

**Reserve Pinot Noir Club™**  
**Beaux Freres Estate 05**  
**St Innocent Villages Cuvee 05**

Annually one of Oregon's highest rated Pinots, our featured March 2007 Pinot noir is the Beaux Freres Estate 05. In a difficult vintage, Beaux Freres crafted another memorable wine.

Maybe it's not so bad if the weather conditions of a vintage are less than perfect. In 2005 Beaux Frères created "good out of adversity" says Kurt Johnson, National Sales Manager.

The 2005 growing season brought Willamette Valley growers a limited fruit set, heat spikes, rain during harvest, and rain that didn't stop. In some years, an early rain has little effect, as the water in the grapes is drawn out and flavors re-intensify over a week or two of warm days. Not so in 2005. When it started raining, that was it. Oregon's famous winter rainy season came on with unrelenting moisture.

Perhaps difficulties in a growing season contribute qualities that add up to a unique character for the vintage. In 2005, limited fruit set meant a limited crop, and fewer clusters of grapes per vine intensified what was left.

Read more about the 2005 vintage and the 2005 PN on page 4 of this newsletter.

**Introducing the Next Generation of Beaux Freres**

Beaux Frères, French for "brothers-in-law," is named for its founders, brothers-in-law Mike Etzel and Robert Parker Jr. Parker's status as a critic and his well-known monthly publication *The Wine Advocate* has certainly garnered attention for Beaux Frères, though Parker, doubtless for obvious reasons, does not cover their winery. After nearly twenty years in business, and as two of Etzel's sons prepare to graduate with college degrees in enology and viticulture, people are wondering: Will Beaux Frères be handed down to the next generation of brothers?

Etzel's sons, Jared and Mikey, have assumed the position of second generation in training, with the youngest, Nathan, possibly in tow. What wine industry work they do with the training is yet to be determined, though the tentative plan is to eventually pick up where Dad and Uncle leave off.

Between their exposure to all aspects of operations at Beaux Frères, their in-depth studies of enology and viticulture at school and their hands-on wine work in Oregon and abroad, Mikey and Jared are amassing credentials to ensure they're prepared to take on the family business with shrewdness and grace.

"I was always hoping that they may want to get involved," says Mike Etzel, "but when they were in high school, they didn't demonstrate any super interest in the wine industry. It was just a way of life. It wasn't until they left and went to Europe that they said, 'I think this is what I want to do.'"

*This story continues on [www.avalonwine.com](http://www.avalonwine.com) at <http://avalonwine.com/Beaux-Freres-Winery-Next-Generation.php>*

**Reserve Pinot Club Info continues on page 4....**

**Northwest Big Reds Club™**  
**Abeja Cabernet Sauvignon 05**  
**Owen Roe Yakima Red 05**

New releases from Owen Roe always get Avalon's staff attention. David O'Reilly consistently produces over-the-top red wines, uniformly excellent from vintage to vintage. He's always pushing for improvements in the vineyards

David has added several new vineyards to his portfolio of properties from which he sources grapes. Emphasizing the importance of the vineyard in making great wine, David can often be seen driving through the hills of Oregon and Washington, checking for possible vineyard sites, and for old vineyards that might be improved and provide old vine fruit. His efforts have brought several western Yakima vineyards to prominence, most notably the Dubrul Vineyard, and recently, the Slide Mountain Vineyard and Slide Mountain area.

David says he thinks the higher elevation vineyard sites in the west-most Yakima Valley in Washington may produce the best fruit in Washington. He has found sites at 1500 ft and higher elevations, where the colder temperature, thin soil, and more extreme weather make for limited crops of unusually terroir-driven flavors. The fruit tends to have flavors and scents that range far beyond the black cherry flavors standard from lower elevation sites, where as much as 8 tons of fruit are harvested per acre.

A new Slide Mountain site, in the foothills of Mt Adams at 1750 feet, provided fruit for the 2005 Yakima Red, along with Cabernet Franc from the Rosa Vineyard Mystica Block, Cabernet Sauvignon from Elerding Vineyard, and Merlot from the Dubrul Vineyard. The Slide Mountain designated Cabernet Franc is now available in very small amounts, giving us a chance to try a wine made 100% from this new site.



David O'Reilly and Jerry Owen

**Big Reds Club continues on page 2...**

**March  
2007**

**Northwest Big Reds Club™**

Abeja  
Cab Sauvignon 04  
\$40

Owen Roe  
Yakima Red 05  
\$42

**Reserve Pinot Noir Club™**

Beaux Freres  
Estate PN 05  
\$75

St Innocent  
Villages Cuvee 05  
\$22

**Oregon New Discoveries Club™**

Purple Hands  
Red NV \$19

Rivers Edge  
Black Oak PN 05  
\$27

**Dessert Wine Club™**

Amity  
Late Harvest  
Riesling \$27

Apolloni  
Lt Harvest  
Viognier 05  
\$27

## NW Big Reds Club

Continued from page 1.....

### About Owen Roe's labels

David O'Reilly is Irish, and he clearly relishes the culture he comes from, incorporating the images and people of Ireland into his winery names and labels. When he decided to start a new winery, he named it after Owen Roe O'Neill, the great Irish patriot.

Back in 2000, David was searching for images for his new winery's labels, and just happened to meet David Brunn, a photographer who, it turns out, is from the same area of Ireland as David O'Reilly, and who had taken photos of the castles and ruins around their ancestral homes. Perfect images for David's wines!

**David Brunn** has his photographs printed using a 19th century printing process called photogravure. **Working Theory Press**, owned and run by Russ and Patrice Dodd in Portland, OR, created the original prints and the wine labels.

Each label is individually hand printed on an etching press, using 100% cotton art paper and archival printing ink. Interestingly, their ink contains pigments that are made with charred vineyard prunings and the lees of wine.

The image on the Dubrul Cab and Merlot labels is of Clogh Oughter castle, in County Cavan where Owen Roe O'Neill died in 1649. The photograph shows the remains of this 12th century Anglo-Norman fortress, where the photographer David Brunn's family still lives today.

The image on the Yakima Red and Cab Franc labels is of the remains for the 6th century Drumlane Abbey in County Cavan, where photographer Brunn's family still lives. The abbey was one of several supported by the O'Reillys until the British took it over.



Print from which Owen Roe's Yakima Red label's images is drawn. These prints are available to purchase. Contact Jean at Avalon Wine for more info.

Big Reds Club continues on page 7.....

## Owen Roe Yakima Red 05 \$42

**Unforgettable.** One of the most intoxicating noses of any red wine I've tried.

Heady and luscious black cherry gushes into your senses, complemented by streaks of red berries and cherries, perfectly integrated toast and Yakima earth, smoke, nutmeg, distant roasted coffee, and it still keeps unraveling.

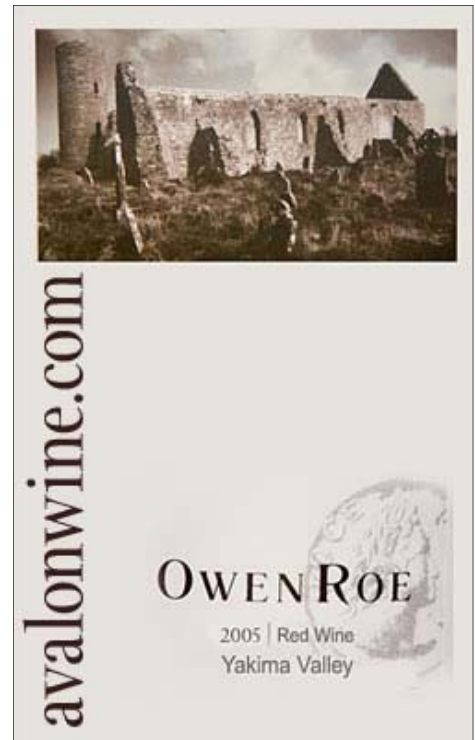
After airing, absolutely velvety flavors of black cherries are layered with dark raspberries and sweet cherries. Sure, the tannins are there but they're woven perfectly into the mouth-coating texture of the wine. The finish reiterates all the wonderful fruit you can't wait 'til the next glass to get more of, mingling with pink peppercorns, tiny hints of dried herbs, cloves, cream and cocoa shavings.

Previous (2004) Vintage received Wine Spectator 93 Points and "Highly Recommended"

This is incredible juice. 41.4% Cab, 37.9% Merlot, 20.7% Cabernet Franc ---  
Decanting recommended for best experience.  
Cellar up to 5 years.

### Food pairings for the Yakima Red 05:

Balanced fruit, acidity, and complexity. Finesse. The smoky note on the nose and finish (as well as a dusky note mixed with pink peppercorn on the second day) would lend itself well to pancetta wrapped squab served with cranberry studded rice or pink peppercorn crusted and seared ahi tuna with grilled fingerling potatoes



## NW Dessert Wine Club

### Amity Late Harvest Riesling \$27

From the winery:  
Our 2002 Late Harvest Riesling is the by product of our production of our 2002 Select Cluster Riesling which was the first Riesling we ever made that would have qualified under German law as a Trockenberenauslese (dry select berry wine).

We bought 6 tons of heavily botrytis affected grapes from Chehalem Mountain Vineyards on November 4<sup>th</sup> 2002. Ideal botrytis, just clean dried and raisined berries without secondary infections of mold etc, happen very rarely and in very few locations. Chehalem Mountain Vineyards in 2002 was such a time and place.

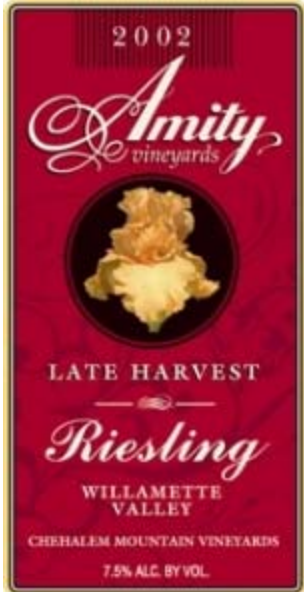
We realized that you could not pay American pickers to go through and pick individual berries so we paid them to pick the whole crop. Then Chris found me 6 workers who we paid by the hour for the next two days. They sorted out 1.25 tons out of the 6 tons that were the most botrytis affected. The remaining 4.75 tons of fruit was used to make 422 cases of 375ml Late Harvest Riesling. \

At 23 Brix, 7.5g/l total acidity and 3.19 pH, this was ideal juice and it made a great wine that could be compared to a German Auslese. The nose is dominated by honey with touches of citrus. In the mouth it is smooth and luscious with delightful tastes of honey, peach and melon. Sweet, but not cloying it is a classic example of what a botrytis affected Late Harvest Riesling can taste like.

### Apolloni Lt Harvest Viognier 05 \$27

This wonderful dessert wine brings out the floral, apricot, pear and spice flavors unique to the Viognier grape.

Made in the ice-wine style from frozen Viognier, the concentrated flavors and aromas capture the essence of the sunny growing season into each small bottle. Enjoy this candy for adults!



## OREGON PINOT NOIR SPRING "SUPER CASE"

Shipping in late May, 2007:

Call Avalon to order 541-752-7418  
Exclusive offer for Wine Club Members

- 2- Beaux Freres "Estate" Pinot noir 05 \$75
- 2- Beaux Freres "Upper Terrace" Pinot noir 05 \$90
- 2- Beaux Freres "Willamette" Pinot noir 05 \$45
- 2- Shea "Estate" Pinot noir 05 \$45
- 2- Shea "East Hill" Pinot noir 05 \$45
- 2- Shea "Pommard" Pinot noir 05 \$52

**\$704 retail value for \$632 save \$72**

### Beaux Freres 2005 Pinot noirs

It has been almost a year since the Beaux Freres 2004 Pinot noirs sold out. Now, with the release of three 2005 Pinots, we have some of Oregon's highest rated wines back for sale. Beaux Freres released three wines in March of 2007

**-Beaux Freres "Estate" 05 \$67.50/\$75** Previous vintage ratings: 2002, 2003 and 2004 all received 95 points from Wine Spectator.

Note: Beaux Freres wines are not rated by Robert Parker as he is a co-owner of the winery with his brother-in-law, Mike Etzel (winemaker).

**-Beaux Freres "Upper Terrace" 05 \$81/\$90** Previous ratings from Wine Spectator: 2004: 93 points; 2003: 94 points, 2002: 91 points

**-Beaux Freres "Willamette Valley" 05 \$40.50/\$45** Called "Belles Soeurs" in previous vintages, same vineyard sources and style, just returning to the Beaux Freres winery name for this wine not made entirely from Estate fruit. Previous ratings from Wine Spectator: 2004: 91 points; 2003: 93 points; 2002: 94 points

You'll find extensive tasting notes on the avalonwine.com site, or call for info. The wines are available on the website, or Wine Club members may order by calling Marcus or Amy at 541-752-7418 or Jean at 541-424-8004.

### Shea Estate Pinot noir 05 "Pre-Review" from Harvey Steiman

Oregon's top rated wine from Wine Spectator was Shea's "Estate" 04, rated number 15 in the Wine Spectator "Top 100 Wines of the Year" for 2006. Now, Harvey Steiman, Wine Spec's reviewer for Oregon wines, has commented on the just released Shea Estate 2005, on the Wine Spectator website.

He says: "...our waiter (at Roaring Fork, in Scottsdale, AZ) pointed us toward the Pinot Noir he declared was his favorite: Shea Vineyard Estate 2005, an Oregon wine I have not yet rated (though I gave the 2004 a 95-point score)."

"Shea's style is fruit-centered, and the 2005 vintage (like the 2004) represents a more typical, balanced character than the results of the hotter years that preceded it. The wine has rich cherry and raspberry character, plus some nice hints of vanilla and cream, but no overt oak. Those are good signs, because oak and alcohol can react badly to peppery heat (in the foods he was eating)."

Scuttlebutt is that he contacted the winery immediately to get the wine for review, always a good sign, as most wineries have to pay a submission fee to even get their wines considered for review at Wine Spectator. We're guessing that his favorable impression means that another high score is a distinct possibility.

Shea Estate 05 is still available for purchase, and we are now taking orders for the Shea "East Hill" Pinot noir 05 \$45, of which there was very little made (Around 125 cases total). We also have a tiny, tiny amount of the Shea "Pommard" \$52 for sale.

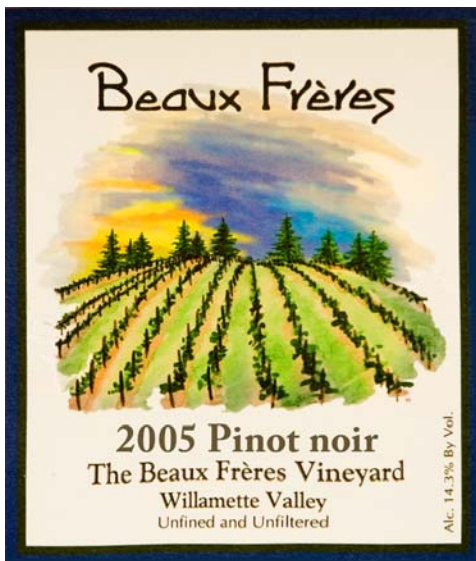


## Reserve Pinot noir Club Continued from Page 1

**Beaux Frères  
"Estate" Pinot noir 2005  
\$67.50/\$75.00**

The Pinot noir vines of Beaux Frères' 22 acre Estate Vineyard were planted between 1987 and 1990, and at 17 to 20 some years of age, are in their prime. The vineyard is a mix of Pommard and Wadenswil clones, for the most part planted on their own roots (versus phyloxera resistant root stock).

In his Estate Vineyard, Mike is harvesting the rewards of his long commitment to careful, meticulous vineyard management, including increasing use of biodynamic methods. The 2005 Estate Pinot noir's complex layering of scents and flavors differentiates the Beaux Frères wines from simpler Pinots. Consistently the highest rated Pinot noir in Oregon, (even without co-owner Robert Parker rating the wine for his famed Wine Advocate), Beaux Frères' 2005 Estate Pinot noir continues to hold its position.



**Wine Spectator reviewed the Beaux Frères Estate 05 in early March, 2007, and gave it 93 points.**

We wonder if Wine Spectator tasted the wine before it was showing at its best. As you know, young Pinot noir goes through "dumb phases", when the fickle Pinot grape seems determined to hide its charms. Tasting the wine in January 2007, we found the wine big and balanced, but changing rapidly with aeration, that is, the scents and flavors kept shifting, and it took awhile after decanting for the complex, layered and intricate flavors to show themselves to the full. And that "je ne se quois" that raises Beaux Frères's Pinots to the highest scores was, perhaps, not as completely present as it might be in a few months.

**Here's what Harvey Steiman said on March 7, 2007:**

"Although 2005 was a difficult vintage, Beaux Frères made a beauty out of its own vineyard. Firm at first, it then blossoms into a panorama of flavors, fanning out its raspberry cream flavors, hinting at floral, mineral, green tea and Asian spice notes as the finish picks up steam. Not a big wine, but it has many layers to explore. Best from 2009 through 2015. From Oregon.—H.S. 93 points.

**Here's what Mike Etzel says  
about the 2005 Estate Pinot noir:**

After 16 vintages it would seem easy to compare the newborn 2005 with a previous year, but it is actually quite difficult. We have had vintages where, because of growing conditions, the wines are delicate, light, and feminine. And other years where, because of low yields and climatic circumstances, the wines are powerful, rich, and dense. 2005 appears to be a blend of both styles.

The color is dark ruby with plenty of purple highlights. The nose is very extroverted and shows no intention of shutting down. At present (January 2007) the wine reveals pure blue and black fruits, (primarily black cherries, raspberries, and a hint of blackberries) along with tell-tale beet root, earth and herb notes. In the mouth the wine is rich and full bodied, yet displays a lighter, more delicate finish.



It is somewhat of a paradox that such an intense wine could also be light on its feet, but that is the style of this vintage. We believe that this season's unique growing conditions leading up to harvest gave us the ideal grapes to produce a wine with impeccable balance in acidity, alcohol, tannin, and depth of fruit. This wine should be relatively approachable in its youth, but because of its balance evolve for 10-12 more years. Over the last sixteen years, we have seen how well our wines have evolved. They have done what we have always hoped, improving in the bottle, which is no easy task.

**Here's our (Avalon Wine) tasting notes:**

Tasted in January 2007, the nose of the Estate was restrained at first, then showing a perfume of violets, red and black berries, toast, and sweet earth. Hints of spice, herbs, and dried flowers mingle with the fruit scents.

The wine shows an immediate intense sweet fruit quality in the mouth. Blackberry, black raspberry, blueberry, and lush black cherry fruit flavors prevail. Subtle notes of sweet wild mushroom, sweet earth, and forest floor are occasionally noted, but come and go, just a gentle undercurrent to the dominant fruit flavors. There's also a sense of perfume on the palate, with hints of Asian spice, dried field flowers and herbs. The tannins are silky and present, adding structure, restraining and balancing the fruit. In January 2007, the tannins are the slightest bit drying in the mouth, although after decanting and air, that quality disappeared quickly.

The Estate is aged on its lees in 75-85% new Francois Frères oak barrels, and the wine has a creamy quality in the midpalate that comes from exposure to the lees. The lees also contribute a silkiness to the mouth feel.

Every time we put our noses in the glass, this wine was changing (January 2007). With time, red fruit, primarily red raspberry, started appearing along with the blackberry and cherry flavors. Marcus noted that this wine seems much more red fruit driven than the Upper Terrace, which has been perceived by us as a much more black and blue fruit dominant wine. This 2005 Estate Pinot noir was changing so rapidly with aeration, we could not help but wonder what it would be like in a few months or a year. We'd love to see what Harvey Steiman (Wine Spectator) would say about this wine in six months to a year.

The Beaux Freres Estate 2005 is drinking nicely now, but 3-4 months in your cellar before opening would definitely allow the wine to rest and show at its best. **This wine can be aged up to 12 years with proper conditions.**

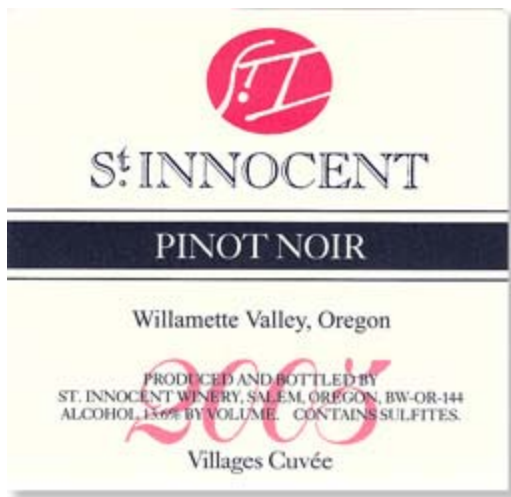
## Reserve Pinot noir Club Continued from page 4

### St Innocent Villages Cuvee 05 \$22

The 'VC' is a blend of three small lots of Pinot noir, about 20% from young (< 5 years) vines at St Innocent's best vineyard sites. The rest comes from Vitae Springs Vineyard in the South Salem Hills.

Winemaker Mark Vlossak says: "All of St. Innocent's Pinot noirs are produced in a style to first reveal the nuances of their terroir. Working in the vineyard with individual growers, we fine tune the viticultural practices with the goal of achieving a balance between the canopy and fruit. Most of the vineyards are grown in a sustainable way and qualify for LIVE certification."

Mark continues: "In the winery, all the fruit is destemmed, minimally crushed with 30-40% whole berries, and fermented in 5-8 ton fermenters with no SO<sub>2</sub> (unless there is rot). There is a 1-4 day cold soak. All punch-downs are by hand and occur once or twice daily. After fermentation, the must is manually removed from the fermenter and pressed gently. Time of pressing and degree of pressing is determined by taste. The new wine is settled and then racked to barrels for 16-20 months. The specific coopers, forests, and percent of new wood is matched to the individual vineyards. Our wines are rarely fined, racked, or filtered."



Mark has a close relationship with Wine Advocate (Robert Parker) and in both 2002 and 2004 he was named one of their "Wine Personalities of the Year". In 2004, Wine Advocate said:

#### Mark Vlossak, Willamette Valley, Oregon – A Wine Advocate Hero in 2002

"Mark Vlossak continues to grace consumers with the finest Pinot noirs Oregon has fashioned to date (one of his wines at Panther Creek earned the highest score Robert Parker ever gave to an Oregon wine and his offerings at St. Innocent Winery have received the highest scores I've attributed to Oregon)."

"As if that were not enough to earn high praise, Vlossak also deserves thanks from all wine-loving consumers for maintaining extremely fair pricing – many of his 2002s, for example, were the finest Pinots I tasted in that highly successful vintage yet were some of the cheapest wines in my report. Vlossak's dedication to quality and his commitment to delivering value to his customers is exemplary."

The Wine Advocate 12-27-04

### St Innocent Villages Cuvee 05 Tasting Notes

#### From the winery:

...nose and flavors of red and black fruits with spice and floral notes. Deeply colored and full bodied, it represents an excellent value. It was bottled in December 2006 and should develop over five years.

Oregon vineyards were originally planted on their 'own roots'. European grape vines, unlike American vines, have no inherent resistance to damage by the root louse phyloxera. This root louse survives by feeding on the small roots of grape vines. Damage to the small root allows secondary infections to enter the vine resulting in its death. There is no way to save infected vines short of replanting with grafted vines - european (vitus vinifera) tops and american vine roots.

Many of St. Innocent's vineyard sources have phyloxera. As we replant, the early crops have lovely fruit characteristics, but little sense of terroir. The wines made from young vines will not be blended with older vines from our best vineyards. Our solution is to blend these 'first crops' with a consistent Pinot noir base wine from Vitae Springs Vineyard producing a Willamette Valley blend. Given the extent of our replanting efforts, the amount of Willamette Valley Pinot noir will increase in the coming vintages.

#### Avalon Wine's Tasting notes:

**Nose:** Lots and lots of red fruit scents like red raspberry, tart red cherry, red currant, and red plum. Hints of soft toast, blackberry, vanilla, and smoke.

**Flavors:** Sweet, juicy red cherry is the initial impression, refreshing and balanced. As the wine opens in the mouth, the midpalate finds intense, bold, darker fruit and barrel toast notes- these darker tones add weight and depth to the otherwise juicy, fruity wine.

**Finish:** The tannins are silky, present in perfect balance, seamless and lushly textured. One is left with a sense of balanced, juicy, refreshing Pinot noir.

As the wine opens and breathes with time (decanting is a great idea for this wine), more impressions of different fruits and other flavors appear, ranging from tart pie cherry through blackberry, black currant, and hints of smoky, toasty oak.

#### Food Pairings

As Amy, Avalon's newest team member says, "Acidity is the friend of food", and she immediately suggested salmon as an ideal food to pair with this wine. The acidity of this juicy wine cuts through the luscious fat flavors of the fish. She suggests grilling or pan searing the salmon. An alternative to salmon could be grilled pork, cooked simply.

## Oregon New Discoveries Wine Club

### Purple Hands Red NV \$19

Purple Hands is "a creation between two young wine makers to begin a winery and wine that is not about pretentiousness or class, but all about the spirit of making wine." Such is the philosophy of Purple Hands' business partners Cody Wright and Matt Giannone.

Explaining the origin of the winery's name, Cody describes the time of year when everyone's hands (and much else of their clothes and bodies) are purple from the juice of the grape, as a special time. He recalls the experience of walking into a store, a restaurant, a winery supply warehouse, and seeing other people with purple hands, and recognizing their common experience in the harvest process.

Matt and Cody are both in their '20s, both grew up around wineries and vineyards, and both made wine at home, an interest that has grown into Purple Hands and jobs with wineries in Oregon, California, Australia, and New Zealand.

Purple Hands is about connecting with the grape and its environment. It's about handcrafted wine, handpicked grapes, hand work as the wine is made, and a hands-on relationship to the vineyard, the vine, and the wine. The partners tell of their deep awareness of the environment in which the grapes are grown, and of the way their relationship to the wine grows in the process of picking and sorting the grapes, of handling, pressing, and working with the pressed grapes and juice during fermentation, and in choosing the blend and completing the process with bottling and labels.

It's exciting to meet a couple of guys who will be carrying Oregon wine forward through the 21st century. Their obvious celebration of all things wine says that the next wave of Oregon wine will not be entirely mechanized, big business. They say:

"Although mechanization is quickly pushing its way into our worlds there are still some industries that are connected with their environments. This label was born to celebrate the connection our hands have with our environments and this product. Here in the northwest we are part of the wine, handpicking the fruit, hand sorting for the best bushels, and hand punch downs. We take pride in creating a wine to celebrate life, love, work, tears, and all that the spirit endures. Viva la Purple Hands!"

### The Guys

I met Cody quite awhile ago, when he was in his mid-teens. He walked into Avalon and asked me for a part time job. I asked him what he knew about wine. Reaching up on the shelves, he proceeded to point out a dozen wineries and told me about their wines, the people, and their vineyards. He had a depth of knowledge surprising, to say the least, for one so young. I didn't realize at the time that he knew most of the winery owners from visiting them, going to school with their children, and helping out at harvest. Cody got the job, and spent a bit of time at Avalon, flattening cardboard, putting price tags on bottles, and loading shipping boxes.



Cody, now 27, was an aspiring professional ski boarder when I first met him at age 16. His thoughts about college were vague, to say the least. I attribute, in part, the effects of excellent parenting to his successes at University of Oregon (a degree in Environmental Science), and his skilled work at harvests in Australia, New Zealand, and Oregon over the last few years.

Cody grew up making wine with his family, and it clearly rubbed off. His Dad, Ken Wright, must have shared his love of the wine making process with his kids, as Cody clearly has the same passion. These days, Cody lives in Portland and assists in winemaking and vineyard management for Ken Wright Cellars, along with the Purple Hands project.

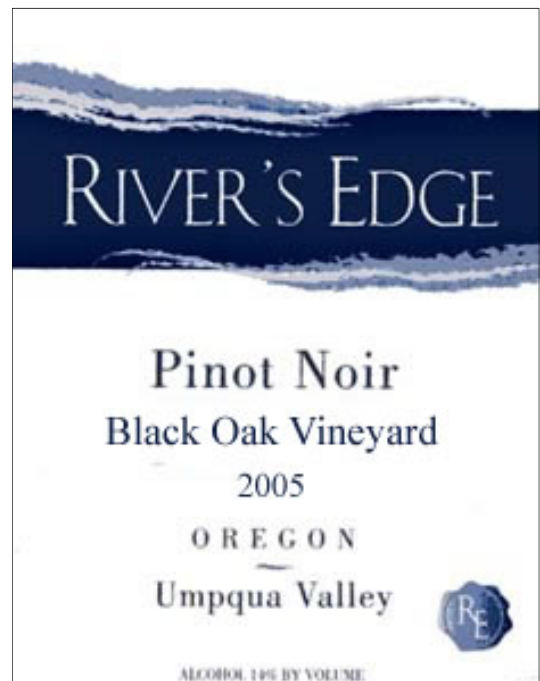
Purple Hands' Matt Giannone grew up in California's Santa Cruz mountains. He developed an interest in wine through living in Piedmont, Italy, and traveling and tasting wines throughout Europe. After his time in Europe, Matt returned to the States and got a job at Orcutt Road Cellars, in California's Edna Valley. He got the "wine bug" and started making his own wines at home.

Moving to Oregon, he started working at Argyle, where he met Cody. Today, Matt works for a wine distributor in Portland, where he lives. Selling wines every day, he's gaining a deep knowledge of the types and styles of wines across the world. He also helps out at Oregon wineries during harvest.

### Rivers Edge Black Oak PN 05 \$27

From the winery:

This wine was made from a portion of our estate vineyard which always has our lowest yield of grapes, less than two tons per acre. We suspect that this characteristic explains why it consistently produces our most intense yet smoothest finishing wine. The 2005 bottling is elegant as well, with ginger/graham on the nose, blackberry/black cherry flavors, and subtle oak influences despite the use of 50% new French barrels.



**Big Reds Club Continued from page 2....****Abeja**

John Abbott made a reputation for himself as THE guy for Merlot when he made wine for Canoe Ridge. Now, at Abeja, he's becoming the insider's go-to-guy for superlative Cabernet Sauvignon.

The small size and collaborative ownership of Abeja Winery allow John to explore the range of styles possible when the winery is your own, and you get to choose from a combination of Estate fruit and purchased fruit from trusted vineyards in the Walla Walla area. After three very different vintages, John has shown his mastery of Washington Cabernet. And his tiny production of Chardonnay is gone before it's even released.

Abeja Winery's name is pronounced 'ah-bay-ha,' ... the word is simple, lyrical, and lovely, and is Spanish for bee. Its origin honors the immeasurable contributions of Latino workers to the NW wine industry. The bee also represents Abeja's respect for the land and their desire to work in tandem with nature.

Avalon has a special interest in John, who's from our little college town of Corvallis, Oregon. While studying to be a veterinarian at Oregon State University, John developed a personal interest in wine and a fascination with a production process that blends both science and creativity. Out of curiosity, he began taking part in a variety of sensory evaluation assignments through the Food Sciences Department and discovered his natural affinity for sensing flavors and aromas. Some of his sensory work included the first legal tests of cork taint in wine.

When he began to realize that veterinary medicine might not be the romantic experience of James Herriot's writings, he started to consider winemaking as a profession. His strong chemistry background from his pre-vet coursework prepared him perfectly for what was to come, and with encouragement from his professors, he arranged an exchange to the Viticulture and Enology program at Fresno State University.

John's professional winemaking career began in 1989, when as a new college graduate, he went to work for Pine Ridge Winery in the famous Stags Leap area of the Napa Valley. After working there with some of the region's best Cabernet Sauvignon and thinking he would eventually return to his home state of Oregon to make Pinot Noir, he joined Acacia Winery. Acacia, located in the Carneros region of the Napa Valley, is known for making perfectly finessed Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. During his first interview, with then-General Manager Larry Brooks, John learned about the Chalone Wine Group's fledgling project in Washington State called Canoe Ridge Vineyard. Four years later, and after working with the early vintages from the young estate vineyard through frequent visits, John accepted the opportunity to start the estate winery. He moved to Walla Walla, Washington and joined the Washington wine industry in July of 1994.



During John's tenure at Canoe Ridge Vineyard, he became known for his consistently outstanding Merlots, Chardonnays, and Cabernet Sauvignons. Among his peers, he is appreciated for his technical expertise, infallible palate, and entertaining sense of humor.

The next phase of John's winemaking career began in the spring of 2002, when he left Canoe Ridge Vineyard to get back in the cellar. Proud of the success of Canoe Ridge, he was ready to begin again with a new focus and a new approach. It was at this time that John joined forces with his friend, Ken Harrison, and together they founded Abeja. The two men were brought together by a common vision of quality and a passion for Cabernet Sauvignon, the varietal that both men believe will increasingly be recognized as the icon varietal of Washington State.

Under John's direction, Abeja has rapidly become known for extraordinary, limited-production Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as Chardonnay, Viognier, and Syrah.

In John's spare time, he is likely to be powering along the farming roads of Walla Walla on his bicycle, or walking in the forests of Walla Walla's Blue Mountains in search of elusive wild mushrooms for the dinner table.

### **Abeja Cabernet Sauvignon 05 \$40**

The winemaker says: this is the varietal that we believe will increasingly be recognized as the icon varietal of Washington State and comprises the majority of our production. This Cabernet is stylish, elegant, and impeccably balanced. We accomplish this by meticulous viticultural management, utilization of a rare sorting system, gentle handling of the fruit and the wine, customized practices for every lot no matter how small, and carefully selected French oak.

Intense aromas of black fruit and fresh ground coffee, with notes of ancho chili. Flavors of black plum and cassis, with bits of black raspberry that give way to dark and milk chocolate, graphite, tobacco leaf, and barrel spice on the finish. With super-fine tannins, great concentration, and balancing acidity, the Abeja Cab '04 should evolve excellently over the next decade. - Marcus

On the nose it reminded me of chestnuts roasting at a cold winters day, full of deep dark coffee and a dark chocolate component on the finish. Nice complexity on the mid-palate. Cozy up with a rich Irish stew and brown bread or a more elegant cocoa nib and hazelnut crusted loin of venison. Embrace winter and stay inside with this wine. - Amy

Abeja's Cab release is one of the most anticipated in the Pacific Northwest each year. John Abbott makes rich, complex, delicately balanced Cabernet Sauvignon that, while big, is also delicious, interesting, and cellarworthy.

