

# Pinot Noir Press



## ALYSIAN WINES

An ultra-boutique vintner in Sonoma County, third-generation winemaker Woody Hambrecht crafts small-lot bottlings from veteran growers and off-the-beaten-path vineyards for his family's Alysian Wines.



He may come from a family with deep roots in the California wine industry, but Woody Hambrecht is determined to incorporate some innovative and far-reaching objectives into his Sonoma County winery.

To be sure, Alysian Wines is filled with great pedigree, having been founded by Woody's grandfather Bill Hambrecht and Gary Farrell in 2006. Both of these iconic wine figures were steeped in success, Hambrecht with Ridge Vineyards and Belvedere Vineyards and Winery, and Farrell with Davis Bynum Winery, Rochioli Winery and Limerick Lane, in addition to his own Gary Farrell Vineyards and Winery.

When both veterans decided to retire in 2013, grandson Woody Hambrecht took over the reins at Alysian Wines and slowly began to change the direction of the smallish Russian River Valley winery.

"I had returned to Sonoma from New York (where he worked for LIFE Books) in 2010," related Woody Hambrecht recently. "My grandfather had owned our Grist Vineyard in Dry Creek Valley for almost forty years and I took over the job of running the vineyard. I had been raised in the business since I was an infant, so it seemed like the correct thing to do. I now live at Grist Vineyard so I have complete control over the growing process."

Alysian Wines was named for a duality in interpretation. Of Greek origin, *alysian* can mean 'the journey' or also 'intuitive creativity,' the definition preferred by Woody Hambrecht. Alysian Wines' production level has remained constant around the 3,000 case level since its inception.

"Our wines were wildly successful from the beginning," informed Hambrecht. "But, I wanted to try some different things as we moved into our second decade. For many years, my family owned large vineyards and our wineries produced hundreds of thousands of cases. At this time, only our ranch (Grist Vineyard) and Alysian Wines are left. The fact that we were once again an artisan winery gave me a great deal of flexibility."

Hambrecht also added that he began searching for vineyards in out-of-the-way places where viticulture was just beginning to take root. Of particular interest to the young vintner was Humboldt County (extremely Northern California around the City of Eureka) in California and the Dundee Hills (south-southwest of Portland) growing area of Oregon.

"These locations and the vineyards already planted there motivated me," confessed Woody Hambrecht. "Both are pioneering areas as far as growing is concerned, and the farmers located

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there are true visionaries."

Hambrecht also laments the fact that his stint as owner and manager of Alysian Wines came almost two decades too late. "We just don't want to be known as another Russian River Valley winery," he confided. "I intend to do some things that will give us a real personalized presence in the California wine world. I want to live outside the box. I'm fortunate to have had the likes of my grandfather and others like Joe Rochioli (considered one of the top growers in California) and noted winemaker Shane Finley of Lynmar Estate and other top wineries

to help me along my journey. I certainly owe them a great deal for Alysian Wines' continued success."

Alysian Wines currently utilizes around 50% of organically grown fruit and also uses around 40% of estate fruit grown on Grist Vineyard. By continuing to explore growing possibilities, Woody Hambrecht sees his production increasing slowly in the future.

"I have always believed that the foundation of any winery operation is in the vineyards," he finalized. "And, now that I have seen the results of some of these really out of sight growing areas, I am inspired to do something with the great fruit I have discovered."

Woody Hambrecht is a person living his dream and has incredible results to show for his efforts. He is one of a small cadre of winery owners that will forge California's future in the coming years. We are delighted to offer this wonderful Alysian Pinot Noir to our *Pinot Noir Wine Club* members. Cheers!

## ALYSIAN 2014 PINOT NOIR

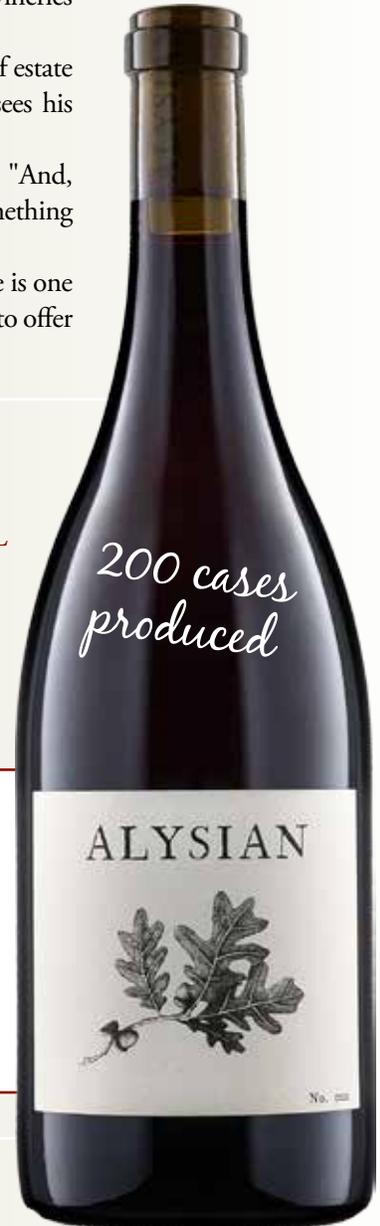
Rochioli Vineyard, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

This lovely and truly elegant Pinot Noir comes from the iconic Rochioli Vineyard in the Middle Reach sub-AVA of the Russian River Valley. It starts with traditional RRV notes of Bing cherry and cola, followed by bright red fruit on the palate. Aromas of baking spice, mocha, black plum, and crushed raspberry comes through on the nose. Aged 17 months in oak. 100% Pinot Noir. Enjoy now until 2022.

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