste, foreboding a great aging ability.

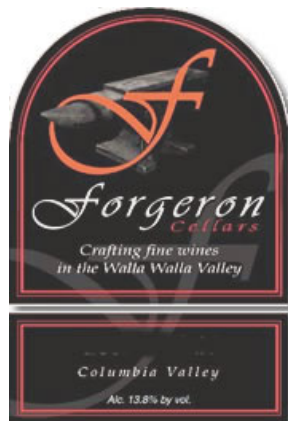
This Cabernet Sauvignon is very young and lively. Additional aging after bottling will bring further elegance and complexity."

The Cabernet Sauvignon is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon:

24% Artz Vineyard, Red Mountain
8% Klipsun Vineyard, Red Mountain
24% Alder Ridge Vineyard, Columbia Valley
30% Pepperbridge Vineyard, Walla Walla Valley
14% Stellar Vineyard, Walla Walla Valley

Forgeron Syrah: The first thing you notice is the inky, black color that fills your glass, followed by zesty blueberry and currant aromas with a hint of lilac blossoms. The fruit from Boushey Vineyard contributes rich, explosive blueberry flavors. Spice and cinnamon notes from an extensive barrel aging tantalize the palate. Tannins and acids intertwine nicely to frame an elegant, yet powerful mouth feel.

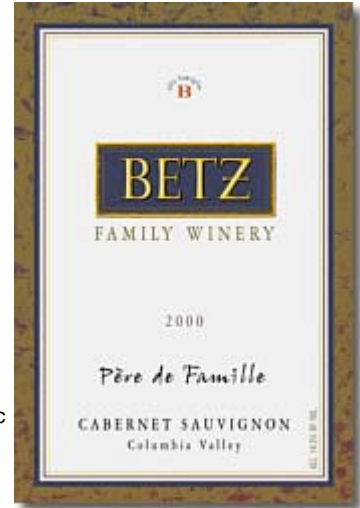
The big structure of this wine will stand up to any roasted meat. Our favorite would be a roasted leg of lamb with fresh rosemary and whole garlic cloves. This wine will also pair nicely with roast beef accompanied by assorted herbed roasted vegetables.



Betz Family Winery Cabernet Sauvignon 00 "Pere de Famille" \$44

Wine Press NW says: "This beguiling Cab-based blend takes advantage of fruit from Red Mountain, Wahluke and Walla Walla. It shows off dark, brooding fruit that should continue to gain complexity with a few years in the cellar."

Receive free bottle of the Betz's Vecchia Emilia Balsamic vinegar with 6 bottle purchase, and free bottles of BOTH Vecchia Emilia balsamic and Casa Brina Olive oil with case purchase!



Seattle Times says: "...the best of Betz. The 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon "Pere de Famille" (\$45) includes some merlot and a touch of cabernet franc in the blend. This is authoritative cabernet, its aromas saturated with cedar, leather and spice. The fruit is plentiful and ripe, but less broadly displayed than in many 2000s — this is what the French call a "vin de garde" — a wine to cellar. Dense and textured, the flavors gracefully unwrap over time as it breathes in the glass.

From the winery: "The 2000 blend is nearly identical to the 1999 in varietal concentration, 76% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Merlot and 5% Cabernet Franc, but the vineyards and vintage made a different wine, one with even more penetration and concentration.

New in the mix are Cabernet Sauvignon from Walla Walla and a small amount of Merlot from the Wahluke Slope. The base is still our selection of vineyards on Red Mountain (Ciel du Cheval and Klipsun) and Alder Ridge that create a powerful, ripe foundation. The new sites added some licorice and leather hints to the aroma. The addition of 5% Cabernet Franc enhanced the blend, making for a more interesting aroma and elegant mouthfeel.

This may be the longest lived of the Cabernets that we've made, so if you're looking for a wine from the millennium year to lay away, consider the Père de Famille. There's powerful tannin that needs aging, but overlaying this compelling structure is a deep concentration of cassis, black raspberry and black cherry. It's rich in tannin, yet supple from gentle handling and aging in French oak barrels for 18 months.

The wood maturation has also added a slight smokiness to the aroma. We recommend additional time in the cellar or an hour in the decanter before serving. (450 cases)"

Last summer Steve Tanzer, the International Wine Cellar Newsletter, tasted it about 2 months after bottling and wrote the following:

"Saturated, bright medium ruby. Raspberry, black cherry, smoky oak and mocha on the nose. Chewy and spicy on the palate, with a deep core of sappy dark berry fruit. Bright flavors of black raspberry and spicy oak really expand in the mouth. Very long finish features building but smooth tannins and sweet oak."

New Discoveries Club

Mystic Zinfandel \$22 Mystic Syrah \$21

2001 Syrah, Oregon-Columbia Valley
Each year the fruit from this "Top Secret" little vineyard gets a little more robust. As the vines age the flavors are richer and deeper and the trademark black pepper spiciness becomes more pronounced. The wine is dark and inky again this year and is set off by nuances of plum and black licorice in both aroma and flavor, and enhanced by just a smidge more new toasty oak than last year. Careful not to overpower the lush natural fruit and spice of this Syrah, the oak rounds out the texture and captures that lingering pepperiness in the finish. The reviews so far suggest we have another crowd-pleaser on our hands.

2001 Zinfandel, Oregon-Columbia Valley-Hillside Vineyard

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus and we think he'll find this one a keeper on those cold winter nights. More aromas of rich raspberry preserves than anything else delight your olfactory senses while the essence of the fruit is concentrated as it coats your tongue. Ample alcohol adds to the sweetness effect in the mouth without drying or a residual "heat" in the finish. This wine is great with just about anything (even PB&J) and holds its own without overpowering many desserts - pairs especially well with chocolate. YUM!

Mystic Wines was started in Oregon by Rick Mafit in 1992. Rick spent the 80's making wine in California's Sonoma and Mendocino counties and came north eager to find sites where "Big Reds" - most notably Merlot, would thrive and make wines of distinction.

After scouring the state he found The Dalles region (Columbia Valley) in the Columbia Gorge just this side of the Washington Border. This area has a longer growing season and the heat necessary to fully ripen Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Syrah varieties.

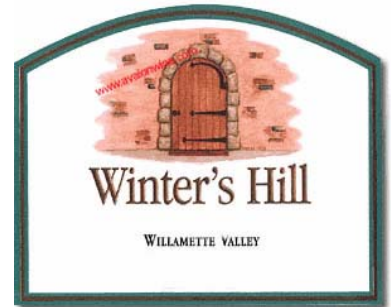
Dillon Mafit (Rick's son) designed the monochromatic label printed on actual "cork" paper. The idea emulates Reserve bottlings of many small wineries in Portugal. Each label varies with the patterns created by the natural cork and the way it absorbs the sepia ink creating a uniquely attractive package. This label recently won an award for Best Use of Art in Label Design in the 2001 San Diego National Wine Competition.



Dessert Wine Club

Winter's Hill Golden Nectar \$24

Made from frozen grapes in the style of an ice wine, this wine opens with the floral notes of the white narcissus, and the intense flavors of honey, pears and apples have an underlying spiciness that leads to a crisp and refreshing finish.
Split (375 ml).



Winters Hill Vineyard has been in the family since 1961, when Emily Gladhart's parents, John and Lena Winter, purchased a grain and fruit farm on a corner of Oregon's Dundee Hills. Peter and Emily and their son Russell planted the first 19 acres of grapes in 1990, 12 acres of Pinot noir and 7 acres of Pinot gris. The vineyard's elevation of 525 to 730 feet on south facing slopes provides optimum warmth during summer days while exposing it to cool ocean breezes every afternoon that drop evening temperatures into the '50's. These conditions bring the slow, gentle ripening so essential to the delicate character of fine Pinot Noir and Pinot gris.

Own rooted plantings are all trained to a divided canopy, Scott Henry trellis system. Grafted plantings are currently trained to a single canopy, double Guyot trellis. Their vineyard management practices and Winter's Hill wines are certified as Salmon Safe and LIVE (Low Input Viticulture and Enology) as they adhere to practices that promote sustainable viticulture while minimizing the use of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers and protecting the farmer, the environment and society at large.

The first harvest was in 1992, with all fruit contracted to Erath Vineyards and Lange Winery. Subsequently Winter's Hill fruit has also been contracted to Adelsheim Vineyards, Amity Vineyards, Belle Pente Winery, Cristom Vineyards, Elk Cove Winery, Eola Hills Wine Cellars, King Estates Winery and LaVelle Vineyards Winery. Currently the balance of Winter's Hill production not dedicated to their estate wines are under long term contracts to Rex Hill Winery, Ponzi Winery, Lemelson Winery and Domaine Meriwether (sparkling wine).

Peter and Emily are directly involved in all aspects of vineyard development and management, fruit selection, wine making and marketing. Russell and daughter Amalia and son-in-law Sean Hayes contribute regularly as members of the farm planning committee and as harvest helpers. Even granddaughter Kate helps test the fruit for ripeness. The vines are carefully pruned, trained, thinned and handpicked by a loyal crew of six that has been with the farm for over 7 years. The vineyard is certified by the LIVE (Low Input Viticulture and Enology Program), that seeks to promote sustainable agriculture while minimizing the use of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers and protecting the farmer, the environment, and society at large.

Winters Hill grapes are sought after by wineries and their wines have always been well received. Several have been vineyard designated by the wineries and have won medals in international competitions. Now Winters Hill is making wine under their own label.

Winters Hill Pinot noir has deep ruby colors, layered fruit flavors, and strong tannins for balance and aging. Their Pinot gris has intense floral aromas, luscious fruit flavors, and good acidity that makes for a balanced, very drinkable wine, with spicy food or as an aperitif.