



Join Brian Freedman, WineChateau.com's resident blogger, as he "Uncorks Life" on his adventures in the world of wine.

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Wine Review Wednesday (on Thursday): Pinots and Chardonnays

Author: Brian Freedman - WineChateau.com | at: 7:46 AM | Category: California, Chardonnay, Hartford Court, Knights Bridge, Oregon, Pinot Noir, Sonoma, Stoller |



Sticking Stateside and nodding in the direction of Burgundy, we feature four exceptional Pinots and Chardonnays this week, each one a standout in my recent tastings.

Stoller Pinot Noir "SV Estate" 2006, Dundee Hills

The utterly intriguing nose here shows almost cherry-cola notes, though it never turns sweet. There's lots of brambly fruit, almost autumnal in its expression, although it still maintains a sense of transparency. On the palate, there's excellent concentration: This is clearly a young wine with serious potential. Some of that cola character comes through on the mid-palate, and is joined by hints of sous bois, black licorice, minerals, and flowers. The acid and tannins are in excellent balance, and though this is drinking nicely now—it's screaming out for food—it should be even better in 7 - 10+ years. A muscular style, with an almost feminine sense of elegance. It evolves with half an hour of air and gains aromatic hints of kimchee and horseradish: Almost like a Gevry-Chambertin or an Echezeaux. Fabulous Pinot.

Hartford Court Pinot Noir "Lands Edge Vineyards" 2005, Sonoma Coast

Very subtle nose, almost smoky and mysterious in character—interesting for a Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir. It's showing spicy, higher-toned dark cherry fruit too, and an unexpected whiff of slate. This is very soft on the palate, with lots of grilled mushrooms, mesquite, and sous bois notes. There's also a touch of meat on the finish, where the cherry comes back, but here in the guise of cherry reduction and coffee grounds. Much of the fruit has melted away at this point, and it's beginning to turn to something more secondary. Fascinating expression of the appellation. Very masculine. Drink now.

Knights Bridge Chardonnay "West Block" 2008, Knights Valley

Warm, toasty oak dominates the nose right now, but with some air, aromas of preserved lemon, cream, red apple, pear, and tarragon start to peek through. Where this wine really gains speed is on the palate, with its flavors of white peppercorn, dulce de leche, toffee, and hazelnuts. The fruit is sweet and ripe, with echoes of baked apple and cinnamon. This is a young wine, and still needs a bit of time to integrate more fully, but it shows lots of potential with its muscular, creamy texture, lingering finish of spiced nuts, caramel, and kumquat peel, and an overall impression of a wine that will evolve for another 6 - 10 years. Big and delicious.

Knights Bridge Chardonnay "Beresini Vineyard" 2008, Carneros

Much more filigreed and detailed on the nose than the "West Block" bottling; maybe the Puligny-Montrachet to the Meursault of the other one? There's something more nervy here, more transparent, with intimations of seckle pear, flowers, and a whiff of minerals. The flavors take a nuttier, spicier turn, with anise and fennel pollen, and the oak's caramel and vanilla are only showing their full potential on the finish for now, where they're joined by a pleasantly bitter hint of lemon pith that vibrates on the tongue for a good 30 seconds. This is a very well-made wine, exceptionally pleasurable, and indicative of what Carneros is capable of. Power and insistency wrapped in an elegant package. 4 - 8 years.

0 comments:

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Wine Review Policy

I happily accept wines for review, but with the understanding that I will only cover what I can write about positively, both on UncorkLife.com and in the other publications for which I write. In other words: If I like it, I'll write about it. Once wines are received, I will allow them to rest in a proper cellar environment before assessing them. Every bottle is tasted and given the same amount of consideration for coverage, though there is no set schedule for doing so. For more information, questions, or my shipping address, please email me at bfreedman@winechateau.com.

Contributors

- [nursing](#)
- [NJVino](#)
- [Brian Freedman - WineChateau.com](#)

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