



**Review Round-Up –| October 2007**

**Paul Hobbs Lindsay Estate Vineyard 2005 Russian River Valley**

As big, as bold and as dramatically oaky as any of this month's Pinot Noir, this bottling is never less than immensely fruity and shrugs off the effects of its hard-charging ripeness. It is a wine clearly concerned more rich richness than manners, and does not now nor ever will claim great elegance for its own, but its compelling flavors of sweet cherries and cream are so very easy to like. Needless to say, one would want to pick something equally rich and savory as its mealtime mate such as juicy lamb or beef dishes.

**91 Points**

**Soter North Valley Oregon 2005**

Tony Soter earns high credit for this stylish, serious Pinot Noir that succeeds without the least resort to ripeness as a prop to youthful fruit. The wine is balanced and very keenly focused on dark cherries with touches of walnut and loam for complexity and the complementary support of creamy oak. It is firm without being hard in feel and it has a supple edge that promises to grow over time as tannin diminishes.

**90 Points**

**Toad Hill Lavender Hill Carneros 2005**

Scents sweet black cherries mingle with those of caramel and vanilla and quiet notes of briar in the inviting aromas of this slow-to-unfold Pinot, and, if a little less than exuberantly fruity on the palate, the wine follows on with rich, well-extracted flavors that stay in step. Drying tannins come on a little strong at the finish just now, but the taste of cherries does manage to stay focus, and the wine's youthful astringency encourages at least a couple of years of aging.

**88 Points**

**Willakenzie Willamette Valley 2005**

A touch of dried brush and wet clay sit off to the edge of well-ripened cherries in the less-than-keenly-defined aromas of this wine and the modest measure of fruit in the mouth is cut short by the narrowing acids that come to define the wine's angular and slightly curt finish.

**85 Points**

**Domaine Serene Cote Sud Vineyard 2004 Willamette Valley**

Very bright, very clean and constructed in a slightly leaner style with its fresh, green-apple fruit underlain by touches of minerals and chalk, this bottling is graced by subtle oak spice and will find its champions chiefly among those who hold to the belief that less is more.

**87 Points**

### **Ramey Russian River Valley 2005**

The best of Ramey's three new appellation bottlings starts out with attention-getting aromas of sweet cream, caramel and lots of very deep and keenly defined ripe-apple fruit, and its beautifully composed flavors are likewise appointed with plentiful fruit and filled out with lovely oak. As well-balanced as it is so very rich, it shows terrific latter-palate extension with its very finely fit acids bringing brightness and length.

**93 Points**

### **Ramey Carneros District 2005**

Yet another deep and generously filled working with a fine fit of keenly defined fruit and sweet barrel-spice, this layered and well-balanced wine again exhibits plenty of substance without being the least bit beholden to ripeness. Its integral acids, lend a note of verve and tension to its rich and long-lasting finish.

**91 Points**

### **Ramey Sonoma Coast 2005**

While there is a fair bit of ripe fruit at work in this wine, there is never so much nor is it as well-defined as either of the other Ramey releases, and the wine is seemingly at odds with itself at the moment being both a bit fat at the front and slightly tight and almost austere at the end. Time may work in its favor, but the prognosis is less certain here, and, in the end, this one holds the shortest straw of the trio.

**87 Points**

### **Seven Heavenly Chards Lodi 2006**

Simple themes of pears and ripe apples are the mainstay of this up-front youngster, and there is fruit enough around at the end to make the wine's last-minute coarseness a moot point. Complexity may not be in offing, but a bit of smoothing is, and we can see the benefit of another six to twelve months.

**86 Points**

### **Stuhlmuller Estate Alexander Valley 2005**

It requires a moment before this wine's appley fruit pushes past the intense toastiness that takes the lead in the nose, but push through it does and claims center stage in the nicely composed flavors that follow. Both well-ripened and briskly balanced with nary a hint of extraneous fat, the wine displays fine fruity depth with a sense of real stamina that bodes well for keeping.

**91 points**

### **Summers Alexander Valley 2006**

Here is a direct and moderately fruity Chardonnay whose easy mix of candied apples, pears and lightly laid-on oak makes it thoroughly likeable wine in its youth. It lacks the kind of depth or potency that are the predictors for appreciable improvement with aging.

**86 Points**