

Patty's Pinot Closet Newsletter

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Victoria, Australia

pat@pinotnoirs.com
www.pinotnoirs.com

Patty's Pinot Closet publishes this newsletter on the enjoyment and appreciation of Pinot Noir. We welcome you to enjoy the newsletters and to share them with others. This, my sixth newsletter, covers Australian Pinot Noirs from Victoria. Tasting was done at wineries, wine festivals, and during very lovely dinners and lunches.

I've been tasting Pinots for a very long time; but, I'd never tasted an Australian Pinot Noir until July 2003 at the International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC) in Oregon. Two wineries from Australia were represented, Curly Flat from the Macedon Ranges region in Victoria and Pipers Brook Vineyard in Tasmania. They were so good that my husband Jud (he does Patty's Pinot Closet Website) and I set off on a quest to find more! Read on to discover what we found.

Victoria Food and Wine

Food Living in the outback of Australia for a short time in the early 1970's, left me with the opinion that the only thing worth eating in Australia was a grilled cheese and tomato sandwich. I was surprised that you can still get this sandwich, even at McDonald's. The food today is as good and exciting as I've had anywhere in the world. We encountered a few unusual dishes such as kangaroo, Balmain Bugs (crayfish in US), and Barramundi (a lovely fish) – and enjoyed them immensely. Australians love semi-oven roasted Roma tomatoes with breakfast and in their salads, especially with rocket (arugula to us in the US).

Restaurants Our first evening in Australia we dined at ARIA in Sydney where I enjoyed Crisp Chinese Skin Barramundi with Shaved Abalone, Choy Sum and Duck Broth. We shared a bottle of Carlei Estate 2000 Pinot Noir from the Yarra Valley – we couldn't believe it, we'd found our first really good Victorian pinot noir of the trip.

The second night we stayed at LindenWarrah Country House in Miliwa, Kings Valley and ate at their 'Restaurant Merlot'. I enjoyed a roast loin of lamb on an olive potato fritter, semi dried tomato, rocket salad, crisp fried onion and a basil oil emulsion. Jud loved his duck breast tossed with nashi pear, baby bok choy and pomegranate molasses jus and creme fraiche.

Our most memorable dining experience occurred at Lake House in Daylesford - Macedon Ranges (Spa Region). Here we enjoyed the attention of Hayden Winch who helped us with wine and food selections. I had a wonderful main course with duck prepared four different ways.

Being a Peter Weir fan I had to make a pilgrimage to Hanging Rock in the Macedon Range region for a picnic. After lunch I climbed up to Hanging Rock in the fog and mist and experienced that eerie beautiful film again.

Near the end of our time in Victoria we stayed at Marylands Country House near Yarra Valley. Here I enjoyed a very good grilled kangaroo with the Bannockburn Pinot Noir made by Gary Farr. A Pinot Noir available in the US and worth finding.

Many wineries are opening cafes adjoining their cellar door (tasting room). These cafes often have beautiful views looking out over the vineyards. Domaine Chandon in Yarra Valley and Paringa Estate in Morington Peninsula are two worth mentioning.



Lake House Restaurant



Paringa Estate Restaurant in Morington Peninsula

Recipes Caesar Cardini invented Caesar Salads in the 1920's at his restaurant in Tijuana, Mexico (across the US border at San Diego). According to Julia Child, who ate there as a child, Caesar originally used only the smallest inner leaves of Romaine and the salad was eaten with the fingers. The Australians have taken the Caesar Salad to a whole new level. They add bacon, parmesan curls, cheesy croutons, and top with a poached egg. [Click here](#) for my version of Australian Caesar Salad.



Australia's Caesar Salad

Hotels we Liked:

- [LindenWarrah](#) Country House in Miliwa, Kings Valley
- [Lake House](#) in Daylesford in the Macedon Range (Spa Region)
- [Marylands](#) Country House near Yarra Valley

Wine Festivals

Australian Wine Festivals While researching Australian wine festivals I came across a terrific site that seems to have most [Australian Festivals](#).

- June 25-28, 2004 -- [Boutique Wine Festival 2004](#), Melbourne, Australia
- August 13-14, 2004 -- [2004 Taste of the Grape](#), Melbourne, Australia
- August 13-15, 2004 -- [Ulladulla Festival of Food & Wine](#), Ulladulla, NSW, Australia
- August 13-16, 2004 -- [VIN International](#), Yarraman Crystal Palace, Luna Park, Sydney
- November 18-21, 2004 -- [Margaret River Wine Region Festival](#), Margaret River, Western Australia
- November 24-29, 2004 -- [Wine Australia 2004](#), Darling Harbour, Sydney
- January 17-21, 2005 -- [Tasmanian Wine Show](#), Battery Point, Launceston, Tasmania, Australia
- February 5-6, 2005 -- [MPVA Pinot Noir Celebration 2005](#), Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, Australia
- February 15, 2005 -- [Moonlight Music and Wine Festival](#), Claremont Showgrounds, Perth, Australia
- March 9-11, 2005 -- [Cool Climate Wine Show 2005](#), Balnarring, Victoria, Australia

US Wine Festivals

- April 24, 2004 -- [1st Annual Pinnacles Wines Festival](#), Monterey County, CA
- April 24, 2004 -- [New York Steak BBO & Wine Party](#), Casa de Fruta, CA (near Gilroy)
- April 29, - May 1, 2004 -- [World Wine Market 2004](#), San Francisco, CA
- April 29, - May 1, 2004 -- [Monterey Wine Festival](#), Monterey, CA
- May 14-16, 2004 -- [Paso Robles Wine Festival](#), Paso Robles, CA
- May 15, 2004 -- [Santa Barbara County Vintners' Festival](#), Firestone Meadow, Santa Barbara, CA
- June 18-19, 2004 -- [D'vine Wine Affair - Wine Gala & Auction / Golf Tournament](#), Monterey, CA
- July 15-17, 2004 -- [Sonoma County Showcase of Wine & Food](#), Sonoma County, CA
- July 23rd - 25th, 2004 -- [18th Annual International Pinot Noir Celebration](#), McMinnville, OR
- August 16, 2004 -- [8th Grape to Glass](#), Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, CA
- August 21, 2004 -- [12th Annual, Winemaker's Celebration](#), Monterey, CA
- October 20-21, 2004 -- [Mid Atlantic Expo](#), Timonium, MD
- November 11-14, 2004 -- [8th Annual, The Great Wine Escape Weekend](#), Monterey County, CA

Victoria Pinot Noirs

Victoria Wine Regions: I visited six of the 23 wine regions in Victoria on my January 2004 trip.

Most countries have a means for designating their wine growing area. The French invented the concept known as Appellation d'Origine. In the US we have a fairly new system called American Viticultural Areas or AVAs. In Australia they have a series of geographic designators; wine zones, wine regions, and sub-regions. The system, referred to as Geographic Indications (GI) governs how wines are labeled. [WineDiva](#) has a very good site with a lot of detail on Australian Wine Regions.

The first area that I visited was North-East Victoria which contains the five viticultural regions of **Rutherglen, Beechworth, Alpine Valleys, King Valleys,** and **Glenrowen**. More than 60 wineries can be found in this area. Main varieties of this region include: Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, **Pinot Noir**, and Shiraz. The numbers on the paragraphs below correspond to the numbered areas on the map.



Victoria Wine Regions

1. Alpine Valleys. After a beautiful drive through this sub-alpine valley we found Bill Tynan's Bogong Estate. He advertises "Pinot Noir is all we do" and yes, they make 5 pinot noirs – a pinot rose, Le Jour, Le Nuit, Le Soir, and a fortified pinot noir. Their alluvial soils, sub-alpine climate, and high altitude make for some nice pinot noirs.

2. Beechworth. Here we also found a sub-alpine climate and soils varying from alluvial to reddish brown older soils. Grapes were first planted in these areas in the 1970's. Guy Darling from the King Valley, one of the first people to plant grape vines in this region, steered us to Richard Kinzbrunner's Giaconda Vineyard and Winery. The Giaconda Winery was built of stone and beautifully set on a hill overlooking the vineyards. One vineyard below us was planted in a circle. I'd never seen that before. Rick poured us his 2002 Pinot Noir and we instantly knew why Guy Darling had sent us to Giaconda. It was wonderful! The kind of pinot you search for. We talked with Rick for quite a while and then went into the barrel room to look at the barrels. He was using a new technique that he had devised where the barrels can each be rolled over to get the wine against the bung hole. The bung holes are also new in that they have a screw holding them in. We talked about French barrels and his were the top of the line with wooden twigs set around them as decoration. He said he uses barrels with a three level toast. We stayed about an hour and at the end certainly knew why Rick had been named Australian Winemaker for 2003.

Second we visited the regions around Melbourne. They contain the five viticultural regions of **Geelong, Macedon Ranges, Mornington Peninsula, Sunbury,** and **Yarra Valley**. I found good pinot noirs in all of these areas. Our wine tasting route took us on a circle going to Macedon Ranges, then Geelong. Next a ferry across the bay to Mornington Peninsula and on to Yarra Valley and back to Melbourne.

3. Macedon Ranges. Located north of Melbourne in the Spa area of Victoria. The soils vary from deep loam to sandy granite based loams. Here you'll also find Hanging Rock where you must go for a picnic and the Lake House, possibly Australia's best restaurant. They produce sparkling wines, including some Pinot Noir sparkling wine, in the Macedon Ranges. Here we found Phillip & Jeni Moraghan's Curly Flat Vineyard with the help of a sheep herder herding his sheep down the road on a motorcycle. We tasted Curly Flat pinot at the International Pinot Noir Celebration in Oregon. This was the reason we had come on our quest to find more Australian pinot noirs. We enjoyed a tasting of different clones from the barrels in their beautiful new winery. We also got a taste of their Curly Flat 2002 Pinot Noir - an absolutely wonderful wine that won't be released until March 2005.

4. Geelong. Located to the west of Port Phillip Bay, Geelong has more than 19 wineries. This region has a very dry maritime climate. Swiss immigrants first planted grapes in the 1850's, but they were soon torn out due to phylloxera. Grape vine planting began again in the 1960's. The soils range from deep loam to sandy gravel loam. Here we found Gary Farr and his two pinot noirs, Bannockburn Vineyards and Bannockburn by Farr. His son, Nicholas Farr, is now making his own pinot noir called Farr Rising. Look for all three – they are wonderful, especially the Bannockburn Vineyards Pinot Noir. It was easy to see why Gary Farr was Australian Winemaker for 2002.

5. Mornington Peninsula. Located south-east of Melbourne this area has a definite maritime climate with red volcanic soils. Serious commercial wine grape growing began in the 1970's. Here we saw some very interesting trellising which I believe is called Tatura trellis. This Australian developed system consists of two inclined canopies at 60 degrees meeting in the middle of the row. A wonderful pinot noir from this area that is well worth finding is Silverwood Estate owned by Paul and Denise Dennis.

6. Yarra Valley. Located north-east of Melbourne with loams in the southern part and red volcanic in the north east. Grape growing flourished during the 1800's but died out during the depression. In the 1960's commercial grape growing started again and in the 1980's James Halliday established his Coldstream Hills Winery. Moet & Chandon established their Domaine Chandon Australia Green Point property in 1986. Here you can enjoy a light lunch in their beautiful Green Point Room along with both sparkling and still pinot noir. Tim Ambrose of Beringer Blass met us at St Huberts for a tasting and then accompanied us to Yarra Ridge where Diana took us on a tour of the winery and vineyards. Each year they invite Olympic stars to make their Yarra Ridge Achilles Pinot Noir. The athletes don bathing suits and jump in a large oak barrel and stomp the grapes. Yarra Ridge donates the wine to charities of the athletes choosing.



Tatura Trellis at Stonier's Winery



Olympic Stars stomping grapes at Yarra Ridge

Other viticultural areas that I didn't get to are:

Western Victoria: Ballarat, Pyrenees, Grampians, Henty

North-West Victoria: Murray Valley, Swan Hill

Central Victoria: Bendigo, Heathcote, Goulburn Valley, Central Victorian High Country

Gippsland: East Gippsland, West Gippsland, South Gippsland

All of the wines listed in the newsletters are listed on the [website](#) as well as notes on how I taste and assemble the list. Hyperlinks to the wineries are included, if available. Where possible, prices listed below have been taken from the winery website or other retail sources and are included for relative comparison only. Your price may be different.

Notes about the wine list:

- All wines in this issue are from Victoria except for a few that are noted.
- Prices followed by a CD are Winery Cellar Door Prices in Australian dollars.
- Prices followed by a SH are from the [Southern Hemisphere Wines](#) web site and are in US dollars.
- Prices followed by a VD are from the [Vintage Direct](#) web site and are in Australian dollars.

Winery	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Bannockburn Geelong	2000	\$34.99 SH	95	A dense ruby-garnet color with aromas of earthy black currant and cinnamon. The palate shows black currant and licorice with a very long aftertaste. A very complex and well balanced wine.
Giaconda Beechworth	2002	A\$65.00 CD	95	Dense wine with earthy aromas of black current, spices, and mushroom. Velvety tastes of black currants and blackberries. Very long lingering aftertaste.
Bannockburn Geelong	2001	A\$50.73 VD	94	A dense ruby-garnet color with aromas of earthy, smokey black currant and cinnamon. The palate shows gamey black currant with a very long aftertaste. A very complex and well balanced wine.
Carlei Estate Yarra Valley	2000		94	Very Burgundian dense wine with a ruby-garnet color. Earthy, gamey, black currant aromas. Luscious taste with a lingering aftertaste.
Curly Flat Macedon Range	1999	A\$49.50 VD	94	Medium intensity with a garnet color. Earthy black currant complex aromas. Well-balanced with a great taste and long lingering aftertaste.
Curly Flat Macedon Range	2002	Release March 2005	94	Medium intensity with a cherry color. Earthy black cherry, violets and cloves in the aroma. Velvety tastes of black fruit. Very complex with a long and lingering aftertaste.
Farr Rising Geelong	2001	A\$39.91 VD	94	Wine by Nicholas Farr. A dense ruby color with earthy aromas of blackberry and cinnamon. Rich velvety in the mouth with a very long aftertaste.
Pinot Noir by Farr (Bannockburn by Farr) Geelong	2001	A\$34.99 CD	94	Dense ruby color with blackberry aromas and forest floor bouquets. The earthy mushroom blackberry taste goes on and on.
Yarra Ridge Yarra Valley	1998	A\$40.00 CD	94	Dense ruby-garnet wine. Toasty, earthy, black currant aromas combined with a wonderful black currant earthy velvety taste. A long lingering aftertaste that goes and goes.
Curly Flat Macedon Range	2001		93	Medium intensity with a ruby-garnet color. Earthy black currant complex aromas. Well-balanced with a great taste and long lingering aftertaste.
Paringa Estate Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$52.00 CD	93	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color. Cherry aromas accompanied with a earthy, dusty bouquet. Tastes of velvety, earthy black cherry with a long finish.
Plantagenet Great Southern Western Australia	2001		93	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine. Black currant aromas are accompanied by an earthy, spicy bouquet. Tastes of earthy dark fruit with a velvety vanilla finish.
Portree Macedon Range	2003		93	
Silverwood Reserve Mornington Peninsula	2002		93	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color. Aromas of plums, black cherry, mint and spice. Smokey forest floor bouquet. Tastes of velvety dark fruit, cinnamon and well-balanced tannins. A very long and lingering aftertaste.
Tarrington Henty	2001	A\$33.70 VD	93	Garnet color wine with aromas of black currant and spice -- very earthy Burgundian nose. Tastes of black fruit with a lovely lingering aftertaste

Curly Flat Macedon Range	2000	A\$49.50 VD	92	Medium intensity with a garnet color. Earthy black currant complex aromas. Well-balanced with a great taste and long lingering aftertaste.
Stonier Wines Reserve Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$49.67 VD	92	Medium intensity with a ruby color. Aromas of black cherry and chocolate. Earthy, gamey, toasty bouquet. Tastes of velvety black fruit and a long aftertaste.
Avalon Vineyard King Valley	2002	A\$20.00 CD	91	This very Burgundian style pinot has a ruby-garnet color and aromas of black cherries and blackberries. Grown in the Whitlands Region, a higher region than King Valley
Domaine Chandon Yarra Valley	2001		91	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color with aromas of black cherry, cloves and mushroom. Tastes of velvety cherries with a hint of oak. Long aftertaste.
Tokar Estate Yarra Valley	2001		91	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine. Aromas of black cherries, cloves and licorice. Earthy bouquet. Tastes of black fruit with a beautifully integrated oak. Lovely long finish.
Bindi Original Vineyard Macedon Range	2002		90	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color with aromas of black fruit, spice, and mint. Well-balanced, complex wine with a lovely aftertaste.
Bogong Le Nuit Alpine Valley	2002		90	Dense ruby-garnet color with earthy black currant aromas and tastes of black currant. Lovely long aftertaste.
Coldstream Hills Reserve Yarra Valley	2002	A\$78.05 VD	90	Medium intensity ruby color. Earthy blackberry and cloves aromas. A nice long aftertaste.
Darling Estate Wines King Valley	2002		90	
Paringa Peninsula Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$28.38VD	90	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color. Cherry and strawberry aromas accompany a gamey bouquet. Tastes of cherries and strawberries with a medium finish.
Portree Macedon Range	2001	A\$25.00 CD	90	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color. Aromas of plum, cherry, lavender and spice. Complex flavors of dark fruit accompanied by earthy, mushroom, and chocolate. A velvety finish.
St Hubert Yarra Valley	2002	A\$25.00 CD	90	Medium intensity with cherry color. Aromas of cherry and cloves with an earthy bouquet. Silky in the mouth with a medium aftertaste.
Stonier Wines Mornington Peninsula	2002		90	Medium intensity with a ruby color. Aromas of cherries and herbs with a gamey bouquet. Tastes of red fruit and a nice medium finish.
The Duke Vineyard Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$25.00 CD	90	Dense ruby-garnet wine with aromas of plums and spice with good mouth feel and nice aftertaste.
The Duke Vineyard Early Release Mornington Peninsula	2000	A\$30.00 CD	90	Dense ruby-garnet wine with aromas of plums, smoke and game. Tastes of velvety plums and spice. Well-balanced with long aftertaste.
The Duke Vineyard Early Release Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$20.00 CD	90	Dense ruby-garnet wine with aromas of black cherries and spice. Tastes of velvety licorice, blackberry and mushroom. Long aftertaste.
Yarra Ridge Yarra Valley	2002	A\$24.04 VD	90	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color. Aromas of black currants and earthy-gamey bouquets. Tastes of earthy black cherries, spices, and mushrooms. Lovely long aftertaste.

Bogong Le Soir Alpine Valley	2002		89	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color with aromas of cherries. Nice aftertaste.
Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley	2002	A\$30.15 VD	89	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color. Earthy plum, cinnamon and cloves in the aroma. Tastes of plum and raspberry with a nice finish.
Darling Estate Wines King Valley	1995		89	
Darling Estate Wines King Valley	2003		89	Medium intensity wine with ruby-garnet color. Aromas of blackberry and cherry.
Eldridge Estate Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$35.00 CD	89	Light intensity wine with aromas of raspberries. Tastes of red berries.
Lark Hill Wine Canberra New South Wales	2001	A\$35.48 VD	89	Medium intensity wine with cherry color. Strawberry, perfume and gamey aromas. Well balanced with a nice aftertaste.
Lark Hill Wine Canberra New South Wales	2002	A\$33.00 CD	89	Medium intensity wine with cherry color. Strawberry, perfume and gamey aromas. Well balanced with a nice aftertaste.
Lindenderry at Red Hill Mornington Peninsula	2000		89	Medium intensity wine with ruby-garnet color. Earthy, gamey, black cherry aromas. Tastes of red fruit with a nice aftertaste.
Main Ridge Estate The Acre Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$36.00 CD	89	Raspberry and mushroom aromas with an earthy red fruit taste and nice aftertaste.
Mt William Winery Macedon Range	2000		89	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with a spicy earthy bouquet.
Mt William Winery Macedon Range	2001		89	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with a spicy earthy bouquet.
Portree Macedon Range	1999		89	
Scotchman Hill Geelong	2001	A\$31.93 VD	89	
Coldstream Hills Yarra Valley	1998	\$14.99 SH	88	Medium intensity ruby-garnet color with earthy cherry aromas.
Eldridge Estate Mornington Peninsula	2000	A\$45.00 CD	88	Light intensity wine with aromas of raspberries. Tastes of red berries.
Main Ridge Estate Half Acre Mornington Peninsula	2001	A\$45.00 CD	88	Raspberry aromas with an earthy red fruit taste and nice aftertaste.
Portree Macedon Range	2000		88	
Scotchman Hill Geelong	2000		88	Light intensity ruby color wine. Aromas of strawberry and violet.
Tarrawarra Estate Yarra Valley	2001	A\$48.00 CD	88	Medium intensity with a ruby-garnet color. Earthy aromas of cherries and cloves.
Yarra Track Yarra Valley	2001	A\$34.59 VD	88	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with aromas of earthy cherries. Tastes of cherries.
Bogong Le Jour Alpine Valley	2002		86	Light intensity wine with aromas of strawberries. Nice aftertaste.

Tarrawarra Estate Tin Cows Yarra Valley	2001	A\$25.00 CD	86	Medium intensity ruby-garnet wine with aromas of cherries.
De Bortoli Yarra Valley	2001	A\$36.18 VD	85	Medium intensity, ruby-garnet color with very light aromas of earthy cherry and cinnamon. Tastes of cherries.
Jindalee Estate Geelong	2000		85	Medium intensity wine with very light red fruit aromas.

Corrections: These corrections have been added to the cumulative review list on the [website](#).

- Sea Smoke Cellars was 2001 and is named Southing from their Estate Sea Smoke Vineyard.
- Fiddlehead Cellars 2001 Cuvee Seven Twenty Eight, Fiddlestix Vineyard correct price is \$38.
- Fiddlehead Cellars 2001 Cuvee Lollapalooza, Fiddlestix Vineyard, was missed, see the [website](#) for details.

Subsequent Newsletters: will cover Tasmania, Sonoma, Napa, San Luis Obispo County, Burgundy, and other Pinot Noir growing areas.

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