

# WINE

TASTING ROOM: Stag's L

tail Week's Soiree F6

## THE CHRONICLE SELECTIONS

*Russian River Valley Pinot Noir*

Russian River Valley Pinot Noir is highly sought after. Few wineries in this Sonoma County appellation produce a large number of cases. Most make less than a few thousand cases — in some cases a few hundred. The Russian River Valley appellation generally has more production than the vineyard-designate Russian River Valley wines recommended last week.

Most of the Russian River bottlings are blends made from more than one vineyard. Some wineries use primarily estate fruit from vineyards the winery owns; others source from growers. In some instances, a winery specifies the vineyard(s) — some of which are quite famous — on the bottle's back label.

Fifty-four wines were tasted in this category, which is about the same number as last week's single-vineyard wines. Similar numbers were recommended for both — 16 this week and 19 last week — though there were higher overall rankings for the single-vineyard bottlings, as might be expected.

This week's Russian River Valley Pinot Noirs have lovely fruit, balancing acidity, moderate alcohol and for the most part, modest tannins. Fewer of the wines are a challenge to locate compared to last week's recommendations. Some are available in restaurants and all can be purchased from the winery.

— Lynne Char Bennett

**2006 Lynmar Estate Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$40),**

**Two stars**

This wine includes fruit from the estate's Quail Hill Vineyard. Lovely aromas and flavors of buoyant cherry, red and dark fruit, and clove. Tangy and bright with a generous burst of fruit surrounding the integrated tannins.

