



**PinotFile**  
The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

*"If You Drink  
No Noir  
You Pinot Noir!"*

### *Lynmar Revives Hospitality*

Lynmar Estate is a very special place that features one of the most welcoming guest centers that I have ever encountered in my wine country travels over the years. The people are genuine and informative and well trained in hospitality. The venue is comforting and relaxing, offering the visitor a unique wine and gustatory experience.

The Fritz family purchased the Quail Hill Vineyard in the Russian River Valley in 1980 and founded Lynmar Winery in 1990. In 2004, the winery launched a five-year investment plan to complete a phased replanting of 71% of the 47-acre Quail Hill Vineyard. Today, the vineyard is 70% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay. A small patch of old vine Swan selection planted in 1974 was retained. The site's soil consists of Sebastopol sandy loam which has an ideal pH and drainage quality for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vines. Located in one of the cooler areas of the Russian River Valley, the site experiences coastal fog penetration through the Petaluma Wind Gap. Combined with cooling influences from the Laguna de Santa Rosa, Northern California's largest complex of freshwater wetlands, the vineyard has a long, cool growing season with bud break typically occurring in mid-March and harvest starting in September.

An impressive new winery with barrel storage caves and hospitality center has been added. Winemaker Hugh Chapelle (photo right) has brought Lynmar (now called Lynmar Estate) to a world-class level. Consulting winemaker Paul Hobbs and consulting viticulturist Greg Adams have also contributed to the recent lofty accolades for this winery.

The tasteful hospitality center and tasting salon overlooking the estate vineyards is located in Sebastopol. The center is open daily for tasting from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. However, to simply drop in for wine tasting is to miss the full hospitality experience offered here. If you can, avail yourselves of the Lynmar Food and Wine Experience or The Estate Tour. The Lynmar Food and Wine Experience (\$45 per person) offers a short tour of the culinary and sensory garden on the estate by the gracious staff followed by a sampling of Lynmar Estate reserve wines paired with the winery's executive chef Sandra Simile's recipes. A two-course light lunch is offered in a serene setting with a well-set table featuring a seasonal menu. The Estate Tour (\$65 per person) is a 2.5 hour

indulgence which consists of a hosted tour of the estate, a sampling of Lynmar Estate reserve wines and a gourmet light lunch. I recently indulged with my family and it was one of the most rewarding wine and food experiences we have ever enjoyed together. The Food and Wine Experience and Estate Tour are offered by reservation Thursday through Sunday. The Food and Wine Experience Menu is duplicated on page 17. Lynmar Estate combines the new and old as shown by the hospitality salon on the left on a sunny day and the picturesque old seed barn on the right on a foggy day in December.

Lynmar Estate is producing striking Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs from both estate and sourced vineyards in the Russian River Valley. If you want to taste a single wine that represents the essence of the Russian River Valley, a quintessential bottling if you will, reach for the 2005 Lynmar Estate Quail Hill Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir. Pair it with the Lynmar Estate Quail Hill Vineyard Chardonnay and you will think you have died and gone to heaven.

I recently tasted through the current lineup of Lynmar Estate Pinot Noir releases. Winemaking is as follows. Grapes are hand-harvested in the early morning, transported to the winery and hand-sorted before being gently de-stemmed and transferred without pumping into small 2.5 to 5 ton open-top fermenters. Fruit is then cold soaked for 3-10 days at 50°F before allowing native fermentation to begin. Fermentations are gently punched down 2-4 times per day as needed. Total skin contact time ranges from 9-16 days depending upon the desired extraction for each lot. The grapes are then basket pressed and the new wines are barreled down where secondary, malolactic fermentation occurs over the next several months. Multiple coopers are used, primarily Remond and Francois Freres. The wines are aged 14-16 months in 35%-65% new oak and racking is minimal or not at all, with aging on the lees until the final blend is assembled. The house style is one of impeccable balance, vibrancy and elegance.

### **2006 Lynmar Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

14.4% alc., 3,196 cases, \$40. This is a blend of lots from Lynmar's 47-acre Quail Hill Vineyard as well as grapes from local growers. • *This wine is a cherry choo-choo. Really attractive cherry aromas with a hint of oak and candied apple lead to a silky core of fresh and bright cherries, an undertone of strawberries and the slightest oak. Soft tannins complete the harmonious picture. For an entry wine, this is stunning.*

### **2006 Lynmar Estate Quail Hill Vineyard Bliss Block Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

14.4% alc., 329 cases, \$60. The Bliss Block is from a unique part of the estate which is very cool. This is the first block designate from Quail Hill Vineyard since 1999. • *A ripe fruit profile on the nose veering toward cardamomspiced cherries and raisins and oak spice. The flavors echo the aromas with an added loamy influence. A balanced wine with supple tannins and a dry finish. Well-crafted but not my cup of tea.*

**2006 Lynmar Estate Hawk Hill Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

14.15% alc., 486 cases, \$70. Hawk Hill Vineyard is located 4 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean at the southwestern tip of the Green Valley/Sonoma Coast border. Paul and Vicki Michalczyk farm 6 acres of Dijon and Pommard clone Pinot Noir vines planted in Goldridge soils. The vineyard is subject to considerable coastal influence creating an extended growing season. The final blend is 60% Pommard and 40% Dijon 115 clones. • *Berry pie-filling fruits on the nose with subtle oak and Provencal herbs. A delicious olalliberry and boysenberry fruit core fans out on the palate nicely and fine-grained dry tannins and admirable acidity bring the wine into perfect balance. The wine's finesse makes it easy to snuggle up to.*

**2006 Lynmar Estate Zephyr Farms Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

13.9% alc., 236 cases, \$70. Zephyr Farms is located at the western border of the Green Valley/Sonoma Coast appellations. Steve Whiteman and Bob Trujox farm 9 acres of Dijon clone Pinot Noir planted in Goldridge soils. The harsh climate results in highly variable yields. Lynmar is the sole recipient of fruit from this vineyard. • *Evocative perfume of dark fruits with a hint of sage and seasoned oak. Lip-smacking and succulent dark cherry and berry fruit kissed by toasted oak. Commendable richness and fullness on the palate. Still wearing a mild grip of tannin and will benefit from more time in the bottle.*

**2005 Lynmar Estate Quail Hill Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.35% alc., 1,419 cases, \$60. This wine represents the finest lots from the Quail Hill Vineyard home estate with the core being a small patch of old vine Swan selection planted in 1974. • *Ramped up intense black cherry scent with dark chocolate, oak and white pepper lurking in the background. Flamboyant layers of cherry and raspberry fruit with a sidecar of oak and cola. Vivid and clean with no hard edges and leaving an incredibly long and memorable finish. This beauty delivers a little more fullness, richness and intensity than the Russian River Valley bottling and is flat-out great.*

**2005 Lynmar Estate Five Sisters Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., 390 cases, \$100. Five Sisters is a tribute to the sibling bond of Lynn Fritz's five daughters. The wine is a blend of the five best barrels from Lynmar's Estate and top partner growers. Five vineyard sources are included: Hawk Hill (115 and Pommard) which formed the base of the wine, Jack Hill (115), Ferguson (mixed Dijon), Terra de Promissio (115, 777) and Quail Hill (old vine Swan selection). 10-30% whole clusters were kept in select fermentations, where stem ripeness warranted, to moderate extraction and add complexity. This special wine is produced only when the vintage and quality warrant. • *Intense deep black cherry and dark berry aromas touched by oak, herbs and a little good barnyard. Very slow to open up. Almost viscous with intense darker fruits and structure to spare. Still sporting noticeable oak and tannins and not ready for prime time. I would check back in three to five years but if you must drink it now, spend some time with the wine and definitely decant it.*

### **1996 Lynmar Five Sisters Russian River Valley Pinot Noir**

14.0% alc.. A blend of the finest barrels from the Quail Hill Vineyard Reserve Block. • *This wine has aged royally and is a delight to drink. The color has persisted with only a hint of mahogany showing through. Mature bouquet of raisin, tobacco smoke and a little funk. Demure berry flavors with notes of raisin, marzipan, mocha and subtle oak. Silky in the mouth with an uplifting finish due to complimentary acidity.*

Lynmar Estate wines are sold at the tasting room, on the website and through limited retail channels. The hospitality salon is located at 3909 Frei Road in Sebastopol. For reservations for any of the hospitality experiences phone 707-829-3374 x 102. During the warmer summer months, Pizza and Pinot Fridays are scheduled. Ingredients from the Estate garden, local cheeses and gourmet mushrooms are used to create pizzas in a custom-designed wood burning oven (see photo below). Lynmar Estate can also host meetings and private events (contact Elan Fayard, Director of Guest Relations and Events at 707-829-3374).

Several photos follow showing the Quail Hill Vineyard with typical Russian River Valley fog in December, the compost pile, the pizza oven, and the old rusting farm truck that adds a touch of character to the surroundings.