

Patty's Pinot Closet Newsletter

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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 twelfth newsletter, covers Green Valley Pinot Noirs from California. Tasting was done at wineries, wine festivals, and during very lovely dinners and lunches.

This issue focuses on Green Valley, a sub-AVA of the Sonoma County, Russian River Valley AVA. The issue also includes a few Pinot Noirs just outside the Green Valley AVA, as well as my first white wine, just one, but not the last one. The Pinot Noir family includes Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc. I therefore, feel I should include some of them.

Announcing "Wine Notes" Software for Wine Evaluation

Developed exclusively for me by the Groundspace Corporation to evaluate wines quickly, accurately and with more detail than using a mere pencil. Wine Notes comes in two versions — 100-



Wine Review Form		
Var:	Pinot Noir	
Winery:	Alta Rang	
AVA:	New Zealand, Martinborough	
Vineyard:		
Notes:		
Vintage:	2000	
Reserve:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Price:	43	
Curr:	USD	
Area:	NZ	
Date:	2/1/04	
Visual:	15	
Note:	22	
Taste:	12	
Altogether Typicalness Gen Quality:	9	
	12	
My Total:	Total: 34	
Save	New	Close

point scale and a 20-point scale. Easy to use with touch & tap operation. You can always have it with you because it runs on a Pocket PC. Available now at www.groundspace.com

Green Valley

Green Valley lies entirely within the Russian River Valley appellation of Sonoma County in California. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, tucked among the towering redwoods, love the cool climate. This cool climate coupled with the fog and the Gold Ridge soil make a perfect terroir for the cool climate grapes.

An American Viticultural Area (AVA) in it's own right, many people refer to it as Green Valley — Russian River. In fact, the region's grape growers and winemakers recently filed for a new AVA specifying "Green Valley — Russian River".

Green Valley Food and Accommodations

Food

Besides wonderful Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes, Gravenstein apples brought fame to the Green Valley for years. Evidence indicates that the Russian Fur Trappers that settled Fort Ross in 1812 first planted the Gravenstein apples. One hundred years later, Luther Burbank commented, "It has often been said that if the Gravenstein could be had throughout the year, no other apple need be grown." The Gravensteins are crisp, juicy, aromatic and full of old-fashioned tart-sweet flavor.

Today, Green Valley growers sell most of their Gravenstein apples for apple juice. We did, however, enjoy some wonderful apple pie while in the region. The area also abounds in blueberries, blackberries and raspberries — all fruits that remind us of Pinot Noir.

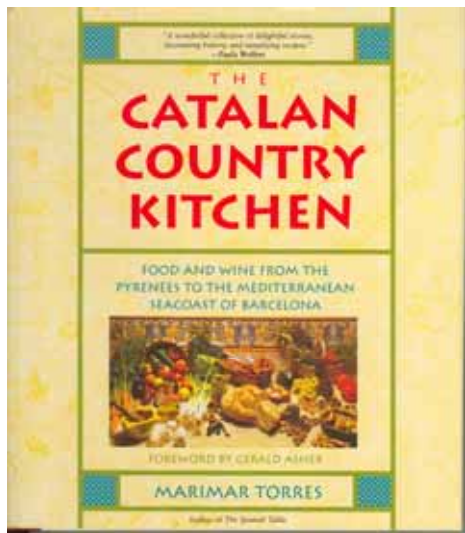


Recipes

This recipe for stuffed baked apples comes from *The Catalan Country Kitchen* by Marimar Torres. The book covers both food and wine from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean Sea-coast of Barcelona. Marimar included more than 100 Catalan recipes in this beautiful book available from her website. <http://www.marimarestate.com>



Baked Apples Stuffed with Pork, Ham, and Pine Nuts (Pomes Farcides al Forn)



Baked Apples Stuffed with Pork, Ham, and Pine Nuts (Pomes Farcides al Forn)

From *The Catalan Country Kitchen* by Marimar Torres Serves 6

"This is a favorite recipe from my late friend Ramón Cabau, the flamboyant genius of Catalan cooking who died in the late eighties. His great Barcelona restaurant, Agut d'Avignon, is still one of the best in the city and features most of his original dishes. These savory stuffed apples, with their filling of pork, ham, and pine nuts, are typical of Girona, the region north of Barcelona that is home to the famed Costa Brava." Marimar Torres

6	large	thick-skinned baking apples, such as Rome Beauties or Pippins (about 1/2 pound each)
2	Tbsp	olive oil
1/4	cup	pine nuts (1.5 ounces)
1	medium	onion, minced
3	large	garlic cloves, minced
3/4	pound	boneless lean baked ham, chopped finely by hand
3/4	pound	medium-ground pork
1/2	cup	homemade bread crumbs

1	tsp	salt
1/2	tsp	freshly ground black pepper
2		eggs
1	cup	dry white wine
2	cups	Veal Stock, or more as needed
4	Tbsp	sugar

With the stem side down, cut top quarter off each apple. With a small knife or melon-ball scoop, remove and discard seeds and hard core, with out going all the way through to bottom of apple. With a knife, enlarge opening, shaping it like a funnel; chop apple pieces and set aside.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Heat oil in a large skillet and sauté pine nuts until lightly golden. Add onion and garlic, and sauté over low heat until tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Add chopped apple pieces; stir and cook until tender, about 10 to 15 minutes. Off heat, add ham, pork, bread crumbs, salt, and pepper; stir and set aside. Beat eggs lightly in a large bowl; add meat mixture and use your hands to distribute egg evenly throughout.

Pack stuffing into apples, mounding it on top; they should look like giant mushrooms. The stuffing will shrink during baking, so don't worry if they look too big; use up all the stuffing. Place apples in an ungreased baking dish, pour wine around them, and bake in the 350° F oven for 1-1/4 to 1-1/2 hours. (Baking time will depend on the size and kind of apples; a 1/2-pound Rome or Pippin apple will take about 1-1/2 hours.) Test apples with a fork, knife, or needle; they should feel soft and pierce easily without resistance. While baking, there should always be a little liquid in the pan; check periodically and add stock if needed, to make sure juices don't burn (especially if you have an electric oven).

Remove apples to a serving platter. Add veal stock to baking dish. Reduce over high heat to desired consistency; it should be a rather light sauce. Meanwhile, caramelize sugar (see below) until it turns an amber color; pour over apples. Serve apples surrounded with the sauce.

Wine Recommendation: Serve with a fairly young, oak-aged, medium-bodied red wine, such as a Tempranillo from Rioja, Catalunya, or Ribera del Duero.

Pinot Pat thought the stuffed apples went quite nicely with a Green Valley Pinot Noir.

Caramelizing. Caramelizing is used in Catalan recipes to add color and flavor to savory dishes or to line a flan mold. The method is simple: dissolve sugar with a little water (about 1 tablespoon water to 1/4 cup sugar is a good rule of thumb) in a heavy saucepan and cook over brisk heat. (You can actually caramelize sugar all by itself, without dissolving it in water, but I find this method easier.) Don't stir, just shake the pan gently; after about 4 or 5 minutes, the water will evaporate and the sugar will begin to melt and turn to a thick golden liquid. At this point, you must decide how dark a caramel you want. – and quickly, since the color goes from light golden to amber to burnt brown very fast.

In savory dishes, the caramel is usually added to a hot liquid; it will hiss and smoke at first, but the caramel will soon dissolve, contributing a rich color and extra depth of flavor.

The following Green Valley wineries have recipes that go well with Pinot Noir on their websites:

Marimar Torres — <http://www.marimarestate.com>

Dutton Estate — www.sebastopolvineyards.com (great looking Lamb Stew recipe)

Iron Horse Vineyards — http://www.ironhorsevineyards.com/index_culinary.html

Restaurants

Underwood Bistro and Bar in Graton at 9113 Graton Road — This seems to be the place all the winery people gather in the late evening after dinner. On one visit, most were drinking Mohitos, a Cuban cocktail of contrasting and complementary ingredients.

Stella's Cafe in Sebastopol at 4550 Gravenstein Highway. Good food! <http://www.stellascafe.net/>



Underwood Bistro & Bar

Accommodations

The Sebastopol Inn, the perfect place from which to explore the Green Valley wine region. Located in downtown Sebastopol behind the historic Gravenstein train station. <http://www.sebastopolinn.com>

Things To Do In Apple Valley

Luther Burbank's Home, Greenhouse, and Gardens where the famed horticulturist experimented with plants for most of his 50-year career. This unique city park is located at the intersection of Santa Rosa Avenue and Sonoma Avenue in Santa Rosa, California. www.lutherburbank.org

Fort Ross State Historic Park. 19005 Coast Highway One, Jenner, CA 95450. Fort Ross State Historic Park is one of the oldest historical park units in the California State Park System. Fort Ross is a wonderful place to visit for its outstanding scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and to learn about local, California, or world trade history. <http://www.mcn.org/1/rrparks/fortross/>



Fort Ross State Park

Wine Festivals

Green Valley Wine Festivals & Events

28-30 October 2005, Pinot Festival "Pinot on the River", Russian River Valley, Sonoma County, CA <http://www.pinotfestival.com/>

Green Valley Dinner at John Ash Restaurant, November 2, 2005. Price per person is \$120 all inclusive. For reservations, call Laura Zeiman at 707.527.7687 ext. 113.

International Wine Festivals

19-26 November 2005, Royal Hobart International Wine Show. Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. <http://www.rast.com.au/>

26-28 January 2006 Central Otago Pinot Noir Celebration, Queenstown, New Zealand www.pinotcelebration.co.nz

31 January—5 February 2007, Pinot Noir 2007, Wellington, New Zealand www.pinotnoir2007.co.nz

US Wine Festivals

19 November 2005, Pinot Fest 2005. Kensington Park Hotel, San Francisco, CA <http://www.farallonrestaurant.com/pinotfest.html>

12-13 November 2005, iSalud! McMinnville and Portland, OR. World premier of Oregon's finest Pinot noir. Winemakers from the state's foremost wineries will debut the 2004 vintage at this benefit for Oregon's seasonal vineyard workers and their families. <http://www.saludauction.org>

3-4 March 2006, World of Pinot Noir. The Cliffs Resort, Shell Beach, CA www.worldofpinotnoir.com/

25-26 March 2006, 2nd Annual Pinot Paradise, Santa Cruz Mountains, www.scmwa.com

29 April 2006, 3rd Annual Pinnacles Wine Festival, Inn at the Pinnacles, Soledad, CA <http://www.innatthepinnacles.com>

23-25 June 2006, 2nd Annual Pinot Days Festival, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA <http://www.pinotdays.com/>

28-30 July 2006, 20th Annual International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC), McMinnville, OR <http://www.ipnc.org/>

[Click Here](#) for a complete list of Pinot Wine Festivals.

Apple Valley Pinot Noirs

Apple Valley Wine Regions

History

The Russians settled in Sonoma at Fort Ross in 1812 and planted European grapes. Thought to be the first California commercial grape vines, the Russians settlers supplied wine to the Alaskan fur traders.

Phylloxera and Prohibition put an end to the grape growing in the area. Apples became the crop of the area until 1970 when people like Rodney Strong, Barry and Audrey Sterling of Iron Horse Vineyards and the ranching/farming Dutton family began planting grapes.

Located only 10 miles from the Pacific Ocean and 50 miles north of San Francisco, the cooling sea breezes and drifting fog influence Green Valley. Fog flows in from the Pacific Coast along the Russian River and through the Petaluma Wind Gap. Tending to be cooler at night, Green Valley remains cooler in the morning longer than most of Sonoma County.

Three to five million years ago part of the valley was an inland sea which flowed to the Pacific leaving fine sandy soils such as the Goldridge. The Goldridge soil makes up approximately 60% of the Green Valley soil. This Goldridge mix of sandy loam over sandstone and clay drains very well.

Today

Today Green Valley contains 1200 acres in vineyards with ten wineries and over 25 growers. Wild turkeys vie with the growers for the grapes. The people here love their region and are very proud of their Pinot Noir wines. Marimar Torres described 2005 as a "high drama" year. She wrote, "Cold weather brought frost in April; a wet and warm spring with record rainfall in May and June encourages mildew and early botrytis; and harvest never seemed to arrive. In early September, the fog was so thick the sun made only a brief appearance each afternoon, leading many of us to fear the grapes would never ripen! Then suddenly, everything was ready and we had to pick within an 18-straight-day period."

She went on to say, "This year's fruit was in excellent shape — juicy and soft with thin skins. No heat spikes throughout the 2005 growing season facilitated long hang times and slow flavor maturation. . . . Tasting the wines after fermentation, the Pinot Noirs show an inky color, rich mouth feel, and bright cherry/blackberry flavors."

I have found all these words in descriptions of Green Valley Pinot Noir: Black cherries, blueberries, blackberries, black plum, raspberries, cranberries, candied red fruit, lilacs, roses, Asian spice, spice, cinnamon, star fruit, anise, cola, black tea, vanilla, and forest floor. Sounds like good stuff doesn't it? Bob Bath, Master Sommelier, described the Green Valley Pinots as having "classic dark cherry, ripe plum and rich earth coupled with a beautiful structure that gives them a definite sense of class."



Green Valley Wineries

Dutton Ranch. Warren and Gail Dutton planted apples and Chardonnay grapes in the early 1960s and named their first parcel of land Dutton Ranch. Today Gail and their two sons, Steve and Joe continue to farm the ranch with 1150 acres of grapes and 150 acres of apples within the Green Valley, Russian River Valley and Sonoma Coast appellations.

Dutton-Goldfield. Steve & Theresa Dutton and Dan & Loie Goldfield started their winery in 1998 and make Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Steve manages the grape growing at his family's Dutton Ranch and Dan makes the wine. www.duttongoldfield.com

Dutton Estate. Joe and Tracy Dutton founded their winery in 1995. Joe manages the vineyards at his family's Dutton Ranch and Tracy works with their winemaker Mat Gustafson in making their Pinot Noirs. Tracy's great-grandparents began farming apples in the Green Valley area in the 1920s. www.sebastopolvineyards.com

goldridgepinot. Devoted exclusively to Pinot Noir, Brice Cutrer Jones named his new vineyard and winery for the principal soil of Green Valley. Brice, formerly of Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards, purchased Don and Marcia Hallberg's 115 acres of prime apple orchard in 1999 to start goldridgepinot. Don Blackburn makes the wine and Kirk Lokka manages the vineyard. They began wine production in 2004. www.goldridgepinot.com

Hartford Family Wines. Don and Jennifer Hartford produce two labels: Hartford and Hartford Court. The winery specializes in single-vineyard Pinot Noirs, Chardonnay and old-vine Zinfandel. Mike Sullivan makes the wines. <http://www.hartfordwines.com>

Iron Horse Vineyards. Audrey and Barry Sterling and Forrest Tancer began their partnership in 1979. In 1990 Forrest married the Sterling's daughter Joy. Today, Joy, her brother Lawrence and his wife Tracy take an active part in the winery. Best known for their sparkling wines, the Sterling-Tracer family also makes excellent Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. www.ironhorsevineyards.com



Joy Sterling

Marimar Torres Estate.

Marimar Torres started planting her vineyards in 1986. The Don Miguel Vineyard — named after her late Father, today



Marimar Torres and Bob Bath, Master Sommelier, addressing a tasting at Marimar Estate

comprises 30 acres each of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. She planted the vineyards totally in the European style with a planting density of 2000 vines per acre. A beautiful winery to visit, she designed her state-of-the-art winery after a Catalan farmhouse. www.MarimarEstate.com

Orogeny Vineyards. The geological term orogeny comes from Greek oro, mountain, and—geny, birth. Collisions of the earth's crust that form mountains make up the process called orogeny. The last orogenic episode in Sonoma County created Green Valley, therefore the name Orogeny Vineyards. The Dutton family custom grow the grapes for Orogeny Vineyard. Dan Goldfield is the winemaker. <http://www.rogenyvineyards.com>

Tandem. Started recently by Greg Bjornstad and Greg La Follette, Tandem only makes Pinot Noir. The two Gregs met at UC Davis and then worked together at Flowers Vineyard, where they shared the Artesian/Winery of the year award by Wine & Spirits in both 1999 and 2000. Greg La Follette makes the wine, while Greg Bjornstad manages the vineyards and assists with the winemaking. www.tandemwinery.com

Other small wineries in the Green Valley area include: Dutch Bill Creek Winery, Freeman Vineyard & Winery, Lynmar Winery, Martinelli Vineyards & Winery, Patz & Hall Wine Company, Scherrer Winery and Walker Station.



Hartford Family Wines

Pinot Noir

Carneros (Napa)	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Acacia Vineyard Beckstoffer Los Amigos Vineyard	2003	45	88	Dense black cherry color with aromas of earthy black berries and black pepper. Velvety raspberries in the mouth.
Beaulieu Vineyard	2003	18	86	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of raspberry. Silky mouth feel
Carneros (Sonoma)	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Paul Hobbs Winery Hyde Vineyard	2003	70	93	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of forest floor and black cherry. Asian spices and dark fruit in the mouth.
Etude	2003	40	90	Medium intensity, cherry color with aromas of black cherry, ginger and raspberry. Silky, subtle tannins in the mouth. Nice aftertaste.
Green Valley	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Willowbrook Cellars Owl Ridge Vineyard	2003	40	94	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of black cherries and forest floor. Earthy, woody dark fruit in the mouth.
Hartford Court Arrendell Vineyard	2003		92	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of white pepper and black cherry. Velvety in the mouth with tastes of black currant, figs, nutmeg and cloves.
Marimar Estate Don Miguel Vineyard "Cristina"	2002	47	92	Dark cherry color with aromas of blackberry and cigar box. Soft rich tannins and a great finish.
Orogeny	2003	22.50	92	Intense black cherry color with aromas of earth, forest floor, black currant and black cherry. Tastes of earthy dark fruit and mushrooms.
Marimar Estate Earthquake Block	2003	42	91	Dense black cherry color with earthy, forest floor black cherry and chocolate. Velvety in the mouth with hints of tea and a lovely finish.
Willowbrook Cellars Dutton Morelli Vineyard	2003	42	90	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of cherries and strawberries.
Marimar Estate Don Miguel Vineyard	2001	35	89	Light intensity with a ruby-garnet color. Aromas of Asian spice, raspberry and cherry. Velvety in the mouth.
Tandem Keefer Ranch	2002	34	89	Aromas of Asian spices, forest floor and red fruit. Tastes of creamy red fruit.
Tandem Keefer Ranch	2003	43	87	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of cranberry and spice. Tastes of spice, vanilla and dark fruit.
Iron Horse Estate	2003	30	86	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Earthy black cherry aromas with silky dark fruit flavors.

Russian River Valley	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Old World Winery Laughlin Vineyard	2001		93	Dense black cherry color with earthy, forest floor black currant aromas. Velvety dark fruit in the mouth.
Old World Winery Potter Valley	2002		91	Medium intensity cherry color with cherry aromas. Silky and spicy cherries in the mouth.
Merry Edwards Wines Klopp Ranch	2002	48	91	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Earthy black cherry aromas with silky dark fruit flavors.
Chasseur Wines	2003	30	90	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of black cherries and roses.
Dutton Estate Thomas Road	2003	50	89	Dense black cherry color with aromas of earthy black cherries. Tastes of gamey, earthy black cherry.
Dutton-Goldfield Winery Sanchietti Vineyard	2003	35	89	Dense ruby color with aromas of Black cherries and roses. Tastes of earthy dark fruit with a spicy finish.
Aubin Cellars Vinehill Road	2003	30	89	Light intensity with a black cherry color. Earthy black cherry aromas.
Halleck Vineyard Three Sons Cuvee	2004	38	87	Medium intensity with a black cherry color.
Sonoma	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Chateau St Jean	2003	19	88	Medium intensity, cherry color with Asian spice and earthy cherries. Spicy red fruit tastes with a nice after-taste.
Sonoma Coast	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Peters Family Winery Dunah	2004		92	Barrel Sample: medium intensity with cherry color. Aromas of earthy black cherries.
Freeman Vineyard & Winery Akiko's Vineyard	2003		89	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Aromas of cranberry and cherry. Smooth red fruit in the mouth.
Copland CREEK Estate	2002	30	88	Medium intensity with a black cherry color. Floral black currant aromas. Silky red fruit in the mouth.
Freeman Vineyard & Winery	2003	34	87	Medium intensity cherry color with earthy forest floor and black currant aromas. Smooth red fruit in the mouth.
Annapolis Winery	2003	42	87	Medium intensity, cherry color with aromas of Asian Spice and black cherry. Tastes of earthy, red fruit and a lovely aftertaste.

Pinot Gris

Carneros (Napa)	Year	Price	Rank	Description
Etude	2004	24	92	Bright light intensity yellow-green color with aromas of tropical fruit and spice. Great long lasting flavor.

Subsequent Newsletters: My next newsletter covers Canada's beautiful Okanagan Valley in British Columbia.

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