

PLATINUM SERIES

Select, Ultra Premium, Collectable Wines from California's Best Winemakers

To put it simply, this month's *Platinum Series Selection*, The Donum Estate, is the type of winery many other wineries would like to emulate. Relatively young by industry standards, the Donum Estate is a carefully thought out, perfectly situated property that combines the absolute finest in grape growing with the exacting expertise of gifted winemakers.

First, the particulars...the Donum Estate is comprised of two vineyard properties, 90 acres of the former Tula Vista Vineyard and 56 acres of the revered Ferguson block, located on hills that skirt the marshlands of Carneros in the lower parts of both Napa and Sonoma counties.

The Donum Estate is owned by the Racke Family of Germany, who also owns the prestigious Robert Stemmler Winery in upper Sonoma. Donum is the pet project of Anne Moeller-Racke, who recognized the value of the vineyards when they were part of the Buena Vista Winery sale to Allied Domecq in 2001.

"I first started to see the incredible possibilities when I took a really close look at Carneros," she admitted. "The Carneros terrain shaped its own destiny. All this land was formerly pastures, big expanses of rolling grassland that fed beef and dairy herds, goats and sheep. For a number of years, the cool climates and ever present moisture off the bay wasn't that attractive to growers."

Moeller-Racke feels that the advent of smaller, quality oriented wineries shaped the future of Carneros. "When the demand for superior quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir started in the mid 1980s, Carneros quickly became everyone's favorite place. I fell in love with the marvelous vineyards that comprise today's The Donum Estate and made sure they weren't part of the Buena Vista sale."

Moeller-Racke then set about to making what some insiders have called 'the perfect Pinot Noir.' She has developed a formula that most wineries simply cannot afford to employ. Anne limits the tonnage to about one ton per acre, well below both the Napa and Sonoma averages. She also encourages a most unique approach to making a Donum wine.

According to international winemaker Kenneth Juhasz, "Donum is a really wonderful project. We're given no case numbers (to produce). We're just asked to make a small amount of extraordinary Pinot Noir."

Introduced with a tiny number (300 cases) in 2001, The Donum Estate has grown to a still smallish 900 cases for the current year. What is neat is the fact that any future growth will depend entirely on the quality of fruit the vineyards provide.

"It is really quite simple," Moeller-Racke continued. "We divide our vineyards into individual units for quality control, and each is farmed a bit differently. The rows up on the ridge have shallow soil and are better drained, and are more exposed to the wind and sun than the vines down in the swale. We call this precision farming and it's all about smaller and smaller units to ensure uniform quality control."

Moeller-Racke also explained that each vintage is capable of producing grapes that will be used for The Donum Estate. Because it is not known which units will prosper under each vintage's conditions, all vines are given the same exacting care. "It's all about allowing the vines to develop their utmost potential," she added, "it just happens at The Donum Estate, we attempt to give them all painstaking attention." She is also pleased that all The Donum Estate

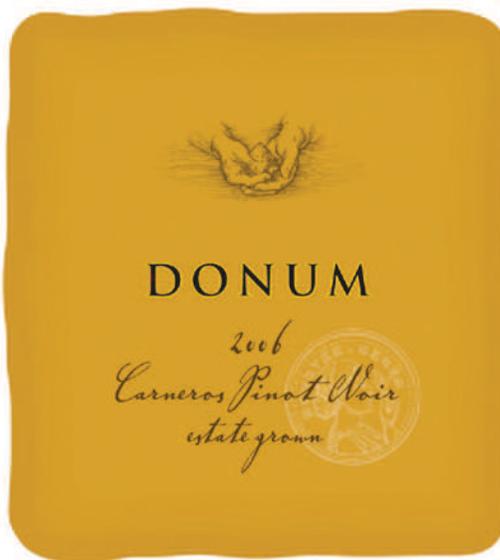
vineyards are post-*phylloxera*, a fact that bodes well for the future of the winery. She also credits her other brand, Robert Stemmler Winery, with allowing her the chance to be so selective for The Donum Estate.

"Our Stemmler label makes Donum possible," Moeller-Racke, pointed out. "It provides us with a wonderful array of fruit from which to select. We have been very pleased that the resulting wines have proven to be quite exceptional."

That last quote might be an understatement. Since its first release The Donum Estate has consistently garnered superior accolades from the wine industry press and has become a hard item to find on a consistent basis, a fact aided by such limited production.

The word *Donum* (from the same Latin root as donation) literally means "gift of the land", a phrase that rings particularly true in the case of The Donum Estate. During its brief history, it has set a standard that other Pinot Noir makers will surely attempt to achieve.

Please enjoy this marvelous *Platinum Series Selection* from The Donum Estate.



The road to great wine begins at your door.

TASTING NOTES



THE DONUM ESTATE

Dear *Platinum Series* Members,

This "gift," from Gold Medal Wine Club, is our 2006 Donum Carneros Estate Grown Pinot Noir. I truly hope that you enjoy it.

The ultra premium pinot noirs produced by Donum Estate come from our closely tended estate vineyards nestled in the rolling hills of Carneros and in the Russian River Valley. We specialize in small lot, hand crafted Pinot Noir and attend to every detail from the vine to the wine.

Donum means "gift of the land." As winegrowers, we guide the fruit through the seasons to bring you the best the year has to offer. Our approach to winemaking is to craft each wine in a way that represents the site and the vintage, that is balanced and rich, yet elegant and true to the variety.

I included our tasting notes. They will provide you with more details specific to the vintage and winemaking practices of your bottle of wine. Do let us know if you would like more information or if we may be of assistance to you. We would love to hear from you.

Cheers!

Anne Moller-Racke
President/Winegrower
The Donum Estate

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TASTING NOTES

800 Cases Produced

The Donum Estate is dedicated to crafting the ultimate Pinot Noir, and to put it simply, they *nailed* it with the 2006 Carneros Estate Grown Pinot Noir. True to form with its dark brooding nature, great depth, and stunning complexity, this Pinot Noir highlights The Donum Estate's traditional Burgundian winemaking techniques through its intricate balance of elegance and intensity. The 2006 Carneros Estate Grown Pinot Noir is also one of the most highly awarded wines from The Donum Estate, achieving an unprecedented **Five 91+ Scores** from among the industry's top periodicals. Ratings include **96 Points** from the *Pinot Report*, **93 Points** from *Wine Spectator*, **93 Points** from *Wine News* magazine, **92 Points** from *Wine Enthusiast* magazine, and **91 Points** from the *Connoisseurs' Guide!* The 2006 Carneros Pinot Noir is a beautiful expression of the exceptional terroir of The Donum Estate's Sonoma County property and is truly distinctive to the region. Intense aromas of black plum, forest floor, ripe Bing cherry fruit, and a wisp of smoke emerge on the nose, setting the stage for what's to come. On the palate, this Pinot is weighty, but soft and glossy in texture, with flavors of succulent black fruits, earth, and ripe strawberries lingering on the long and refreshing finish. Supremely elegant and an *excellent* achievement. Aged 11 months in oak. Enjoy now until 2014.

ORDERS

The Donum Estate name has been associated with world-class, cult status Pinot Noirs since its inception, and the 2006 Estate Grown Carneros bottling is one of their finest achievements to date – an outstanding wine, and easily among the highest scoring Pinot Noirs from the Carneros region.

The **Donum 2006 Carneros Pinot Noir** retails winery-direct for \$65.00 per bottle. As a *Platinum Series* member your very special pricing is as follows:

2-Bottle Members..... \$47.00 /bottle*
4-Bottle Members &
Multi-Series Members.....\$45.00 /bottle*
*2 bottle min. order [Plus shipping]

Call: 1-800-266-8888
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