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## THE WILDER SIDE OF CALIFORNIA

Doug Wilder, Issue 22

### A bevy of Pinot Noir

St. Helena, CA - October 21, 2005

Is it just me or is the Pinot Noir on the market more delicious than ever? The usage of a consulting winemaker is growing and the attention to detail is increasing. This week alone I've tasted about a dozen wines that were sensational but narrowed it down to my top six. I am very excited to tell you about them.

VINTAGE	WINE	PRODUCTION	750ml	RATING
2002	Longfellow - Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast	280 cases	\$33	VF 90
2003	Roessler - Pinot Noir Savoy Vineyard	650 cases	\$38	VF 91
2003	Roessler - Pinot Noir Sangiacomo Vineyard	202 cases	\$32	VF 92
2003	Lynmar - Pinot Noir Quail Hill Vineyard	990 cases	\$40	VF 93
2003	Derbes - Pinot Noir Russian River Valley	200 cases	\$44	VF 95
2003	Dierberg - Pinot Noir Estate	1,050 cases	\$30	VF 97

All wines are prearrival and ship within two weeks of order.

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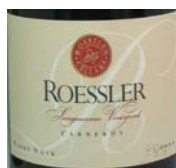
### VINFOLIO REVIEWS



**2002 Longfellow - Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast; Vinfolio rating: 90 points**

I first learned of this winery in February at Premiere Napa Valley, a unique event where members of the trade are invited to barrel taste through some of Napa Valley's top wines. I thought the wines were well made and fairly priced. Rolando Herrera is the winemaker and has created a very approachable style of Pinot Noir. His experiences working at Paul Hobbs Consulting (where he was the Director of Winemaking) and with his proprietary label, Mi Sueno, have allowed him to work with some of the best fruit available.

Abundantly aromatic, with supple, soft red cherry fruit and spice. The palate is well defined with ample structure; wet stone, ripe fruit and sweet spice. Drink 2005-2008.



**2003 Roessler - Pinot Noir Savoy Vineyard; Vinfolio rating: 91 points**

Wells Guthrie of Copain also makes Roessler. I wrote earlier in the spring about his highly regarded 2003 Chardonnay from Dutton Ranch (93 points, \$32, WSC Issue 7).

Savoy Vineyard is one of the best vineyards in the region. The nose has hints of soft, sweet soy and cherry that merges with supple and smooth black cherry and creamy red and black berries. Drink 2005-2007.



**2003 Roessler - Pinot Noir Sangiacomo Vineyard; Vinfolio rating: 92 points**

Sangiacomo is one of the biggest vineyards in Carneros and possesses different sub-climates. The fruit going into this wine is coming from the Northern portion that gets a bit more sun than those more affected by the breeze coming off the San Francisco Bay. The style reminds me of a Russian River Pinot Noir with more sturdy structure in the nose and less softness than expected

from the Dijon 115 clone. It has a very nice palate feel and structure. Well defined plum fruit and hints of cola are balanced by fine acidity throughout. Drink 2006-2010.



**2003 Lynmar - Pinot Noir Russian River; Vinfolio rating: 93 points**

Critically acclaimed winemaker Hugh Chappelle (Flowers and Madrona Vineyards) is now the Director of Winemaking at Lynmar. With the help of consulting winemaker, Paul Hobbs, Chappelle is making some great wine.

Classic Russian River Pinot Noir – rose and other scented blossoms in the nose leading to seductive, full-bodied smoothness on the palate. There is excellent concentration and complexity with ripe black cherry, licorice and a touch of allspice on the long finish. Drink 2005-2010.



**2003 Derbes - Pinot Noir Russian River Valley; Vinfolio rating: 95 points**

Cecile Derbes has certainly made me smile lately with her wines. Her 2001 and 2002 Russian River Chardonnays are delicious and have appeared in this column already (93 points and 92 points, \$43 each, WSC Issue 2). Another previously released effort from Cecile is Les Pinots, a light bodied wine made from a blend of Pinot Noir and Pinot Muenier. The real news here is her premiere release of this fantastic Russian River Pinot Noir.

The nose bursts with gorgeous aromatics of orange-scented spice box, dense cherry and tar. The mouthfeel is seamlessly smooth with a fat richness on the mid-palate continuing with mineral and smoky cherry. This is beautifully balanced wine with a long finish. Drink 2005-2012.



**2003 Dierberg - Pinot Noir Estate; Vinfolio rating: 97 points**

You may recall my notes on the Arcadian Pinot Noir from Dierberg Vineyard (94 points, \$45, WSC Issue 18). Now I bring to you Dierberg Estate Pinot Noir which will confirm the quality of this vineyard. There are 10 clones matched to 25 distinctive blocks. After harvest, winemaker Nick de Luca carefully selects the best lots for this estate bottling. Consulting with de Luca on this masterpiece is David Ramey and Paul Hobbs.

The nose blossoms as soon as the cork is pulled showing nice concentration – sap-laden sweet cherry and boysenberry with layers of spice and vanilla bean and low acidity. The palate is beautifully rounded cherry and loamy richness almost begging to be enjoyed by itself. The ripe roundness of the flavors merges nicely with the finish of spicy/sweet rhubarb and earth. Drink 2005-2007.

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