

SCORE: 94

**2014 Sojourn Cellars
Ridgetop Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, Pinot Noir**

14.2% alc., 775 cases, \$48. This vineyard is located in the Petaluma Gap high on a ridge. Some whole cluster fermented Pommard clone is blended with clone 777. 15% whole cluster. Native yeast fermentation, aged in 50% new French oak barrels. Bottled unfixed and unfiltered in July 2015.

Moderately dark reddish purple color in the glass. The nose is more savory than fruity, offering aromas of potpourri with redder fruits in the background. The intense attack of perfectly ripened cherry fruit is almost numbing, yet the wine is focused and refined. There is plenty of savory spices and a light hand with the oak. The satiny texture is very comforting, and the finish has grand cru length. A perfect marriage of fruit and savory nuances.

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**2014 Sojourn Cellars
Riddle Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, Pinot Noir**

14.4% alc., 350 cases, \$59. This vineyard is located north of Occidental on the second ridge from the Pacific Ocean. Clones are Mt Eden and Pommard planted in sandy loam Goldridge soils.

Moderately dark reddish purple hue in the glass. Beautifully perfumed with hi-tone scents of dark berry jam and Asian 5-spice. Mid weight plus in style with a strong physique, yet charming and nimble. The dark berry core really grabs on the mid palate and hold through a fruit-laden finish. the wine has a trim oak component and a thick yet lubricating texture.

SCORE: 93

**2014 Sojourn Cellars
Reuling Vineyard, Sonoma Coast, Pinot Noir**

14.4% alc., 275 cases, \$69. This vineyard is located between Graton and Forestville. Heritage clones are planted in Goldridge soils.

Moderately reddish purple color in the glass. Heady aromas of black cherry, sous-bois, woodland and nutty oak. Both fruity and savory on the velvety palate, with flavors of black cherry and dark red raspberry enhanced with a light touch of toasty oak. A subtle savory herbal imprint runs in the background. Juicy, with noticeable but tame tannins and impressive length on a finish that is reluctant to give up.

SCORE: 93

**2014 Sojourn Cellars
Wohler Vineyard, Russian River Valley, Pinot Noir**

14.2% alc., 500 cases, \$48. This vineyard is located in the heart of the Russian River Valley. Clones are Wädenswil 2A, 115, 667 and "828" planted in Goldridge soil.

Moderate reddish purple hue in the glass. Shy, but pleasing aromas of cherry and sandalwood that pick up intensity over time in the glass. Like cherry pie day at baking class, with a discreetly concentrated core of fresh red cherries and baking spices. Quite elegant and charming, with a silky countenance, weightless tannins, and cherry goodness that hangs on the finish. The lightest weighted wine in the

Sojourn Cellars: 2014 Pinot Noirs are Wines of Emotion

Sojourn Cellars takes its name from something Plato said, "It is a common saying, and in everybody's mouth, that life is but a sojourn." Owners Craig Haserot and Erich Bradley took the meaning of sojourn as a rest or respite to be enjoyed, and started Sojourn Cellars, appropriately displaying a lawn chaise on their label and putting superb Pinot Noir in the bottle. They could easily have modified Plato's quote to be, "It is a common saying, and in everybody's mouth, that life is but a Pinot Noir."

Craig and Erich are two buddies who met on the tennis courts of Sonoma, and along with Ellen Haserot, formed Sojourn Cellars in 2001 with the production of 100 cases of Cabernet Sauvignon. They released their first Pinot Noir in 2004 at the height of the 'Sideways' frenzy. Erich's considerable winemaking talent led to instant praise from the wine press, and Craig's sales, marketing and management expertise have put a visible face on the winery. The winery's focus has never wavered, concentrating on vineyard designated Pinot Noir and small bottlings of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Erich has a solid winemaking background inspired by his family's purchase of a 26-acre ranch in Sonoma County's Valley of the Moon complete with a vineyard and 500-case winery. As part of the sale, the Bradley family was taught winemaking. Erich later studied winemaking and viticulture at University of California at Davis and Santa Rosa Junior College. He was smart to pick out two of California's most iconic winemakers, Richard Arrowood of Arrowood Vineyards & Winery and David Ramey of Ramey Wine Cellars to mentor him. Erich then made acclaimed wines for Audelssa Estate Winery in Glen Ellen, a position he still holds today. He has also consulted for a number of wineries including Hop Kiln and HK Generations.

Craig left a career in computer software sales and moved to Sonoma County to pursue a new path. His background in sales and marketing provided an instant compliment to Erich's winemaking expertise. Also, he addresses grower relations with multiple vineyards and engineered the opening of a unique Sojourn Tasting Salon, just off the square in the town of Sonoma. Guests are welcomed to seated comparative tastings featuring flights of Sojourn Cellars wines served in Riedel stemware in a relaxed setting. The tastings are available by appointment daily at salon@sojourncellars.com. Take a sojourn and enjoy some special Pinot Noir.

The small production Sojourn Cellars wines are sold primarily through a mailing list, with limited fine restaurant distribution. Visit the website at www.sojourncellars.com.

The 2014 vintage had early bud break and the earliest harvest on record. March rains fueled the drought stricken vines and moderate summer weather allowed grapes to evenly ripen. Picking began in August and ended by the end of September. Thicker skins and even ripening led to balanced and complex wines.

I have always enjoyed Sojourn Pinot Noirs and have reviewed a number of vintages. The 2014 wines were stunners to say the least, capable of eliciting emotion, something only great Pinot Noir can do. The wines I tasted were impeccably balanced and had everything you could ask for in a California Pinot Noir, including vineyard individuality. It is rare to have tasted a winery's entire lineup of Pinot Noirs and found every one stellar and worthy of celestial scores. The Riddle Vineyard, Reuling Vineyard, Ridgetop Vineyard and Wohler Vineyard Pinot Noirs will be released in the fall 2016. A Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir and Gap's Crown Pinot Noir were also produced in the 2014 vintage and were part of the spring release.