

Pinot Noir Press



FLYING GOAT CELLARS

This whimsically-named Santa Ynez Valley winery is famous for their Pinot Noirs that have set hard-to-match standards for the past twenty years.



Yes, you read correctly, this month's *Pinot Noir Club* selection is from none other than Flying Goat Cellars. Let's get to the name first, certainly a highlight name in any arena, anywhere.

First of all, the goats actually existed, named Never and Epernay. They were pygmy goats, bought by owner Norm Yost to help control his backyard blackberry vines and mow his lawn. They were the perpetrators of unrestrained spiral loops, flipper turns and straight-legged leaps that brought endless entertainment and enjoyment to anyone around. When it came time for Yost to name his new wine venture in 2000, the name *Flying Goat Cellars* seemed a perfect choice. Sadly, the goats passed away several years ago but were replaced by a chocolate lab named Cooper (named for the barrel makers in wine).

Flying Goat Cellars released its first Pinot Noirs in 2002 and was immediately heralded by numerous sources as seriously good. A bevy of accolades followed, and Flying Goat Cellars was suddenly a real player on the then-expanding Pinot Noir stage.

Winery owner and winemaker, Norm Yost puts it like this. "Pinot Noir is all about 'place'. When grown with care and patience and treated well when it arrives at the winery, this grape will express a vineyard and region like no other varietal."

Today, Flying Goat Cellars produces around 2500 cases that includes seven different Pinot Noirs. "We source from the finest vineyards in Santa Barbara

County, informed Yost. "There are differences in the fruit from all the AVA's in the county and I'm all about establishing the transparencies that make the terroirs so unique. It's a challenging job, but it certainly has its rewards."

Have Pinot Noirs changed during the past decade?

"Yes, probably so. For a while, everyone was interested in making the big, expressive, fruit forward wines that the general public seemed to enjoy. I think that has changed over the past five or six years. The Pinot Noir community has backed off a bit. Now, it seems we are looking for more refinement and style in our wines. There is less alcohol apparent in the newer releases. These changes allow us to explore the subtle differences available within the AVA's themselves. Remember, I said the Pinot Noir is the most expressive varietal when it comes to terroir and this change in style proves my point," concluded the veteran winemaker.

What about the general public's appreciation of Pinot Noirs?

Yost responded, "I am of the opinion that the general public is still learning about Pinots. It's all about subtlety, and that's not so easy to define. The Pinotfiles of the world are still absorbing what they can about this grape and they have different ideas about what they feel and taste. When you throw in the different AVA's and their divergent soils, you get a plethora of opinions and attitudes. I think it's great for both the consumers

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and the vintners that the numbers (of Pinotfiles) appear to be growing.”

Almost 1,000 cases of sparkling Rose (Yost calls these wines Goat Bubbles) are an integral part of the Flying Goat Cellars’ portfolio. “It looks like we will have to expand our production of the Rose,” added Yost. “I can’t seem to make enough of it to meet the demand and that’s not a bad position to be in. It might be difficult to cut back on the Pinot Noir production, but we are still a small winery so I will wait and see what happens.”

Flying Goat Cellars is also part of the Lompoc Ghetto facility in Lompoc where it operates a tasting room along with several other wineries. This cumulative operation has been quite successful in its own right according to Norm Yost. All the winemaking chores are handled by Yost, a UC Davis graduate in Environmental Studies

way back in 1981. Yost was also a college football player who worked in numerous capacities in both Napa Valley and Sonoma County as well as Oregon’s Willamette Valley and Western Australia’s Margaret River. He also taught winemaking at Allan Hancock College in nearby Santa Maria, California.

Flying Goat Cellars recently celebrated the completion of its twentieth harvest and Norm Yost put everything in perspective. “After all is said and done, it’s nice to be able to have a glass of fine wine with friends and family in much the same manner that it has been done for hundreds of years.”

It is with great pleasure we reintroduce our *Pinot Noir Wine Club* members to another marvelous release from Flying Goat Cellars. Please celebrate this enticing wine in the genial manner it was produced. Enjoy!

FLYING GOAT 2013 PINOT NOIR Rio Vista Vineyard, Sta. Rita Hills AVA

Flying Goat Cellars 2013 Pinot Noir Rio Vista Vineyard Dijon, Sta. Rita Hills AVA- Beautiful garnet color offers dark plum, jammy aromas filled with spicy aromas that are the signature of the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Palate-wise, subtle brown sugar, molasses and forest floor flavors mingle and linger. Eat with savory pairings like smoked turkey and spicy sausage for wonderful results. 100% Pinot Noir, 14.5% alcohol. Aged in French oak (35% new) for 16 – 20 months.

95 POINTS
– *Wine Enthusiast*



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