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Wine of the week: Foursight, 2012 Charles Vineyard, Anderson Valley, Clone 05 Pinot Noir



BY PEG MELNIK
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our pinot noirs are below 14% alcohol," Webb said. "We aim to pick at the right time so we do little to nothing to alter the wine in the cellar, staying true to pinot noir and its ability to seduce even the most jaded wine drinker."

What gives this pinot the edge is its depth of flavor with bright, tangy fruit. It has a gorgeous melding of flavors – cherry and cranberry – buoyed with crisp acidity. It also has a tasty undercurrent of roasted herbs and cracked black pepper. It's complex and focused.

Asked what's the most challenging part of making pinot noir, Webb replied: "Doing nothing."

"Pinot noir has to be picked at the right time and handled very gently or it can come out tasting like any other generic red wine," he said. "Being able to know when to stand back and let the natural processes happen can be tough for winemakers."

Webb began his wine odyssey when he was at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo.

"My now-wife, Kristy Charles, and I were out wine tasting," he explained. "We stopped at Talley Vineyards in Arroyo Grande and had its current release of Rosemary's Vineyard Pinot Noir. It was my first taste of what a really well-made pinot noir could be. We loved it so much we spent more money than either of us had on a bottle to give to her parents as a gift."

Their college budget couldn't stretch enough for them to afford a bottle for themselves, and they still joke about that fact. Webb recalls this pricey pinot adventure as a nudge to make classy pinot noir.

"It was an eye-opening experience that led to many more purchases, trips and eventually a career making pinot noir," he said.

Webb is a co-founder and winemaker of Foursight Wines in Boonville.

The most gratifying part of making a prized pinot noir, Webb said, is uncorking a bottle.

When it comes to making pinot noir, Joe Webb is a minimalist.

Webb is the co-vintner and winemaker behind our wine-of-the-week winner – the Foursight, 2012 Charles Vineyard, Anderson Valley, Clone 05 Pinot Noir at \$49.

"We are very minimal-input and most of

"Seeing that 'ah-ha moment' on a customer's face when they finally understand what a great pinot can be -- that mix of beautiful fruit, fresh acidity, elegance, balance and complexity," Webb said. "It's magical for a winemaker."

Wine writer Peg Melnik can be reached at 707-521-5310 or peg.melnik@pressdemocrat.com.

Wine of the Week: Scouting for the tastiest red wines.

Wine writer Peg Melnik had a blind tasting this week of impressive reds, with pinot noirs, cabernet sauvignons, Bordeaux red blends and zinfandels in the mix. It was a top-tier line-up with some striking contenders, including the Paysage Bordeaux red blend and the Carlisle zin. Our wine-of-the-week winner is the Foursight, 2012 Charles Vineyard, Anderson Valley, Clone 05 Pinot Noir at \$46. It edged out the others in the flight because both because it's a knockout and because it's in good supply.

TOP PICK

Foursight, 2012 Charles Vineyard, Anderson Valley, Clone 05 Pinot Noir, 13.9 percent alcohol, \$49. ★★★★★1/2 What gives this pinot the edge is its depth of flavor with bright, tangy fruit. It has a gorgeous melding of flavors – cherry and cranberry – buoyed with crisp acidity. It also has a tasty undercurrent of roasted herbs and cracked black pepper. Finally, the pinot has excellent balance. Stunning.

OTHER IMPRESSIVE WINES

Lasseter Family Winery's Paysage, 2011 Sonoma Valley, Sonoma County 14.8 percent, \$52. ★★★★★1/2 This is a striking Bordeaux red blend with a great concentration of fruit that appeals to the hedonist in all of us. It has aromas and flavors of ripe plum, toasty oak and pepper. Here's the brilliant breakdown: 42 percent merlot; 30, cabernet sauvignon; 25, malbec; and 3, cabernet franc. It's a generous blend. Impressive.

Carlisle, 2012 Saitone Vineyard, Russian River Valley, Sonoma County Zinfandel, 15.7 percent, \$46. ★★★★★1/2 This is a class-act zinfandel with full-throttle fruit and snappy spice. What sets this zin apart is its irresistible black raspberry fruit, layered with licorice and cracked black pepper. It has great complexity, and it's edgy. A zinfandel-lover's zin.

Monte Volpe, 2011 Aglianico Mendocino County, 14.5 percent, \$28. ★★★★★1/2 This is a smoky, earthy wine with notes of dried plums, ripe boysenberry and spicy oak. It has ripe tannins and a lingering finish. Exotic.

MacRostie, 2012 Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir, 14.5 percent, \$34. ★★★★★ This is a tasty pinot noir, crisp and lively. It has bright cherry fruit and a hint of pomegranate, with mushroom and cinnamon in the mix. It has great structure and balance, yet manages to have a lush texture. Lovely.