

## UNWINED Wine Club March 2008 Release A Taste of Pinot

Pinot is the first word of many a French wine varietal name and is thought to refer to the shape of the Pinot grape bunches. It is considered one of the most ancient grape varieties with no fewer than 100 different clones. The better known ones are Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir. DNA profiling has even shown that Pinot progenies include Chardonnay and Traminer.



Pinot Noir is often described as being a “difficult” grape to grow, to deal with in the winery, and to find truly great examples of, but fans are passionate about this variety, as sensually expressed by the dialogue between Miles and Maya in the 2004 movie “Sideways”. The Pinot Noir that gets the most attention is associated with the delicate, yet powerful wines of the Burgundy region in France.

Difficulties plague Pinot Noir at every step, from propagation to even its bottle-aging characteristics. The same genetic instability that has resulted in so many progenies also means that the parent vine may produce offspring that bear fruit that is nothing like the parent’s in size and shape of the berry or

cluster and will frequently even have different aromas, flavors, and levels of productivity. In the vineyard the Pinot Noir grape is susceptible to Spring frosts due to its early-leaving characteristic. The vines are not prolific and the lack of canopy often leaves the berries as a snack for the birds.

Pinot Noir is found in many areas of California. Improved site and clonal selections coupled with better viticultural methods and techniques have resulted in some great wines from the Russian River Valley (Sonoma), Carneros (Napa and Sonoma), Anderson Valley (Mendocino), Santa Maria Valley (Santa Barbara), Edna Valley (San Luis Obispo) and Santa Lucia Highlands (Monterey), to name just a few areas.

Great Pinot Noir creates a lasting impression on the palate and in the memory. Its aroma is often one of the most complex varietal and can be intense with a ripe-grape or black cherry aroma, accented by a pronounced spiciness that suggests cinnamon, sassafras, or mint. It is full-bodied and rich but not heavy, high in alcohol, acidic or tannic. The most appealing quality of Pinot Noir may be its soft, velvety texture. When right, it is like liquid silk, gently caressing the palate.

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### Wine Selections (the numbers indicate suggested tasting order)

#### Flight Club

##### Reds Only

1. River Road 2007 “Essense” Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley
2. Whitcraft Winery 2006 Morning Dew “FI” Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley
3. Downhill Winery 2007 Pinot Noir, Peter Martin Ray Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mtns

##### White/Reds

1. Benessere 2008 Pinot Grigio, Carneros, Napa Valley
2. Whitcraft Winery 2006 Morning Dew “FI” Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley
3. Downhill Winery 2007 Pinot Noir, Peter Martin Ray Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mtns

#### Select Club

##### All Reds

1. River Road 2007 “Essense” Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley
2. Downhill Winery 2007 Pinot Noir, Peter Martin Ray Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mtns

##### White/Red

1. Benessere 2008 Pinot Grigio, Carneros, Napa Valley
2. Downhill Winery 2007 Pinot Noir, Peter Martin Ray Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mtns

**Benessere Vineyards**  
**2008 Pinot Grigio, Carneros, Napa Valley**



This wine has a beautiful jasmine and honeysuckle nose with grapefruit zest. These same fresh fruits shine through in on the palate with crisp acidity.

The grapes for this Pinot Grigio come from two vineyards on the Napa side of Carneros. It is the coolest region in Napa Valley, located on the edge of San Pablo Bay and cooled by the bay breezes.

**Varietal:** Pinot Grigio

**Appellation:** Carneros, Napa Valley

**Winemaker:** Chris Dearden

**WebSite:** [www.benesserevineyards.com](http://www.benesserevineyards.com)

**Maturity:** Ready to drink now or over 2 years

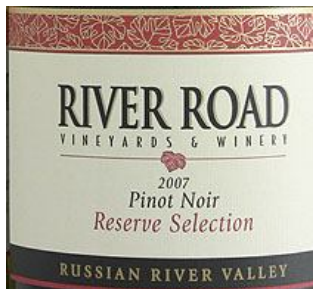
**Food Pairing:** Crab cakes, halibut, chicken breast sandwich, tuna salad

**Price:** \$23.95

**Club Price:** \$21.56

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**River Road Vineyards**  
**2007 “Essense” Pinot Noir, Russian River Valley**



This wine has a red cherry color and exhibits the great cherry and strawberry aromas and flavors expected from Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. The balance of acidity and tannins leads to an exceptional finish.

River Road Vineyards has been a family farming company for years, growing the grapes used by winemakers in the area. Farming is always unpredictable and the family decided to open a small winery to use much of their fruit from their 12 acre vineyard. This is a special cuvee of 4 barrels made from selected lots.

**Varietal:** Pinot Noir

**Appellation:** Russian River Valley, Sonoma County

**Production:** 100 Cases

**Winemaker:**

**Website:** [www.riverroadvineyards.com](http://www.riverroadvineyards.com)

**Maturity:** Ready to drink now or over next few years

**Food Pairing:** Duck, game bird, lamb

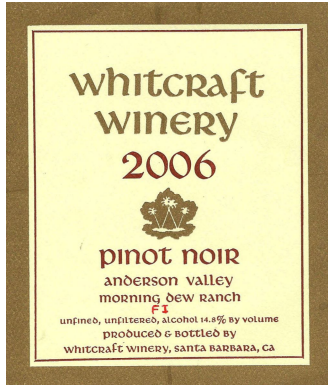
**Price:** \$32.95

**Club Price:** \$29.66



## Whitcraft Winery

### 2006 "FI" Pinot Noir, Morning Dew Ranch, Anderson Valley



This fine Pinot Noir has a lighter cherry color with a nose of strawberry and plum that carries through to the palate with good acidity and a rich full mouth feel. It has a nice long finish.

Morning Dew Ranch is a vineyard owed by Burt Williams of Williams-Seylem fame. "FI" stands for Fred's influence. Fred was Burt's son who passed away, but he told his dad to plant clone 23 ("Mariafeld clone") which is the primary grape in this Pinot Noir.

The wine is 100% whole cluster, unfined, unfiltered, and unpumped (the bottling line is even gravity fed to ensure the most gentle handling of the grapes.)

**Varietal:** Pinot Noir

**Appellation:** Anderson Valley, Mendocino County

**Winemaker:** Chris Whitcraft

**WebSite:** [www.whitcraftwinery.com](http://www.whitcraftwinery.com)

**Cases Produced:** 140

**Maturity:** Ready to drink now or over next year

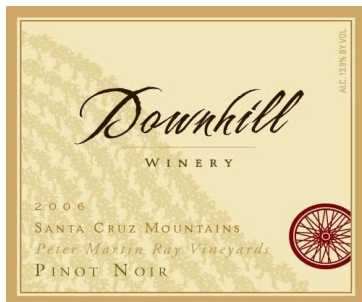
**Food Pairing:** Roast beef, lamb

**Price:** \$32.95

**Club Price:** \$29.66

## Downhill Wines

### 2007 Pinot Noir, Peter Martin Ray Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mountains



This wine from the Santa Cruz Mountains has dark earthy qualities reminiscent of black tar and sandalwood. As you taste the wine you will enjoy the aromas and flavors

of cherry cola and significant spices including pipe tobacco, cinnamon, cloves and anise. The finish includes blackberry and forest floor.

Martin Ray began planting grapes in the 1940's in the Santa Cruz Mountains, sites which now include the Mountain Winery and Mount Eden Vineyards. His son Peter has maintained the tradition and still farms many of the same vines his famous father planted in the hills above Saratoga.

**Varietal:** Pinot Noir

**Appellation:** Santa Cruz Mountains

**Winemaker:** Frank Ashton

**WebSite:** [www.downhillwine.com](http://www.downhillwine.com)

**Maturity:** Ready to drink now or next 3-5 years

**Food Pairing:** Roast beef, roasted turkey

**Price:** \$32.95

**Club Price:** \$29.66