

# Pinot Noir Press



## AMICI CELLARS

This excellent Napa Valley-based winery utilizes more than eighty growers to produce their great portfolio of top-notch wines, including this prized Reserve Pinot Noir from Sonoma's Russian River Valley.



Amici Cellars has been around for almost three decades and started in the wine business with a tiny release of around fifty cases. Located just above Calistoga in the Napa Valley, Amici Cellars is the handiwork of two friends whose desire was to produce truly fine wines.

The friends, John Harris and Bob Shepherd, planned their winery's future carefully and began collecting ultra-quality growers to provide the fruit necessary to fulfill their dreams.

"Whenever fruit from a true high quality vineyard became available, we jumped on it at once," offered Melissa Devore, Amici Cellars' President. "We now have a cadre of grower friends that must rank as among the best in California. The fruit we receive is just tremendous and that's what you need to be a top rung winery."

Amici Cellars has grown to around 15,000 cases per annum, a level the winery is completely happy with.

"But, whenever superior fruit becomes available, such as some recently in the Stag's Leap AVA, we quickly commit to adding to our portfolio. It's almost impossible not to buy really great fruit and turn it into masterful wines," she added. "A gem is a gem no matter what."

John Harris tends to the production side of the business and Bob Shepherd to the company's sales and marketing efforts.

Both spend a good deal of their time on the road promoting Amici Cellars.

The entity is also extremely proud of their Reserve and Vineyard-Designated programs that produce small lots of limited production wines, usually around the 150 case level. This month's Amici 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir falls into that category and provides an excellent example of outsourced fruit from the fabled Russian River Valley of Sonoma County.

"When the company first started, we were using Pinot Noir fruit from the Mendocino area, but soon realized the Russian River Valley was a superior growing area for the varietal," mentioned Devore. "The results from this move have been outstanding for us. Four different sources were utilized for this Reserve Pinot Noir and the scores it has received speak for themselves."

The winemaking team at Amici Cellars is something quite unusual, given there are two noted winemakers involved with the operation. Tony Biagi, the highly-credentialed Napa Valley winemaker (Clos Du Val, Paraduxx Winery, PlumpJack Winery, Sinegal Estate and CADE Estate) is considered the lead winemaker and handles most of the Napa Valley winemaking. Jesse Fox, another noted winemaker (Harlan Estate, Ram's

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Gate Winery) has also traveled abroad with stints in Argentina and New Zealand to his credit. He makes most of the additional AVA selections for Amici Cellars. Both employ different styles of winemaking and each has found great success. Biagi's wines tend to be big, bold examples of near-perfect Napa Valley fruit, while Fox's selections tend to be smoother, more methodical and statistical, perfect combinations for the likes of the problematic Pinot Noir varietal.

The Amici Cellars label is simplicity itself and speaks well of the winery's intent. "Since wine is the only beverage that is meant to be shared among friends, we intended that the label be about the place itself without any gimmicks. The wine business is all about *terroir*, at least at our winery's level," concluded Melissa Devore. "We believe we've honored that concept."

Amici Cellars is a prime example of a truly focused winery that has carved an important niche for itself in the incredibly competitive California wine market. Its wines score highly in industry periodicals and events and its following is large and faithful. We are delighted to present this exceptional Amici 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir. We know you will enjoy this exquisite wine!

## AMICI 2017 RESERVE PINOT NOIR

### Russian River Valley

For Amici, the 2017 wine grape harvest will be remembered as a harvest of teamwork and dedication showed on all levels from the team, colleagues, friends, and first responders that saved their homes and livelihood. This vintage is showing great promise with excellent quality, vibrancy and complexity. The 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir exemplifies the RRV style with black cherry, pomegranate, rhubarb and cranberry notes with hints of leather. Flavors of black tea and cinnamon add complexity through the palate, where a dense, velvety texture is balanced nicely with crisp fruit-driven freshness. Aged 11 months in oak. Enjoy!

**93+ POINTS**

– Robert Parker's  
*The Wine Advocate*

**92 POINTS**

– Jeb Dunnuck



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