

## Churchill Wine Cellars

Ken and Susan Churchill are also refugees from the corporate world who sold their environmental consulting business and moved to the Russian River Valley to make ultra-premium Pinot Noir. Fortunately, they found prime vineyard property on Olivet Lane and lovingly manage their one-acre estate Bella Luna Vineyard with sustainable and precision farming. Anthony Austin is the talented winemaker who is a legend in Santa Barbara County. In 1975, the Firestones started Santa Barbara's first modern-day commercial winery and their first winemaker was Anthony Austin. Austin crafted many memorable award-winning wines for both Firestone and his own eponymous label, Austin Cellars. Currently he is also the winemaker at Sonoma Coast Vineyards.

The Bella Luna vineyard is planted on sandy loam soil to Dijon clone selections, including 115, 667, 777 and the newer 459 clone. The vines are tight spaced at 4' x 4'. Irrigation is kept to a minimum. The small size of the vineyard allows for precision viticulture.

The **2004 Churchill Cellars Russian River Valley Blend Pinot Noir** and **2004 Churchill Cellars Bella Luna Vineyard Russian River Valley Pinot Noir** were reviewed previously in the *PinotFile*

**2005 Churchill Cellars Bella Luna Pinot Noir** 14.5% alc., 233 cases, \$45. A nine day cold soak with 10% whole clusters. Aged 18 months in 50% new French oak which is air dried for 36 months. *Right in step with the luscious 2004 edition. Terrific aromatics featuring candied cherry, spice, and newly-sawn wood. Easily approachable with layers of sweet red Pinot fruit, leather, mocha, oak and herbs. Fine and creamy in texture with integrated tannins and impeccable balance. Will only improve with cellaring. The future looks bright for this young vineyard.*

**Churchill Cellars** is located at 1574 Olivet Rd, Santa Rosa, CA. 707-578-5393. The wines may be purchased on the website at [www.churchill-cellars.com](http://www.churchill-cellars.com). Discounts are available to wine club members.



## Alcina Cellars

Alcina Cellars is another of the young hounds that have joined the California Pinot Noir race. Wine lover Greg Piatigorski (Greg P to his friends) learned his winemaking craft under Greg LaFollette (Tandem, DeLoach) and has looked to winemaker Richard Davis (former assistant winemaker at Tandem and now winemaker at Londer Vineyards, Halleck Vineyards and his own label, Calstar Cellars) for additional guidance. His initial vintage, 2002, produced small amounts of Pisoni Vineyard and Sangiacomo Vineyard Pinot Noir. He has expanded his vineyard sources and in the 2005 vintage released 2 appellation and 3 vineyard-designate Pinot Noirs in addition to Syrah and Petite Syrah.

I recently tasted through the 2005 lineup of Alcina Cellars Pinot Noirs. Because of the vagaries of weather in 2005, yields on the Sonoma Coast were tiny at 0.3 tons per acre, but more normal in the Russian River Valley at 3 tons per acre. I found the entire lineup quite interesting with all wines showing an admirable style exemplified by elegance. Alcohols were 14.5% or above but were well-integrated. All wines were closed with a synthetic stopper.