

The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir



Rick Burge led us through another wonderful informative night—with Pinot Noir the main theme. The welcome wine was a genuine sparkling burgundy— a Louis Bouillot Perle Rouge Bourgogne Mousseux Rouge from Burgogne France. While we sipped this and munched on the cheese and dried fruit supplied by our caterers, Rick told us a bit about Pinot Noir and the procedure for the evening.

While our glasses were topped up with BJT Shiraz for our annual toast to our founder Ian introduced the guests for the evening—His son Nick, Anthony Sharkey and our special guest Ivan Limb. Ivan was chief winemaker at Orlando in Bruce's time there. Ivan told us about Bruce's passion for the history of Orlando and the Barossa and his attention to detail. Something Rick could attest to—Bruce helping a dignitary visiting Rick avoid protesters. There were also lighter moments— like when a group of them somewhat the worse for wine arrived back in the Barossa only to get a call from Bruce complaining that they had left him in a hotel in Adelaide!

Then it was on with the Pinot tasting. It was 'Let's head for the hills' with an Adelaide Hills 2010 Riposte Reserve Pinot Noir (Tim Knapstein). Rick told us there were two styles of Pinot Noir the first (of which this wine was an example) was a raspberry/strawberry feminine style with not much tannin. The variety does not have a great deal of tannin and to get the second style whole bunches and stalks are used with plenty of pump-overs to get a more gutsy style. We jumped to wine number 5 'A very 'hot' Tassie' for an example of the latter. It was a 2014 Tolpuddle Pinot Noir from the Coal River Valley of Tasmania—apparently a very 'in' pinot at present.

We then moved to the table with an extra glass so we could taste some wine 'pairs'. We started with 'A couple of Yarra's'. They were a 2015 De Bortoli 'Estate Grown' Pinot Noir and a 2015 Giant Steps 'Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir.

These had more body and the group liked the Giant steps better. The next pair were 'Two more Tassies'.—a 2010 Apsley Gorge Vineyard Pinot Noir from Bichenot, Tasmania and a 2013 Dawson James Pinot Noir from the Derwent Valley.

The next pair were 'Across the 'dutch' for some heavy –hitting Kiwis'. Rick noted that New Zealand is in prime position to capitalise on the current swing to Pinot Noir. The wines were 2014 Escarpment 'Kupe' Pinot Noir from Martinborough (North Island east of Wellington) and a 2015 Felton Road 'Bannockburn' Pinot Noir from Central Otago (South Island)

Pinot Noir number 10 was 'One I knocked up earlier'. Rick explained he made this wine by telephone to Tasmania. It was a 2013 HVG Pinot Noir from Derwent/Coal River Valley grapes. Tim Goddard of Cool Wines and previous CEO of Morilla asked Rich to help produce a Pinot Noir. Rich did so by phone he said.

The final wine of the night was not a Pinot Noir at all but a Grenache made in a similar style. Rick said Grenache as structurally similar to Pinot Noir.

Bog & Jenny provided a delicious meal of Baked Ham with mild Honey Mustard Sauce, Beef Sausage and sweet caramelized onion Wellingtons, Surf & Turf (minced veal and fish fillet meat



◆ **Coming up: Tuesday December 13th Christmas at Orlando—Jacob's Creek Visitor Centre with partners.**

The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: Continued

balls), hot potato and cream bake, black beans & cheese Sauce with green salad.

Prizes supplied by Rick were drawn with Mick Schilling, Peter Frick and Greg Riechlet being the winners. Then it was time for Rory Chisholm's annual Muscat challenge. This was led by the keeper of our cellar Simon Grandfield in Rory's absence.

We were provided with two samples A and B as asked to rate them. One was from Rory's barrel the other a Morris Rutherglen Muscat. They were hard to tell apart but the general opinion was that the Morris won by a whisker. The tasting was accompanied by cakes and sweet nibbles supplied by Bob & Jenny.

All in all a great (if somewhat alcoholic) night.



Want to read what James Halliday says about Pinot Noir?

Follow the link to [‘James speaks at the International Pinot Noir Celebration’](#)

or [Weekend Australian article on *pinot noir, the wine they drink in heaven*](#).

The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: Continued

The variety: Pinot Noir

Pinot noir is a red wine grape variety of the species *Vitis vinifera*. The name may also refer to wines created predominantly from Pinot noir grapes. The name is derived from the French words for *pine* and *black*; the *pine* alluding to the grape variety having tightly clustered, pine cone-shaped bunches of fruit.

Pinot noir grapes are grown around the world, mostly in the cooler regions, but the grape is chiefly associated with the Burgundy region of France. Other regions that have gained a reputation for Pinot noir include the Willamette Valley of Oregon, the Carneros, Central Coast and Russian River of California, the Elgin and Walker Bay wine regions of South Africa, Tasmania and Yarra Valley in Australia and the Central Otago, Martinborough and Marlborough wine regions of New Zealand. Pinot noir is also a primary variety used in sparkling wine production in Champagne and other wine regions. It is widely considered to produce some of the finest wines in the world, but is a difficult variety to cultivate and transform into wine. The grape's tendency to produce tightly packed clusters makes it susceptible to several viticultural hazards involving rot that require diligent canopy management. The thin-skins and low levels of phenolic compounds lends Pinot to producing mostly lightly coloured, medium bodied low tannin wines that can often go through dumb phases with uneven and unpredictable aging. When young, wines made from Pinot noir tend to have red fruit aromas of cherries, raspberries and strawberries. As the wines age, Pinots have the potential to develop vegetal and 'barnyard' aromas that can contribute to the complexity of the wine.



The leaves of Pinot noir are generally smaller than those of Cabernet Sauvignon or Syrah and the vine is typically less vigorous than either of these varieties. The grape cluster is small and conico-cylindrical, vaguely shaped like a pine cone. Some viticultural historians believe this shape-similarity may have given rise to the name. In the vineyard Pinot noir is sensitive to wind and frost, cropping levels (it must be low yielding for production of quality wines), soil types and pruning techniques. In the winery it is sensitive to fermentation methods, yeast strains and is highly reflective of its *terroir* with different regions producing sometimes very different wines. Its thin skin makes it susceptible to bunch rot and similar fungal diseases of the bunch. The vines themselves are susceptible to powdery mildew, and in Burgundy (and elsewhere) infection by leaf roll and fan leaf viruses causes significant vine health problems. These complications have given the grape a reputation for being difficult to grow: Jancis Robinson calls Pinot a 'minx of a vine' and André Tchelistcheff declared that 'God made Cabernet Sauvignon whereas the devil made Pinot noir.' It is much less tolerant of hard, windy, hot and dry, harsh vineyard conditions than the likes of Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot, or Grenache.

However, Pinot noir wines are among the most popular in the world. Joel Fleischman of *Vanity Fair* describes pinot noir as 'the most romantic of wines, with so voluptuous a perfume, so sweet an edge, and so powerful a punch that, like falling in love, they make the blood run hot and the soul wax embarrassingly poetic.' Master Sommelier Madeline Triffon calls Pinot 'sex in a glass'.

The tremendously broad range of bouquets, flavours, textures and impressions that Pinot noir can produce sometimes confuses tasters. In the broadest terms, the wine tends to be of light to medium body with an aroma reminiscent of black and / or red cherry, raspberry and to a lesser extent currant and many other fine small red and black berry fruits. Traditional red Burgundy is famous for its savoury fleshiness and 'farmyard' aromas (these latter sometimes associated with thiol and other reductive characters), but changing fashions, modern winemaking techniques, and new easier-to-grow clones have favoured a lighter, more fruit-prominent, cleaner style.

The wine's colour when young is often compared to that of garnet, frequently being much lighter than that of other red wines. This is entirely natural and not a winemaking fault as Pinot noir has a lower skin anthocyanin (colouring matter) content than most other classical red / black varieties. However, an emerging, increasingly evident, style from California and New Zealand highlights a more powerful, fruit forward and darker wine that can tend toward Syrah (or even new world Malbec) in depth, extract, and alcoholic content.

Pinot noir is also used in the production of Champagne (usually along with Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier) and is planted in most of the world's wine growing regions for use in both still and sparkling wines. Pinot noir grown for dry table wines is generally low-yielding and of lesser vigour than many other varieties, whereas when grown for use in sparkling wines (e.g. Champagne) it is generally cropped at significantly higher yields.

In addition to being used for the production of sparkling and still red wine, Pinot noir is also sometimes used for rosé still wines, Beaujolais Nouveau-styled wines, and even vin gris white wines.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pinot_noir

The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: The wines

As is sometimes the case when Rick chooses the wines, some tasting notes were a bit hard to come by.

Louis Bouillot Perle Rouge Bourgogne Mousseux Rouge

Made from Gamay and Pinot Noir, Perle Rouge is characteristic of a red Burgundy mousseux, an easy-drinking wine with lots of fruit thanks to its balanced dosage. With its turn-of-the-century packaging recalling a toile pattern, this cuvée is an elegant return to the tradition of the great Burgundy sparkling reds. Perle Rouge is a powerful, full-bodied original, with a bright violet-tinged vermillion colour. The nose is abundantly fruity, with delicate aromas of blackcurrant buds then jam and fruit in eau de vie. It is a rich mouthful of red berries, balanced by a subtle dosage.

The grapes come from an area in the Bourgogne appellation. The wine is made according to the specifications of the AOC Bourgogne Mousseux Rouge. Harvesting is done by hand, with long maceration and temperature-controlled fermentation. Malolactic fermentation took place naturally. Each bottle has been aged for at least 30 months on laths before final corking.

Alcohol: 12.5% by vol. Price: \$34.00

(<http://www.louis-bouillot.com/en/collection.r-384/les-audacieuses.r-357/perle-rouge.v-9475.html>)



2010 Riposte Reserve Pinot Noir (Tim Knapstein)



The Knapstein family began making wine in South Australia's Clare Valley in 1894. A third generation vigneron Tim began his career at the family owned Stanley Wine Company. After being named Dux of his year in oenology at the renowned Roseworthy College he went on to win over 500 show awards, gold medals and trophies in his first 10 years as head winemaker at Stanley with their premium brand Leasingham. In 1969 Tim ventured out on his own and founded the Enterprise and Tim Knapstein Wines labels in the Clare Valley and established himself as one of Australia's most highly regarded wine-makers. An unrequited desire to produce premium cool climate varieties, in particular Pinot Noir, led Tim to plant the first vineyard in the Lenswood district of the Adelaide Hills in 1981. In 1994 Tim severed all ties with the Clare Valley winery bearing his name to live and make wine full time in the Adelaide Hills under the Lenswood Vineyards . These and later Riposte wines continued to gain accolades both domestically and abroad. From the vineyard to the bottle, every aspect of each Riposte wine is personally crafted by Tim Knapstein. Working closely with independent growers from selected sites in the lead up to vintage Tim can most often be found in the vineyard checking, sampling and tasting to ensure that fruit is picked at optimum flavour. In the winery through crushing, pressing and oak regime right to the point of final fining and filtration Tim, Dale and Nick taste again and again seeking exquisite balance and varietal expression. No compromises are permitted, what we put into bottle are the finest Adelaide Hills wines we can produce

2014 Tolpuddle Pinot Noir

JAMES HALLIDAY 97 POINTS 'Excellent colour; the bouquet is highly expressive and fragrant, with red fruits wrapped in notes of spice and forest that will continue to increase as the wine develops; the palate is similarly poised between primary fruit flavours and savoury secondary characters. Its greatest assets are its balance and, above all, length.'

Tolpuddle: 'Expressive Pinot aromas leap from the glass once again showing the extravagant, almost exotic nature of this wine. Dark cherry and a hint of plum meld seamlessly with spice and sap notes. The palate has both ripe and earthy edges with juicy acidity delivering brightness and freshness. There's a wonderful poise to the wine where the sense of structure and tannic grip perfectly frame the complex fruit and savoury character.'

Alcohol: 12.5% by vol. Price: \$75.00 (<https://winehouse.com.au/tolpuddle-pinot-noir-2014>)



The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: The wines

2015 De Bortoli 'Estate Grown' Pinot Noir

VINEYARD: Several estate vineyards planted to MV6 and 777 clones. Average vine age 23 years.

APPEARANCE: Medium red in colour.

BOUQUET: Bright red fruits, lovely Pinot aromatics, hints of whole bunches, complex, spice.

PALATE: Gentle tannins, plump, textural, elegant.

VINTAGE CONDITIONS: A mild season with a gentle aromatics, plumpness, charm and fine tannins. Quite fine and composed, good natural acidity.

WINEMAKING: The Estate Grown Pinot Noir is typified by perfume, structure, some whole bunch characters and fine tannins. Fruit was hand harvested and sorted. A combination of 80% whole berry and 20% whole bunch is tipped into open fermenters. 18-22 days of maceration and fermentation with wild yeast. Pressed, settled overnight and then filled to barrel by gravity. Allowed to mature for 8 months at 16°C in 225L French casks.

Alc/Vol: 13.5%, pH: 3.62 TA: 6.0 g/L . Price (Dan Murphy) \$21.99

(<http://shop.debortoli.com.au/brands/yarra-valley-estate-grown/yarra-valley-estate-grown-pinot-noir-2015.html>)



2015 Giant Steps 'Applejack Vineyard Pinot Noir.

VINIFICATION / MATURATION:

- Natural winemaking philosophy, while making quality the priority.
- Minimal intervention in the vineyard.
- 100% hand-picked.
- 100% indigenous fermentation in 4000L open oak vats, 60% whole bunch.
- Delestage by gravity, some light hand plunges and pigeage.
- 100% malolactic fermentation.
- 11 months in new and used French puncheons, 25% new, 75% older.
- Bottled by gravity.
- No filtration at bottling.

97 pts James Halliday 'Significantly deeper colour than prior vintages, likewise depth of fruit; the bouquet and palate are driven by black and red cherry fruit of exceptional generosity but with an unusual touch of dark chocolate.'

CLONE: MV6, ALC/VOL: 13.5%, TA: 6.49 g/L, PH: 3.6 RRP



2010 Apsley Gorge Vineyard Pinot Noir

Tasmania's Apsley Gorge is a world apart. The location is unique, the vineyard snuggled as it is under the Douglas Apsley National Park at the northern end of the East Coast. It is a cool location, extending the ripening season and making it among the last to pick in the state.

Stylistically it's in a world of its own too. Owner/winemaker Brian Franklin has over the years crafted and defined a wine as much from the skills learned from his annual vintage in Burgundy as a response to his site in Tasmania on the other side of the world. Always characterful, Apsley Gorge's particular trademark is the richly structured and fruited palate - it is a big and giving pinot.

Ferrous/bloody/wet stone aromas get a lift from aromatic florals and cranberry-scented fruit plus there is some intrigue from meaty mushrooms. The flavours are rich and persistent with succulence and fullness. Bold on the finish with structured but not aggressive tannins, Apsley Gorge Pinot shows wonderful complexities after breathing. The Pinot Shop Launceston.

Price \$65



The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: The wines

2013 Dawson James Pinot Noir

The third release of our Pinot Noir having lost the 2012 vintage due to the effects of bushfires. It remains a single vineyard wine from the Meadowbank vineyard in the Derwent Valley in Southern Tasmania. The 2013 growing season was characterised by above average temperatures and below average rainfall. However, in keeping with previous vintages the grapes were hand picked in the third week of April.

Pinot Noir was grown with one bunch per shoot to ensure optimal maturity. The berries developed intense fruit flavours and sweet tannins whilst retaining a fine line of acidity. After hand picking, a combination of whole bunches and destemmed berries were transferred to small open fermenters and were cold macerated before the onset of natural fermentation. Temperatures reached quite elevated levels before tailing off prior to the end of fermentation and basket pressing. After pressing the wine was briefly settled and then transferred to Burgundian coopered French oak barriques for malolactic fermentation and maturation. With the benefit of good structure the wine supported maturation of 14 months in barrels of which 40% were new.

The wine displays vivid colour and an aroma of exotic spices, forest floor, strawberries and black cherries. The palate is rich and spicy with balanced stalkyness and oak providing complexity and structure. Fine acidity confers length and a creamy succulent finish.

97 Points – James Halliday, 2016 Wine Companion

Sourced from the Meadowbank Vineyard in the Derwent Valley. Good colour is a promising start, the wine rapidly building on that with its utterly seductive and delicious red cherry and strawberry fruit that caresses the mouth; the end result is exceptional purity oak and tannins present, but largely unseen.

Price: \$68.00

2014 Escarpment 'Kupe' Pinot Noir

This is the tenth release from The Escarpment Vineyard's close planted vineyard on Te Muna Road, Martinborough.

The vines which have grown this wine have been our pride and joy since being planted in 1999. The spacing of 1.5m * 1m (6,600 vines/ha) is approaching the planting densities used in Burgundy from where the inspiration for this wine comes. The season was warm and drier than average for this block. It has created fruit harvested in brilliant condition giving ripe flavours and soft tannins. The summer was as good as the inspirational 2013 vintage.

Fermented in wooden French cuvees, hand plunged and aged in 50% new French oak barriques for 18 months. It was bottled without fining or filtration, promoting soft mouth feel and texture.

The wine was given every priority during its elevation and now shows all the hallmarks of a grand young wine on release in 2016. It is at the vanguard of Pinot noir style in the New World and should age gracefully for up to 10 years. The wine is a true reflection of both Martinborough's unique terroir and the skills and experience of winemakers Larry McKenna and Huw Kinch.

Alcohol by volume: 14.1% ,Total acid: 5.4g/L, pH: 3.60, Residual sugar: <1g/L, Price: \$86.00



The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: The wines

2015 Felton Road 'Bannockburn' Pinot Noir

Tasting Note: Dark cherry, rosehip and wafts of perfumed leather lead into notes of omega plum, cinnamon spice, nutmeg and dried thyme on the palate. Seamless tannins are immediately embracing with a rich engaging fruitiness coating the finish. A complete and harmonious Pinot Noir that accurately and sensitively epitomises its fine Bannockburn vineyard origins.

Beginning with meticulous site selection and vineyard design started in 1991, Felton Road's story is one of refusal to compromise. A strict 100% estate policy with fully organic and biodynamic viticulture (Demeter certified) ensures that our fruit arrives at the winery as pure as it can be, while our entire estate comes as close to true sustainability as is possible. A commitment to hands off winemaking: gravity flow, wild yeasts, wild malo, an avoidance of fining and filtration all help preserve the wine's expression of its terroir. The result is a Pinot Noir which we believe expresses the authenticity and complexity of our unique vineyards. Gareth King; Viticulturist, Blair Walter; Winemaker, Nigel Greening; Proprietor.

Vineyard & Viticulture: Felton Road farms four properties totalling 32 ha in the Bannockburn sub-region of Central Otago. This wine is a blend from three vineyards; Cornish Point, Calvert and The Elms. Meticulous summer management of a single vertical shoot positioned (VSP) canopy ensures even and early fruit maturity. Shoot thinning, shoot positioning, leaf plucking, bunch thinning and harvest are all carried out by hand to ensure optimum quality fruit. Cover crops are planted between rows to assist in vine balance and to improve soil health and general biodiversity.

Vintage: Cool spring conditions resulted in bud **burst** a little later than usual and slow early season growth. The weather finally stabilised in time for flowering in mid-December. Low rainfall assisted with soil temperatures finally increasing causing a rapid growth surge. Peak temperatures continued to be high throughout January in the build up to veraison. Bunch compositions were overall of a good size although berry numbers were down in places. Temperatures were relatively moderate through February with warmish nights but more than double the monthly rainfall. Veraison was helped by the early warmth and achieved completion quickly. Vine and leaf condition held very well with no signs of stress or early shut down. Yields were normal with harvest starting on March 27.

Vinification: The unique gravity flow winery enabled the grapes to be gently destemmed directly into open-top fermenters without pumping with approximately 25% as whole clusters. Traditional fermentation with a moderately long maceration on skins has extracted good colour and tannin with considerable depth of flavour. This wine was aged for 13 months in French oak barrels from artisan Burgundian coopers. In accordance with our non-interventionist approach to winemaking, this wine was fermented with indigenous yeast and was not fined or filtered.

Price: \$65.00

2013 HVG Pinot Noir

A blend of approx. 50% Pinot Noir from Derwent Valley, 'Meadowbank' vineyard, and 50% from Coal River Valley, 'Nocton Park' vineyard. Approx 14 months in French Barriques - 30% new.

HVG refers to Bert Goddard (the Grandfather of the wine's owner), who was on the expedition who rescued Mawson when he got into strife on one of his trips to the Antarctica.



The Wonderful World of Pinot Noir: Photos

