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THE ULTIMATE BURGUNDY REFERENCE

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**Statement of Principles**

It is important that readers understand how I collect and evaluate the information that is reported in the pages of **Burghound.com** (the tasting notes and information are the sole responsibility of the author).

- I am personally responsible for all of my business expenses without exception. This includes airfare, hotels and effectively all of my meals. The purpose is as clear as it is simple: No conflicts of interest. *I do not accept nor do I seek any subsidy, in any form, from anybody.*
- Sample bottles are accepted for evaluation and commentary, much as book reviewers accept advance copies of new releases. I insist, however, that these sample bottles represent the final wines to be sold under that particular label.
- Finished, bottled wines are assigned scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel, however, are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished product.
- Wines are evaluated within the context of their *appellations*. Simply put, that means I expect a *grand cru* Burgundy to reflect its exalted status.

While the concept of *terroir* remains a controversial issue in the opinion of many people, it is not controversial to the Burgundian mindset—or to me, either. I attempt to convey, where appropriate, how certain wines are particularly good, or particularly bad, at expressing their underlying *terroir*. This is admittedly a difficult thing, rightly open to discussion among the Burgundians themselves, never mind an outside observer such as myself. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to great Burgundy. Mere "hedonism" is just that: empty pleasure seeking. Burgundy can deliver so much more—if it is asked.

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## A Brief Word About Scores:

Numerical scores are endlessly debated among wine lovers. Inevitably, critics tend to emphasize certain characteristics at the expense of others. What follows is an explication of scores at **Burghound.com** and the underlying taste values they reflect.

Simply put, Burgundies that emphasize purity, elegance, overall balance and a clear expression of the underlying *terroir* are rated more highly than Burgundies that don't deliver these qualities. Other important characteristics include typicity, richness, balanced extraction, length and harmony. For example, a Volnay should taste like a Volnay and a *grand cru* should deliver a *grand cru* drinking experience.

The score is a summation of the taster's thoughts about a wine. It does not actually express those thoughts. Clearly, a mere number cannot fully represent the nuanced, detailed impression conveyed by a tasting note.

Please note: Wines are scored based on their expected quality at peak drinkability. Many *grands crus* that will, I believe, "be" a 92 may not necessarily taste like a 92-point wine when young, thanks to the tannins or general inaccessibility.

Wines rated 90 points or above are worth a special effort to find and cellar. Wines rated 85 or above are recommended, **especially among regional and villages level wines**. There will be relatively few 90+ point wines, simply because there are relatively few outstanding and superlative wines. Finished, bottled wines are assigned specific scores as these wines are market-ready. Wines tasted from barrel are scored within a range. This reflects the reality that a wine tasted from barrel is not a finished, market-ready product.

<b>95 – 100:</b>	<b>Truly incomparable and emotionally thrilling.</b> A wine so rated is as good as Burgundy gets. By definition, it is reference standard for its <i>appellation</i> .
<b>90 – 94:</b>	<b>Outstanding.</b> Worth a special effort to purchase and cellar and will provide memorable drinking experiences.
<b>85 – 89:</b>	<b>Good to High quality.</b> Burgundies that offer solid quality in every respect and generally very good typicity. "Good Value" wines will often fall into this category. Worth your attention.
<b>80 – 84:</b>	<b>Average to Good quality.</b> The wine is "correct", displays no noticeable flaws and will provide pleasing, if straightforward, drinking.
<b>76 – 79:</b>	<b>Barely Acceptable quality.</b> The wine is not worth your attention nor is it a good value.
<b>75 and Below:</b>	<b>Don't Bother.</b> A wine with noticeable, irremediable flaws.

## Estimated Maturities:

Estimating a window of when any given Burgundy will be at its peak is an extremely difficult thing to do with precision. The time frames that you see after the score is my best estimate as to when any given wine will likely be at its best. This is of course simply an educated guess about how the wine will evolve and assumes that the wine will have been responsibly shipped and stored, which as long-time collectors know is not always the case. Just as importantly, the time suggested windows are based on how I personally prefer my Burgundies. This effectively means that for reds, there is still obvious freshness and vibrancy remaining to both the fruit and the flavors and while the tannic structure will be largely resolved, it by no means suggests that a completely smooth palate will exist devoid of any firmness. Especially tannic and or concentrated wines will necessarily have wider windows for obvious reasons. For whites, the windows are designed to indicate that point at which youthful fruit has passed into secondary nuances with more fully developed complexity as well as when the textures have rounded out and the sometimes pointed acidity has mellowed. Important note: what the estimated maturities do NOT suggest is how long a wine will remain structurally sound and still capable of providing some enjoyment as many Burgundies are capable of remarkably long periods of graceful decline; however, beyond a certain point they will have passed their peaks and should be drunk, no matter how intellectually interesting they may be. As with anything this subjective, there is no substitute for your own experience and I offer these estimated maturities as a general guideline, not gospel and as the saying goes, your mileage may vary.

## The 288 Producers Reviewed in This Issue

### Chablis:

Barat, Michel  
Bessin, Jean-Claude  
Billaud-Simon  
Brocard, Jean-Marc  
Chablisiènne, La  
Chardonnay, du  
Chenevières  
Collet, Jean  
Damppt, Daniel  
Damppt, Sébastien  
Damppt, Vincent  
Dauvissat, Jean & Sébastien  
Dauvissat, Vincent  
Defaix, Bernard  
Droin, Jean-Paul et Benoit  
Duplessis, Gérard  
Durup, Jean/Chateau de Maligy/  
de L'Eglantière  
Fèvre, William  
Goisot, Ghislaine et Jean-Hughes  
Grossot, Jean-Pierre  
Laroche  
Long-Depaquit  
Malandes, des  
Michel, Louis  
Moreau, Christian  
Picq, Gilbert  
Pinson Frères  
Pommier, Denis  
Raveneau, François  
Savary, Olivier  
Séguinot-Bordet  
Servin  
Tremblay, Gérard  
Tribut, Laurent  
Vrignaud

### Mâconnais:

Aladame, Stéphane  
Barraud, Daniel  
Cordier, Roger/Christophe  
Fuissé, Château de  
Guffens-Heynen  
Lafon, Héritiers des Comtes  
Lassarat, Roger  
Merlin, Olivier  
Rijckaert, Jean  
Robert-Denogent  
Rontets, Château de  
Saumaize-Michelin

Soufrandière/Brett Bros  
Thibert Père et Fils  
Verget, Maison

### Côte Chalonnaise:

Aladame, Stéphane  
Cellier aux Moines  
Chamirey, Château de  
Dureuil-Janthial, Vincent  
Ferté, de la  
Folie, de la  
Jacqueson, Henri et Paul  
Jaeger-Defaix  
Joblot  
Juillot, Michel  
Meix-Foulot, du  
Mercey, Château de  
Ninot  
Raquillet, François  
Rodet, Antonin  
Rully, Château de  
Salomon, Clos  
de Villaine, A. & P.

### En Plus:

Boyer-Martenot  
Felton Road  
Heart & Hands Wine Co.  
Jessiaume  
Kumeu River  
Perdrix, des  
Ramonet  
Vedeau, Maison Maurel  
Vougeraie, de la

### Champagne:

Aubry  
Bara, Paul  
Barnaut  
Beauchamp  
Berèche et Fils, Champagne  
Billiot Fils, H.  
Bollinger  
Bonnaire  
Canard-Duchêne  
Chartogne-Taillet  
Chassey, Guy de  
Chiquet, Gastin  
Clouet, Paul  
Corbon, Claude

Comte Audoin de  
Dampierre  
Coquille, Stephane  
Delamotte  
Dhondt, José  
Diebolt-Vallois  
Doquet, Pascal  
Dumont et Fils, R.  
Fourny et Fils, Veuve  
Geoffroy, René  
Gimonnet, Pierre  
Gobillard, Bruno  
Godmé Père et Fils  
Gonet-Médeville  
Goutorbe, Henri  
Hébrart, Marc  
Henriot  
Jacquesson  
Laherte Frères  
Lallement, Jean  
Lamiable  
Lassaingne, Jacques  
Lasalle  
Lavalle, Georges  
Le Brun Servenay  
Leclair-Gaspard  
Lenoble, A.R.  
Lilbert-Fils  
A. Margaine  
Marguet Père & Fils  
Michel et Fils, José  
Milan, Jean  
Moncuit, Pierre  
Morlet, Pierre  
Moutardier  
Pehu-Simonet  
Peters, Pierre  
Philipponnat  
Pol Roger  
Prévost, Jérôme  
Saint-Chamant  
Salon  
Savès, Camille  
Selosse, Jacques  
Soutiran, Alan  
Taittinger  
Triolet, Thierry  
Varnier-Fannière  
Vazart-Coquart & Fils  
Vilmart & Cie  
Vouette et Sorbée

### California Pinot Noir:

Adelaida Cellars (35)  
Adrian Fog Winery  
Alesia Vineyards (35)  
Alma Rosa Winery (35)  
Alta Maria Vineyards (35)  
Ampelos Cellars  
Ancien Wines (35)  
Anglim Winery  
Ant Hill Farms  
Arcadian Winery  
Arisa Jane  
Arista Wines (and 35)  
Aubert Wines  
Au Bon Climat  
August West  
Baileyana Winery  
Benziger Family Winery  
Big Basin Vineyards  
Black Kite Cellars  
Black Ridge Vineyards  
Bonaccorsi Wine Co  
Breggo Cellars  
Brewer-Clifton  
Brophy Clark Cellars  
Buena-Vista  
Bybee Vineyards  
Cadre Vineyards  
Calera Wine Co (35)  
Campion Wines  
Carmel Road Winery  
Carr Vineyards (35)  
C. Donatiello Winery  
Ceritas Wines  
Chateau St. Jean  
Cima Colina  
Clary Ranch (35)  
Clendenen Family Vineyards  
Clos Pegase  
Clos Pepe Estate (35)  
Cobb Vineyards  
Copain Wines  
Coterie Cellars  
Cuvaision Estate Wines  
Cycles Gladiator  
Dain Wines (35)  
Davis Bynum Winery  
Dehlinger Winery  
DeLoach Vineyards  
Derbès Wines  
Dierberg Estate (35)  
Donum Estate (35)  
Dutton-Goldfield (and 35)  
El Molino Winery  
Eric Kent Wine Cellars  
Estancia Estates  
Etude Wines  
Evening Land Vineyards  
Expression Wines 39°  
Failla  
Fess Parker Winery

Flowers Vineyard  
Fog Dog  
Foursight Wines  
Foxen Winery & Vineyard  
Freeman Vineyard  
Freestone Vineyards (35)  
Fulcrum Wines  
Furthermore Wines  
Gainey Vineyard  
Gary Farrell Vineyards  
Goldeneye Winery (35)  
Grey Stack Cellars  
Hahn Estates  
Halleck Vineyard  
Hanzell Vineyards  
Harrington Wines  
Hartley-Ostini /Hitching Post  
Hirsch Vineyards  
Jim Ball Vineyards  
J Vineyards & Winery  
Keller Estate Winery  
Ken Brown Wines  
Kendric Vineyards  
Kenneth Volk Vineyards  
Kistler Vineyards  
Kosta Browne Winery  
Kutch Wines  
Kynsi Winery  
La Crema (35)  
Laetitia Vineyard  
La Fenêtre (35)  
Landmark (and 35)  
Lane Tanner  
L'Angevin/Pierson Meyer  
Lattanzio Wines  
Littorai Vineyards  
Longoria Wines  
Lucienne Vineyards  
J. Lynne Wines  
MacMurray Ranch (35)  
MacPhail Family Wines  
MacRostie Winery  
Mahoney Vineyards  
Marcassin  
Martin Alfaro Winery  
Martinelli Winery (35)  
Matanzas Creek Winery  
Mayro-Murdick Wines  
McIntyre Vineyards  
Melville Vineyards  
Mercy Vineyards  
Morgan Winery  
Ojai Vineyard (35)  
Olson Ogden Wines  
Orsi Papale Wines (35)  
Ortman Family  
Owen Roe  
Pahlmeyer  
Pali Wine Co.  
Papapietro Perry (35)  
Patz & Hall Wine Co.  
Paul Lato Wines (35)

Paul Mathew Vineyards  
Pey-Lucia Vineyards  
Pey-Marin Vineyards  
Phillips Hill Estates  
Pillow Rd. Vineyard  
Prodigal Wines  
Radio-Coteau (35)  
Red Car Wine Company  
Rhys Vineyards  
Riverbench Vineyard  
Rivers-Marie  
Robert Sinskey  
Robert Stemmler  
Rochioli Vineyards  
Rodney Strong  
Roessler Cellars  
Rossi-Wallace  
Rusack Vineyards  
Saintsbury  
Samsara Wine Co.  
Sand Hill Wines  
Sandford Winery  
Savannah-Chanelle  
Scherrer Winery (and 35)  
Sequana Vineyards  
Siduri Wines  
Signorello Vineyards  
Small Vines Wines  
Sojourn Cellars  
Sonoma Coast  
Sonoma-Cutrer (35)  
Spell Winery (35)  
Summerland Winery  
Talbot Vineyards  
Talisman Cellars  
Tandem Winery  
Tantara Winery  
Terlato Family Vineyards  
Testarossa Winery  
Thomas Fogarty Winery  
Thorne  
Three Saints Vineyard  
TR Elliott  
TreViti Wines  
Twomey Cellars  
Tyler Winery  
Valerie's Vineyard  
Vergari Wines  
Walter Hansel Winery (35)  
Wild Horse Winery  
Williams-Selyem  
Windsor Sonoma Winery  
Windy Oaks Estate

# **California Pinot Noir - 2007**

## **With Other Current Releases from 2005 and 2006**

What is indisputably clear from tasting hundreds of examples from the 2007 vintage in California over the last four months is how aromatically pure, and clean, the fruit is. The wines are appealingly fresh, easy to like and understand, expressive and fruit-forward, already approachable, concentrated, generally lower in alcohol than several of the preceding vintages, possess excellent transparency and as a result, the overall balance is typically quite good. Critical praise has, not surprisingly, been extremely high and almost uniformly positive, even gushing. By contrast, I run the risk of being a bit of a wet blanket in this blizzard of huzzahs as I am less convinced that 2007 is a genuinely great vintage. Very good to excellent, certainly, but truly great? I don't believe so.

So, you might reasonably ask, "With this many positive things going for it, what's not to like about the vintage?" Well, there are a few things, admittedly mostly minor but worth keeping in mind as you read the reviews below and plan your buying strategy. For one thing, there are too many wines that have monochromatic aromatic profiles; no, this is not an indirect reference to the limited clonal palette some winemakers are "painting" with but literally to a more compressed set of aromas than I am used to seeing.

The second concern is where things that are normally attributes in my eyes can cut both ways. I noted above that in 2007, alcohols are generally lower and that there is very good transparency (read more expressive of site character). Unfortunately, among those wineries which elected to push the ripeness levels, the alcoholic warmth is even more noticeable than usual. And with the higher transparency, even alcohol levels that would normally be considered within the realm of the reasonable, which is to say 14% to 14.5%, can still impart a sense of backend warmth, even if it's discreet.

Those aspects though are about the only flies in the ointment because the other side of the coin is that 2007 is wonderfully consistent. As with any large review encompassing hundreds of wines (no matter where they are from), there are always a few disappointments. The good news though is that in 2007, there aren't very many and while there are also not very many great wines (above 93 points), there are more in the 89 to 92 point range than I have ever seen before.

As it turns out, I am not alone in my concerns about the future development of the 2007s. Given how positive the press has been, I did not expect the number of winemakers who would also voice concern. I did a number of interviews discussing the quality of the 2007 vintage and the viewpoints were similar to what I have outlined above, which is to say very positive in most respects save for comments regarding the relatively narrow aromatic profiles. I was quite surprised by another observation made by a number of the winemakers, who said that while 2007 was a much more consistent vintage, 2008 was more interesting. Given that some vineyards were hit by frost and others, according to some I spoke to, by smoke from nearby forest fires, one has to wonder if it's possible. Still, I find the comments interesting because several winemakers were quite emphatic about their viewpoints. Several other winemakers suggested that 2005 was not only more interesting but would be significantly longer-lived and one winemaker even averred that 2006 was better, which also surprised me.

Irrespective as to whether 2007 is very good, excellent or great, one thing that is not in doubt is that the wines are already a pleasure to drink. The aromatics, even if as noted are not brilliant, the fruit is pure, ripe and clean and the delicious flavors possess good dry extract levels, which confers a seductive mouth feel to the balanced, sappy and generally harmonious finishes. One of the aspects that I particularly like is that there are relatively few wines that were "pushed" to be over ripe. In fact, several winemakers went so far as to say that anyone who had alcohols above 14.5% "did so deliberately, not because they needed to in order to have the necessary phenolic ripeness." Either way, 2007 simply does not have the extreme ripeness levels achieved by some in 2004 or 2005.

Given that the vintage character is very much in the middle, e.g. neither under ripe nor over ripe, the fruit is largely red in nature with some blue fruit, in particular plum and blue pinot but rarely does it run to black fruit. The red fruits typically are comprised of cranberry, pomegranate, cherry, raspberry, strawberry and of course red pinot. When floral characters are present, it's often more in the vein of violet than rose petal, though some wines do display the latter as well. There are wines that evidence herbal characteristics but this is not common in 2007.

You might expect that the colors of a cooler vintage might be on the lighter side, or at least less deep. That is not my conclusion based on the large number of wines in this review. I inquired about this aspect and most winemakers attributed it to the thicker skins with elevated levels of anthocyanins. Readers should note though that the typical '07 is not as deeply hued as the typical '04 but it is certainly deeper than the typical '06.

As to potential longevity, I believe that the '07s are going to surprise collectors. I say this because the better wines have ample amounts of dry extract, which always tends to render the supporting structural elements, in particular tannins, less evident. The extract is also what is creating the impression of early accessibility and thus, drinkability. I suspect that many

wines will be consumed in their youth precisely because they are presently fruit forward and agreeable. Despite the fact that I believe 2007 should age well, I doubt that it will make the same old bones as the best of the '05s.

If you enjoy aged pinot, then the key question to answer is whether the aromatic complexity is going to improve with cellar time. My sense is that it will certainly improve, primarily because the average 2007 is so well-balanced. Couple this balance with good dry extract levels and you at least have a potential combination for a significant improvement in both aromatic and flavor complexity.

In addition to the consistency, transparency and balanced wines that 2007 produced, perhaps my favorite aspect of the vintage is that it allowed winemakers to pick phenolically ripe fruit at somewhere between half a degree and a full degree lower potential alcohols. This obviously makes them more balanced as well as notably more food friendly and it's also one of the reasons that they are so pleasant to drink already, which is to say that the first glass makes you feel like having a second.

To sum up 2007, it's an elegant, clean, pure and ripe vintage that produced balanced and age-worthy wines that deserve a place in your cellars. This 6<sup>th</sup> annual review of California pinot noir is the largest one that I have done with some 175 producers. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to each and every participating winery. And be sure to take a close look at the largest list of Burghound Selections for US pinot that I have yet chosen as you will find some terrific values as well as some top flight pinots.

Here are two sample California reviews from issue 36 (wines receiving a ➡ are particularly outstanding and especially merit your attention:

**Scherrer Winery (Sebastopol, CA)**

<b>2007 ➡ Pinot Noir – Big Brother</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>2007 ➡ Pinot Noir – Hallberg Vineyard</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>2007 ➡ Pinot Noir – Platt Vineyard</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>2007 Pinot Noir – Russian River Valley</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2007 Pinot Noir – Sonoma County</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>89</b>

I have greatly admired and followed the wines of Fred Scherrer since he was the winemaker for Tom Dehlinger and subsequently went out on his own with his first vintage in 1991 and then with Scherrer Winery became his full-time occupation since 1998. These are elegant, pure and sexy pinots crafted in a traditional yet opulent, rich and full-bodied style. The reds are bottled without fining and filtration and with minimal SO<sub>2</sub>. It's well worth signing up for Scherrer's mailing list (his newsletters are always an entertaining read) and the wines, which are always very fairly priced, may be offered early but often with plans to age them. Note that reviews for the Scherrer 2006s appear in Issue 35 or readers can also find them in the database. For further information, contact: (707) 823-8980 or visit [www.scherrerwinery.com](http://www.scherrerwinery.com)

**2007 Pinot Noir – Sonoma County:** (14.5%; \$35, 480 cases). This is actually more aromatically refined, if less complex, than the RRV with a very pretty mix of upper and lower level fruit notes that evidence background spice hints that are also reflected by ripe but cool middle weight flavors that are also relatively refined and beautifully balanced on the lingering finish. Like the nose, the flavors and finish are not especially complex but I very much like the delivery as it's understated and harmonious. 89/2012+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Russian River Valley:** (14.5%; \$40, 700 cases, to be released through the mailing list this winter). A ripe, stylish and nicely complex nose features aromas of dark berry fruit, plum, earth and a hint of underbrush that is in keeping with the earthy character of the delicious, supple and textured medium-bodied flavors that are balanced and solidly persistent. The tannins are firm but integrated and this should easily reward 5 to 7 years of cellar time and last for years longer. 90/2013+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Big Brother:** (Sonoma Coast, \$50, 200 cases, offered to mailing list customers in the spring or summer of 2010). A restrained, even discreet nose blends together both red and blue pinot fruit with plum and subtle floral notes that complement well the utterly delicious and seductive flavors that are blessed with excellent dry extract levels that confer a velvety mouth feel onto the sappy, dusty and solidly firm finish. This is quite ripe as the plum character really comes up on the finish. 91/2013+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Hallberg Vineyard:** (Green Valley, \$75, 24 cases). A completely different nose features notes of mint, spice and deeply pitched pinot fruit aromas that are fresh and ripe yet cool as they introduce detailed, focused and mouth coating medium-bodied flavors that are quite rich and culminate in a complex, sappy and notably firm and lingering finish where a hint of warmth arises. This will require time to round out as it's on the robust side at present. 92/2014+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Platt Vineyard:** (Sonoma Coast, \$75, 90 cases, to be released in 2010 to mailing list customers). Once again, the nose changes dramatically and here the aromas, while also quite restrained, are both elegant and highly complex, offering up layered notes of violets, spice hints, earth and a beautiful mélange of red and blue pinot fruit that marries seamlessly into textured, detailed and equally layered medium weight plus flavors that possess excellent mid-palate fat that buffers the firm tannins on the impressively long finish. This is first-rate and highly recommended. 93/2014+

**Williams-Selyem (Healdsburg, CA)**

2007	Pinot Noir – Central Coast	red	88
2007	Pinot Noir – Russian River Valley	red	89
2007	Pinot Noir – Sonoma Coast	red	88?
2007	Pinot Noir – Sonoma County	red	89
2007	Pinot Noir – Westside Road Neighbors	red	90
2006	➔ Pinot Noir – Allen Vineyard	red	91
2006	Pinot Noir – Flax Vineyard	red	89
2006	Pinot Noir – Hirsch Vineyard	red	87
2006	Pinot Noir – Peay Vineyard	red	90
2006	Pinot Noir – Precious Mountain Vineyard	red	90
2006	Pinot Noir – Rochioli Riverblock	red	88

John and Kathe Dyson purchased Williams Selyem in 1998 from founders Burt Williams and Ed Selyem. The executive winemaker is Bob Cabral and winemaker Lynn Krausman. The '07 W&S upper level wines should be exciting as the entry level wines are certainly very good. For further information, contact: (707) 433-6425 or visit [www.williamsselyem.com](http://www.williamsselyem.com).

**2007 Pinot Noir – Central Coast:** (bottled at 14.2%; \$34). This is really quite pretty with an airy red berry fruit nose that is very pinot in basic character and leads to detailed, vibrant and attractively balanced flavors that possess just enough complexity to avoid being one-dimensional. Despite being on the simple side, I like the style. 88/2012+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Sonoma County:** (bottled at 13.8%; \$34). This too is aromatically fresh, pretty and admirably pure with classic red pinot fruit aromas that complement perfectly the vibrant, delicious and focused middle weight flavors that possess a beguiling mouth feel, all wrapped in a moderately more complex and slightly longer finish. 89/2013+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Sonoma Coast:** (bottled at 14.0%; \$42). Here the fruit is mildly riper with a lightly spiced nose of red raspberry and cherry fruit aromas that slide into delicious and energetic medium-bodied flavors that presently display a noticeable trace of astringency on the otherwise persistent finish. This may or may not round out but for now it's a bit of a question mark. 88?/2012+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Russian River Valley:** (bottled at 14.1%; \$46). This offers a step up in aromatic depth with a spice and sandalwood character to the fresh and ripe red pinot fruit nose that is followed by lush, round and supple flavors that are delicious though there is the barest edge to the otherwise perfumed and lingering finish. This will probably round out in the bottle and the benefit of the doubt is offered. 89/2013+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Westside Road Neighbors:** (bottled at 13.8%; \$67). The most complex wine among these '07s with a layered nose that combines a subtle trace of framing wood as well as mild spice hints on the red and blue pinot fruit aromas that precede rich and relatively full-bodied flavors that display just a touch of backend bitterness that should dissipate rapidly. Overall, I like the solid balance, length and finishing depth. Worth a look. 90/2013+

**2006 Pinot Noir – Rochioli Riverblock:** (from Russian River Valley fruit - bottled at 14.4%; \$75). Here the nose is a blend of wonderfully pure red pinot fruit and subtle cranberry hints, both of which are picked up by the rich and impressively detailed middle weight flavors that are supple and forward but culminate in a tangy and moderately bitter finish that cuts the length short. While this may round out, I have some concerns on this point. 88/2013+

**2006 Pinot Noir – Peay Vineyard:** (from Sonoma Coast fruit, bottled at 14.2%; \$54). A cool, pretty and airy red berry fruit nose precedes delicious, vibrant and lightly mineral-suffused middle weight flavors that culminate in a tangy finish that is at present mildly drying though I suspect that it will eventually smooth out. Once again, I offer the benefit of the doubt. 90/2013+

**2006 Pinot Noir – Flax Vineyard:** (from Russian River Valley fruit - bottled at 14.2%; \$54). An expressive and notably ripe nose of attractive spice and freshly crushed berry aromas that are very much in keeping with the detailed, energetic and persistent flavors that also display a touch of dryness on the otherwise lingering finish. I slightly prefer the superior depth of the Peay. 89/2013+

**2006 Pinot Noir – Hirsch Vineyard:** (bottled at 14.3%; \$72). A high-toned and notably cool nose of delicate and airy red berry fruit aromas trimmed in just a hint of wood that is also reflected by the detailed, intense and minerally flavors that seem to possess less depth than I'm used to seeing from this vineyard as well as noticeable finishing dryness and tanginess. We'll see if this comes together but at present, this is pretty awkward. 87/2012+

**2006 Pinot Noir – Precious Mountain Vineyard:** (from Sonoma Coast fruit - bottled at 13.9%; \$90). The nose possesses very impressive aromatic complexity with a lovely mix of both red and blue berry fruit notes, spice hints and a gentle touch of wood toast that does not continue onto the supple, round and vibrant flavors that display good mid-palate density on the slightly dry and tangy finish that does not really detract significantly from the overall sense of balance. We'll see how this turns out but it appears to have the dry extract to round out the finish in time. 90/2013+

**2006 Pinot Noir – Allen Vineyard:** (from Yorkville Highlands fruit - bottled at 14.1%; \$78). Here too the nose possesses really lovely aromatic depth with perhaps just a touch more elegance to the pure red pinot fruit trimmed in a bit of earth and spice notes that are also reflected by the delicious yet stylish and classy flavors that are underpinned by lacy tannins yet the palate impression is firm, all wrapped in a youthfully austere finish of solid length. The best in show in 2006. 91/2013+

And here are two sample Oregon reviews issue 37:

**Bergström Wines (Newberg, OR)**

2007	} Pinot Noir – Bergström Vineyard	red	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Cumberland Reserve	red	90
2007	Pinot Noir – De Lancellotti Vineyard	red	90
2007	Pinot Noir – Durant Vineyard	red	89
2007	Pinot Noir – Nysa Vineyard	red	88?
2007	} Pinot Noir – Shea Vineyard	red	91

In 1999 the Bergström label was born and the winery was constructed in 2001. The family business is currently owned by John and Karen Bergström, Josh and Caroline Bergström, Kendall and Paul de Lancellotti, Kim and Alan Brune, Eric Bergström and Anders and Liz Bergström. The winery has three estate vineyards covering 40 acres and two appellations in Oregon's Northern Willamette Valley, all of which are Demeter certified biodynamically farmed. The winery produces 10,000 cases per year of ultra premium Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling crafted by winemaker Josh Bergström. For more information, contact: (503) 554-0468 or visit [www.bergstromwines.com](http://www.bergstromwines.com)

**2007 Pinot Noir – Nysa Vineyard:** (from Dundee Hills fruit; 13.9%, \$55). A pretty, complex and layered red berry fruit, anise and clove-suffused nose merges into medium weight flavors that possess a mild touch of bitterness that is exacerbated by a bit of gas on the otherwise lingering finish. This opened considerably with aeration, which also helped dissipate the CO2. As the description would imply, this is awkward and it's hard to say where it's going. 88?/2012+

**2007 Pinot Noir – De Lancellotti Vineyard:** (13.9%, \$65). An elegant and very pure nose of upper register red berry fruit, briar and subtle earth nuances gives way to balanced, intense and complex middle weight flavors that are not especially concentrated or powerful but there is very good depth and fine length on the dusty and mouth coating finish. I quite like the delivery as it's understated and allows the vineyard to speak. 90/2014+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Shea Vineyard:** (13.9%, \$65). Initially the nose was slightly marred by subtle reductive notes that blew off with 30 minutes in a decanter to reveal earthy, serious, layered and ripe dark berry fruit aromas that introduce equally serious and solidly concentrated flavors that culminate in a lingering finish that is presently on the austere side. This is a relatively dense and decidedly robust '07 with ample aging potential and unlike many wines from this forward vintage, this is more in the

“don’t touch for at least 5 years camp” and 7 or 8 would be better. In sum, this is worth a look but only if you’re committed to allowing for adequate cellar time. 91/2016+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Durant Vineyard:** (13.9%; 75 cases produced from Dundee Hills fruit - the label notes that this is part of their Oregon Old Vine Series). This required a lot of aeration, which is to say 24 hours, to really reveal what it’s capable of as it was frankly on the herbal, even weedy side when initially opened but transformed into an expressive nose of red currant, raspberry and even a hint of cranberry as well as touches of briar and underbrush, both of which are picked up by the nicely detailed, pure and delicious flavors that possess a dusty texture on the mouth coating and mildly austere finish. At present, this lacks a bit of overall complexity to be at the next level but it may get there as it’s certainly built to age. 89/2014+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Bergström Vineyard:** (from Dundee Hills fruit; 13.9%, \$75). A nicely complex blend of red raspberry, cranberry, plum and violet aromas merges into nicely rich, round and delicious flavors that possess fine balance and very good to excellent length. Note that this was quite compact at first and required several hours of aeration before it really began to express itself; indeed it was better the next day when I revisited it. Worth a look. 91/2014+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Cumberland Reserve:** (made from a blend of the best barrels from a mix of vineyards; 13.9%, \$45). A perfumed nose of red currant, raspberry and high-toned hints of cranberry combine with notes of sandalwood and menthol where the latter element is picked up by the detailed and precise middle weight flavors that possess good balance and a slightly austere and dusty finish at present though the underlying material appears to be present to allow this to positively develop for 5 to 8 years. Unless you’re just very curious, I would let this sit in the cellar for a while first. 90/2014+

**Domaine Drouhin Oregon (Dundee, OR)**

<b>2007</b>	<b>➔ Pinot Noir</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>➔ Pinot Noir – Laurène</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>2007</b>	<b>➔ Pinot Noir – Louise</b>	<b>red</b>	<b>92</b>

Domaine Drouhin was hardly the first Oregon winery (the land was purchased in 1987 and the winery built in 1989) but it was the real ground breaker in terms of bringing instant credibility to the region’s existing wineries as well as those who have followed. DDO, as it’s known, tries to emulate the elegant and pure style of the Domaine Drouhin Burgundies while working with the different ripeness and fruit characteristics that Oregon produces. For further information, contact: (503) 864-2700 or visit [www.domainedrouhin.com](http://www.domainedrouhin.com)

**2007 Pinot Noir:** (from Dundee Hills fruit bottled at 13.9%, \$40). While this doesn’t have the aromatic depth and breadth of the two prestige *cuvées*, it is still very pretty with a relatively elegant and expansive nose of pure red pinot fruit plus a whiff of cranberry that is additionally nuanced by just a hint of crushed herb that continues onto the delicious, textured and lilting middle weight flavors that glide across the palate on the dry, clean and precise finish. This is an understated effort where you’ll find just a touch of austerity that offsets the natural sweetness of the mid-palate. Worth a look. 89/2012+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Laurène:** (from Dundee Hills fruit bottled at 14.1%, \$65). A fresh, elegant and complex nose blends both upper and lower register fruit aromas, in particular red currant and plum, along with subtle soil undertones that lead to delicious, detailed and equally complex medium-bodied flavors that possess excellent focus, balance and persistence on the beautifully long finish that displays an attractive touch of austerity. If you wanted to pick nits, you could say that this is not as dense as some prior vintages but I would counter with how lovely this wine is to simply drink, which is what really counts. Well worth your interest. 93/2014+

**2007 Pinot Noir – Louise:** (from Dundee Hills fruit bottled at 13.9%, sold only at the winery). This is ever so mildly riper than the Laurène though here the nose is also very fresh, layered and seductive with a similar aromatic profile that is discreetly spicier and the spiciness extends to the generous, delicious and equally seductive middle weight flavors that are plusher because while there is all the length and punch of the Laurène, the finish does not have the mild austerity. I would rate these as qualitative equals but make no mistake, they are distinctly different wines. Those who want something that is cut more from Burgundian cloth, stylistically speaking, would very likely prefer the Laurène. By contrast, those who would prefer something that is somewhat more generous and forthcoming would be better off choosing the Louise. Either way, you cannot make a mistake as they are both terrific and among the better young wines that I have had the pleasure of trying from DDO. 92/2013+

California and Oregon segments include Allen's top pinot noir selections. Here is a small portion of his top 72 list from issue 36:

**Burghound.com's 72 California Pinot Noir Selections**

2007	Pinot Noir – Abbey-Harris Vineyard	Ant Hill Farms	94
2007	Pinot Noir – Comtche Ridge Vineyard	Ant Hill Farms	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Demuth Vineyard	Ant Hill Farms	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Isabelle Morgan	Au Bon Climat	91
2007	Pinot Noir – The Architects	Cadre Vineyards	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Escarpa Vineyard	Ceritas Wines	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Le Bon Climat	Clendenen Family Vineyards	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Clos Pepe	Copain	92
2007	Pinot Noir – Hacienda Secoya	Copain	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Kiser en Bas	Copain	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Kiser en Haut	Copain	92
2007	Pinot Noir – Wentzel	Copain	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Dutton Ranch Freestone Hill Vyd	Dutton-Goldfield Winery	92
2007	Pinot Noir – McDougall Vineyard	Dutton-Goldfield Winery	91

And from issue 37 on Oregon:

**Burghound.com's 45 Top Oregon Pinot Picks**

2007	Pinot Noir – Boulder Bluff Vineyard	Adelsheim Vineyard	92
2007	Pinot Noir – Bryan Creek Vineyard	Adelsheim Vineyard	92
2007	Pinot Noir - Botanica	Antica Terra	92
2007	Pinot Noir - Archery Summit Estate	Archery Summit	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Belle Pente Vineyard	Belle Pente	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Murto Vineyard	Belle Pente	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Bergström Vineyard	Bergström Wines	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Cumberland Reserve	Bergström Wines	90
2007	Pinot Noir – De Lancellotti Vineyard	Bergström Wines	90
2007	Pinot Noir – Shea Vineyard	Bergström Wines	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Athena	Boedecker Cellars	90
2007	Pinot Noir – Shea Vineyard	Boedecker Cellars	90
2007	Pinot Noir – Select	Brick House Wine Co.	90
2007	Pinot Noir – Cuvée des Tonneliers	Brick House Wine Co.	91
2007	Pinot Noir – Claudia's Choice	Broadley Vineyards	91