

## Wine & Cheese by TCC's September 2011 Wine Club

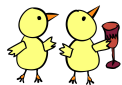
This month we bring you a Chardonnay and a Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley of California. The wine producers call themselves the Ministry of the Vinterior. Their website displays their monarch-like proclamation: "WHEREAS: The Ministry of the Vinterior is now supplying per annum wine rations to the general population. Rather, The Ministry pledges to work tirelessly on behalf of its loyal subjects, scrutinizing wine regions and vineyards the world over, selecting only those which meet the Ministry's rigorous demands for quality, value and regional authenticity. As well as, and of course, an allegiance to the Party of the Vinterior in that vintage year. Henceforth, Ministry subjects are assured of complete satisfaction with superior quality wine rations which may come from as close to home as Sonoma but as far reaching as Mendoza, Bordeaux or beyond." They even have ever-changing numbered "Ministry Edicts" or winery "laws" that change with each launch of their site (worth checking out!)

The winemaker responsible for the Ministry's creations is Daniel O'Donnell. Daniel began his wine career at Ravenswood in California where he began as 'cellar rat' and advanced to 'cellar master'. After Ravenswood, he gained experience working with such names as Aubert, Lewis, Crane, Paul Hobbs, and Voss and also held the position of winemaker and general manager at Leducq winery in St. Helena, California.

Daniel is also known globally in the wine industry and highly respected for his winemaking skills. His international experience includes blending wines for well known wine producers and sellers in Chile, Argentina, Turkey, France, Italy, and Uruguay, to name a few.

In the following pages, there is some information regarding the wine club selections. First, you'll find a map\* showing the region where the wines were produced. Next, you will see a description of each wine, some technical information on the wines, and food pairing suggestions. As always, your feedback is encouraged. Please call us or stop by with your comments regarding our selections.

### The Gang at TCC



Wine & Cheese by TCC

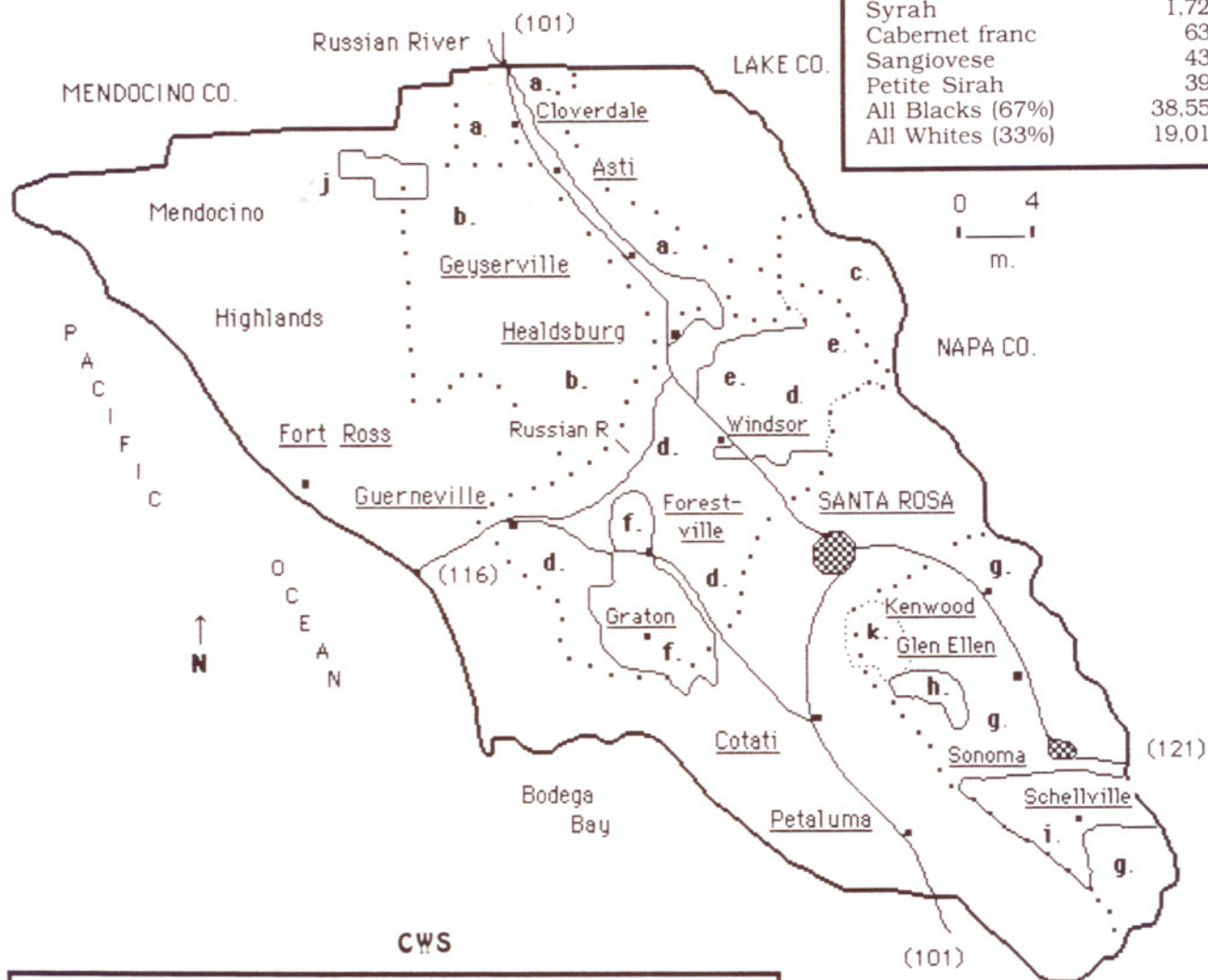


24104 W. Lockport Street Plainfield, IL 60544  
(815) 436-3499  
[www.webytcc.com](http://www.webytcc.com)

## #5 -- SONOMA COUNTY

| # WINERIES | VINEYARD AREA                 |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| 190        | 57,572 acres<br>(80% bearing) |
| 2002       |                               |

| MAJOR WINE VARIETIES (acres) |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Chardonnay                   | 15,558 |
| Cabernet-Sauvignon           | 11,785 |
| Pinot noir                   | 10,018 |
| Merlot                       | 7,287  |
| Zinfandel                    | 5,052  |
| Sauvignon blanc              | 2,100  |
| Syrah                        | 1,726  |
| Cabernet franc               | 636    |
| Sangiovese                   | 430    |
| Petite Sirah                 | 399    |
| All Blacks (67%)             | 38,559 |
| All Whites (33%)             | 19,011 |



| VITICULTURAL AREAS * (planted acres)     |  |
|--|--|
| a. Alexander Valley (7,000)              | g. Sonoma Valley (6,000)                                 |
| b. Dry Creek Valley (9,100)              | h. Sonoma Mountain (750)                                 |
| c. Knight's Valley (1,100)               | i. Los Carneros (with Napa:<br>9,000--about 50/50 split) |
| d. Russian River Valley (9,000)          | j. Rockpile (120)  |
| e. Chalk Hill (1,500)                    | k. Bennett Valley (proposed:<br>650)                     |
| f. Sonoma County Green<br>Valley (1,200) |  |

\* in addition, all of western coastal Sonoma, as well as the Dry Creek VA, is known as the "Sonoma Coast" VA, while an umbrella VA known as "Northern Sonoma" envelops the Dry Creek, Alexander, Russian River & Knight's Valley VAs as well as most of the Sonoma County Green Valley VA.



# Ministry of the Vinterior

## Chardonnay

|                       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type:                 | White                             |
| Varietal composition: | 100% Chardonnay                   |
| Vineyard Location:    | Russian River Valley, California  |
| Vintage:              | 2009                              |
| Country:              | United States                     |
| Alcohol:              | 13%                               |
| Age-ability:          | Drink now or cellar for two years |

### Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details

The Russian River Valley, located in the southernmost region in Northern Sonoma, is one of the United States' oldest grape growing areas with crops dating back to the early 1800's. Chardonnay grapes are known to grow particularly well in the Chalk Hills (the eastern portion of the Russian River Valley) where the higher elevation inhibits fog development.

In 2009, the mild winter, cool spring, and long growing season enabled the Chardonnay grapes to ripen slowly which contributed to their exceptional natural acidity.

### Tasting Notes

Robust yet balanced, this Chardonnay has floral and vanilla aromas with flavors of lime, ripe pineapple, and a hint of white pepper spice. It has a mouthwatering acidity that balances the rich oak on the lingering finish.

### Pairing Suggestions

Pair this wine with shellfish, chicken, and creamy cheeses such as Gruyere. A perfect accompaniment to our Cafe Salad or Salmon Carpaccio!

For this month's cheese selection, pair with the Harmony Specialty Dairy Foods Caerphilly. The sharp, buttery and honey notes of the cheese marry nicely with the ripe pineapple and vanilla notes of the wine.

# Ministry of the Vinterior

## Pinot Noir

|                       |                                   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type:                 | Red                               |
| Varietal composition: | 100% Pinot Noir                   |
| Vineyard Location:    | Russian River Valley, California  |
| Vintage:              | 2009                              |
| Country:              | United States                     |
| Alcohol:              | 14.8%                             |
| Age-ability:          | Drink now or cellar for 3-5 years |

### Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details

The Russian River Valley produces some of the best Pinot Noir grapes in California. This area promotes "early morning fog, warm days, an afternoon breeze from the sea, and cool nights" which is key to producing quality Pinot Noir grapes. These grapes typically have a higher alcohol content due to the warmer climate, producing more robust wines. The 2009 vintage had lower than average yields but produced excellent Pinot Noir grapes. The grapes were harvested and crafted utilizing traditional Burgundy methods which emphasize minimal handling (Pinot Noir grapes are very sensitive). The grapes were picked by hand from various vineyards, basket-pressed, fermented in small wooden, open top vats, and aged in French oak barrels. Note: basket-pressed is a method where the grapes are crushed by a plate in a basket-type container allowing the juice to flow out of the grapes and through the holes in the basket.

### Tasting Notes

This full bodied Pinot Noir has a rich, garnet color. It has aromas of dark fruit and a slight smokiness with flavors of rich raspberry fruit along with anise, spice and a vanilla, cedar finish.

### Pairing Suggestions

A perfect match for poultry, beef, fish, and pork. Also pairs well with creamy sauces and spicy foods. Try it with our Grown Up Mac N' Cheese or Roasted Chevre.

For this month's cheese club selection, pair with the Harmony Specialty Dairy Foods Double Gloucester. The nutty flavor and creaminess of the cheese are nicely complemented by the rich raspberry fruit of the wine.

Enjoy!