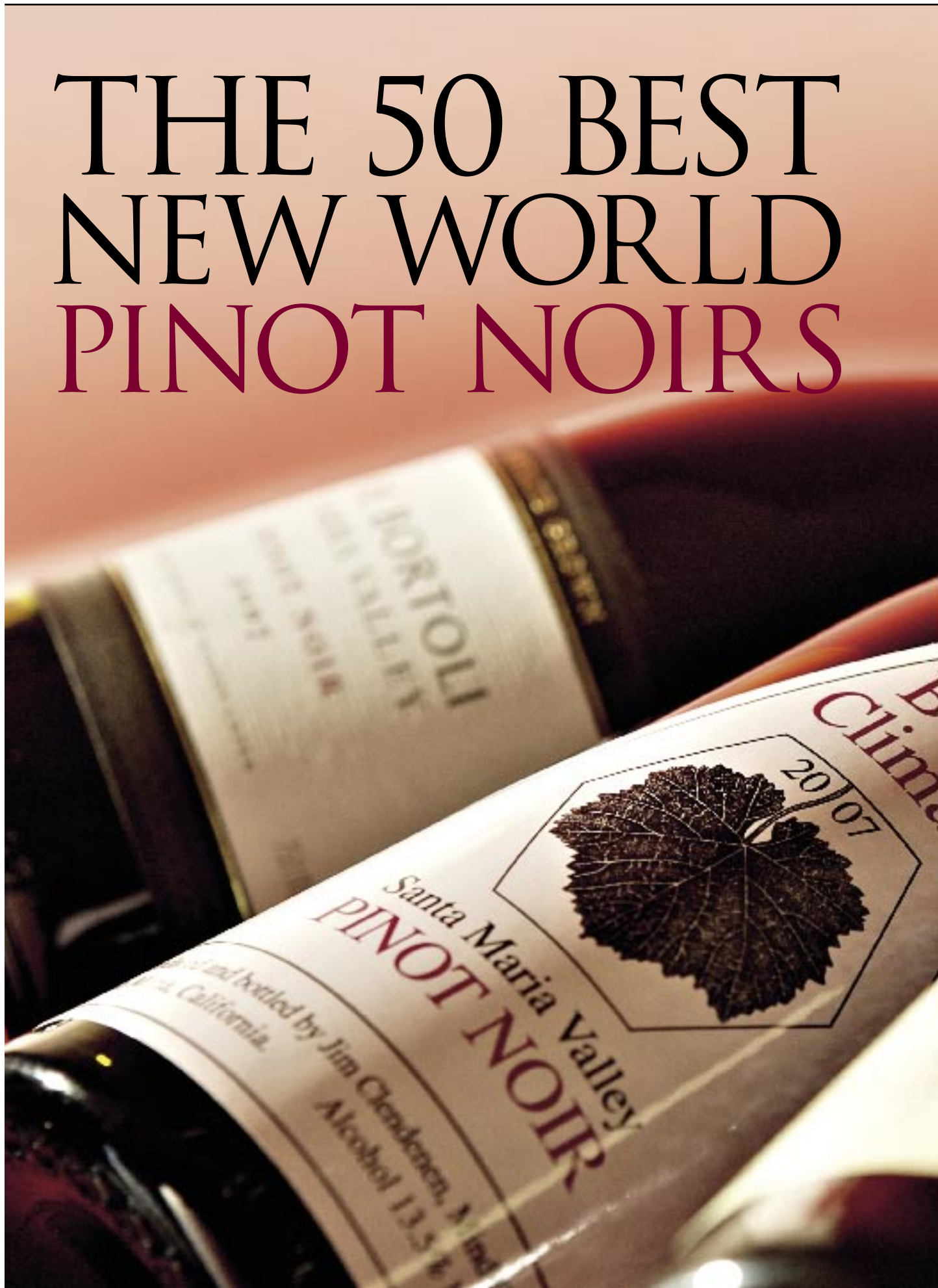


# THE 50 BEST NEW WORLD PINOT NOIRS



PHOTOGRAPHS: THOMAS SKOVSENDE

Pinot Noir is finally  
making a home for  
itself outside  
Burgundy.

**MATTHEW JUKES**  
rates the best of the  
New World, from  
Australia to the US

**I**t's taken 20 years, but I've finally done it. I've given up using Burgundy as a reference point for New World Pinot Noir. None of my notes now read 'Morey-like', 'Gevrey earthiness' or 'Volnay-textured'. This is like a sort of vinous confessional, but in the past, it was useful for me to use village names or particular domaine styles as a note-making tool, given that Burgundy will, at least for my lifetime, remain the global model for this, the most awesome and mesmerising of grapes.

But I don't do it with New World Cabernet and claret and I long ago cast off the Cornas/Crozes and cool-climate

Shiraz mantle. It's time to move on and my 50 choices here might convince you to do the same. The reason for my life change is that many New World countries now make their own definitive, regionally exact versions of Pinot Noir. They have their own world-renowned gurus and well-defined sub-regions. Vine age is rolling along nicely and clonal selection is more finite. If you aren't already on board, then shame on you. But don't beat yourself up too much: non-Burgundian Pinot Noir excellence is a newish phenomenon.

I published my first Great New Zealand Pinot Noir Classification in >

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late 2007, in my annual wine guide *Taste* (co-authored by Tyson Stelzer). We felt it was time for a guide to those Kiwi estates who were really getting it right in this specialist, but rather esoteric field. It seemed to us that many people were ham-fistedly mucking up the magic contained in a great bottle of Pinot, and we wanted to stick our necks out and say who'd got it right and who'd dropped the ball. I'm happy to report that there's more of the former than the latter these days.

Australia has sneaked up on the outside

in the Pinot race over the past few years via a large choice of superb wines available at all prices on UK shelves. The same cannot be said for the wines from the US. These days there is very little California or Oregon Pinot shipped here of any great quality (those dastardly Americans keep the top stuff for themselves), so I've had to work hard to track down the best. But they are pretty pricey, so perhaps best to look elsewhere just now. South Africa is on this list, with three good wines, and there are more to come, but they have

other grapes to concentrate on for now, so don't hold your breath. South America tries hard, but it's not firmly in the Pinot zone yet, though I've found a top Chilean example that proves they can do it.

Non-Burgundian Pinot Noir is finally getting the worldwide recognition it deserves – so much so that a few French superstars are raising their own game even further. Great news all round. **D**

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## Jukes' 50 greatest New World Pinots

### Australia

**Ashton Hills, Vineyard Reserve, Adelaide Hills, South Australia 2007** ★★★★★ (19/20)  
There's nothing to touch the integrity and reward in Stephen George's Pinots. Once Pinot central, Ashton Hills is now more of a cool-climate Shiraz haunt, but this wine just proves why many have got Guru George wrong. Drink now–2016.  
**N/A UK; [www.shop.adhills.com.au](http://www.shop.adhills.com.au)**

**De Bortoli, Reserve Release, Yarra Valley, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (18.5)  
It's delightful (and admirable) that De Bortoli is reserved about the amount of oak and intensity of fruit on display in this Reserve. Bigger is not better here, but longer and finer is actively encouraged. Drink now–2013. **£28.99; Odd**

**Piper's Brook, The Lyre, Tasmania 2005** ★★★★★ (18.5)  
With more purity and less muscle than the equally brilliant but as yet unreleased 2005 Reserve, this is an ethereal wine of precision and beauty. Tasmania is finally showing its vineyard-specific credentials. Drink now–2014. **£10.99; Adn, JRP**



**De Bortoli, Estate Grown, Yarra Valley, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (18)  
Steve Webber and his team build thrilling wines from entry-level to flagship. No one in the southern hemisphere comes close to this depth of field in their Pinot armoury. Drink now–2013. **£18.99; Odd**

**Pirie, Sigma, Tasmania 2005** ★★★★★ (18)  
Dr Andrew Pirie's reaction to the 2005 vintage in Tasmania is as unnervingly assured, detailed and original as the man himself. A stellar Tassie example. Drink now–2015. **£21.99–£22.49; Rsv, Stf**

**PHI, Lusatia Park, Yarra Valley, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (18)  
This beautiful single vineyard gives us a siren sound of wild berry fruit and a sexy, slippery palate. Now–2013.  
**£21.49; Cdn, ExW, Har, Vik, WDI, YWC**

**Ten Minutes by Tractor, McCutcheon Vineyard, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria 2006** ★★★★★ (18)  
This is the flamboyant Mornington at its enviable best with lashings of layered, boisterous red and black fruit and a heavenly, brocaded finish. Now–2013.  
**£36.99–£42; Ess, HBa, TWL**

**William Downie, Yarra Valley, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (18)  
Bill Downie's wines are enigmatic and often puzzling on first sip, but spend time unravelling them on your palate and the inevitable eureka moments are extraordinary. Now–2014.  
**£36.95; DII, WMa, Sel, HoM, You**

**Yabby Lake, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (18)  
Yabby's unstoppable march to the top of the Aussie Pinot League continues unchallenged. Structured, youthful and crammed with energy, this wine's got real attitude. Now–2014. **£24; Swg**

**Paringa Estate, Peninsula, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)  
Preferred to the Reserve (which is often a little oaky) this is a succulent, foresty, dark wine with gamey appeal and superb attack on nose and palate. Now–2012.  
**N/A UK; [www.paringaestate.com.au](http://www.paringaestate.com.au)**

**De Bortoli, Gulf Station, Yarra Valley, Victoria 2008** ★★★★★ (17)  
One of the planet's best-value Pinots. It should be allowed to age for 12 months before it's devoured. Sadly few bottles will get that pleasure as no one will wait that long. Now–2011. **£9.99; Sai**



**Devil's Corner, Tasmania 2008** ★★★★★ (17)  
Tassie is not designed to make inexpensive Pinot, but this wine bucks the trend and it does it with earth, spice and grip as well as fruit – smart work. Now–2011. **£9.95; AuB, Ave, Bct, ChS, Con, Hay, Hug Nov, You**

**Scotchman's Hill, Swan Bay, Victoria 2008** ★★★★★ (17)  
The second Pinot of Scotchman's Hill is better than the estate flagship, thanks to its fruit purity and lack of overt oak. The UK has had it for years, but no one buys it. Why? Now–2011. **£8.99; Maj**



**Ten Minutes by Tractor, 10X, Mornington Peninsula, Victoria 2007** ★★★★★ (17)  
Tractor's baby Pinot is chunky, bold and dark and is a joy to drink even though it is a little like a headstrong teenager on a Friday night jamboree. Now–2012.  
**£21.70–£21.99; TVD, VnN**

**Riposte, The Sabre, Adelaide Hills, South Australia 2007** ★★★★★ (17)  
Tim Knapstein's accuracy with Pinot is a reflection of his ample experience. Briary and layered, this is as exciting as any mid-weight European red regardless of variety. Now–2012. **£14.99; AWO, WSR**

**De Bortoli, Windy Peak, Victoria 2008** ★★★★★ (16.5)  
The fourth from De Bortoli. Windy Peak is a wine that has changed Pinot opinion, proving this grape can offer true value for money as well as the ultimate sensory experience. Drink now. **£7.99; Bth, Sai**



## Chile

**Viña Leyda, Secano Estate, Leyda Valley 2008** ★★★★★ (17)

The only way to introduce the greater market to Pinot is via a perfect example at an attainable price. This is my choice from the entire UK market. Leyda (and M&S) should feel proud of their unrivalled missionary work. Drink now. **£6.29; M&S**

## New Zealand

**Ata Rangi, Martinborough 2007** ★★★★★ (19)  
The standard bearer for Martinborough and still the finest Pinot of its style, this is a wine that has so much complexity that you must treat with the respect it commands. A modern-age trailblazer. Drink now–2016. **£36.95; HgD, Lib, You**

**Felton Road, Calvert Vineyard, Central Otago 2007** ★★★★★ (18.5)

The finest Pinot portfolio in New Zealand boasts a complete range of iconic wines – this is the most dramatic and audacious. It fizzles with magic and delivers everything you would wish of it. Drink now–2015. **£28–£35.20; Ave, BBR, J&B, Lai**

**Mt Difficulty, Central Otago 2007** ★★★★★ (18.5)

Another estates that flies beneath the radar yet which cracked the Pinot enigma

**Left and below: New Zealand wineries put New World Pinot on the map, but now other countries are vying for its crown**

years before the legions of pretenders. This wine, and all in MtD's Pinot portfolio, are unmissable and life-enhancing. Now–2014. **£20.57–£21.95; Cnr, NZH, Wai**

**Pyramid Valley Vineyards, Growers Collection, Calvert Vineyard, Central Otago 2007** ★★★★★ (18.5)

Winemaker Mike Weersing is as close to a wine visionary as I have found in recent years. His interpretation of this soil is phenomenal. Now–2015. **£28; Swg**

**Craggy Range, Calvert Vineyard, Central Otago 2007** ★★★★★ (18)

Three wines in this list come from one vineyard in Central Otago – Calvert, one of the world's most important Pinot Noir sites. Craggy's version is mesmerising. Now–2015. **£19.99; BnC**

**Escarpment, Martinborough 2007** ★★★★★ (18)

Larry McKenna is a laser-guided Pinot maker and his obsession is in simply mirroring his vineyards in the glass. This vintage is true Martinborough Pinot, with unforgettable essence. Now–2014. **£16.99–£22; Maj, Oxf, PIG, SHJ, Swg**

**Peregrine, Central Otago 2007** ★★★★★ (18)

A very high-level wine that has held its price for years, meaning you can have definitive Otago Pinot without breaking the bank – us Pinot freaks owe it a debt of gratitude. Now–2014. **£19; BBR**

**Auntsfield, Hawk Hill, Marlborough 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)

The softer Marlborough Pinot model is generous and welcoming but no less



attractive than more mineral types. This is one of the most intricate. Now–2012. **£16.99 (2006); Ess, Has, Hvn, WUF**



**Bald Hills, Single Vineyard, Central Otago 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)

A relatively new estate but one that has grabbed the essence of the soil and gained the traction and integrity this grape desires. Now–2012. **£25.95; CeD, Cnr, NZH, Whd**

**Delta Vineyards, Hatters Hill, Marlborough 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)

Matt Thomson is an accomplished winemaker and his Pinot genes are in place, too. But this wine is the first Delta to recognise his talent and realise the quality of the dirt in his vineyard. A delicious and thoughtful wine. Now–2012. **£16.99; Cmb, Dll, Smp**

**Pegasus Bay, Waipara 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)

Pinot often involves pain and Pegasus Bay isn't an easy pill to swallow. But where there's mystery and consternation, there's often unbridled joy and elation – this is one of those. Now–2015. **£22; NwG**

**Schubert Vineyard, Block B, Wairarapa 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)

Chunky oak and robust fruit mark this as a keeper, but there is immediate beauty too, and this forward wine, from a future classic piece of turf, is one to watch. Now–2015. **£25.99–£29.95; CeD, Cnr, SWC**

**Wither Hills, Marlborough 2007** ★★★★★ (17.5)

A popular wine and one that has always been made with 100% passion and commitment. The 2007 is phenomenal now but if you can, try to hang on to it – never an easy ask. Now–2012. **£15.99–£18.49; Bib, Odd, NZH, Wai**

**Ata Rangi, Crimson, Martinborough 2008** ★★★★★ (17)

Crimson is supposedly the wine to introduce you to its bigger Ata Rangi estate Pinot. But perversely, you need all of the Pinot knowledge in the world to understand just how special Crimson is. Now–2012. **£16.99; Crk, Har, HoM, N&P, NZH, Rsv, Vik, WFM, Wmb**

**Forrest Estate, Marlborough 2007** ★★★★★ (17)

The remarkable fact about this wine is that the price is so low. Dr John Forrest

## NEW WORLD PINOT

counters: 'it's the right price, everyone else's is too expensive – this is great-value Pinot'. He's right. Now–2012. **£10.99; Adn**

### Vavasour, Dashwood Estate, Marlborough 2007 ★★★★★ (17)

It's nice to know that some estates take their underling wines as seriously as their estate ones. Glen Thomas at Vavasour does. Dashwood is a lip-smacking, exact example. Now–2011. **£10.99; Odd**

## South Africa



### Bouchard Finlayson, Galpin Peak, Walker Bay 2007 ★★★★★ (18)

With more horse-power than other SA Pinots, Galpin Peak is a youthful brute, but there is serious breeding here. One of the Cape's finest ever. Now–2014. **£19.99–£29.99; GGR, L&S, SAO, Vir**

### Chamonix, Reserve, Franschhoek 2007 ★★★★★ (18)

One of the most remarkable properties in SA, this Pinot is every bit as alluring as the great wines from Otago and Mornington. Now–2013. **£11.99; Bac, BFV, BoC, Btl, CeD, Cmb, Def, Dlh, Han, PEy, Raf, Sta, SWC, Unc, WnA, WSo, WtB, WWin**

### Hamilton Russell, Walker Bay 2007 ★★★★★ (17.5)

With less overt oak influence and an overall lighter chassis than you might expect, this is a wine that might confuse fans, but it has swept me off my feet with its classic beauty. Now–2014. **£22.99; Ave, Evy, WiR, WMa, WSo**

## USA

### Au Bon Climat, Isabelle Morgan, California 2006 ★★★★★ (18.5)

The top wine from ABC, California's Pinot pioneers, is worth the price with its spice and exotic fruit rollercoaster. The oak is just as extraordinary. Devastatingly attractive. Now–2014. **£43.50; BBR**

### Beaux Frères, The Beaux Frères Vineyard, Oregon 2006 ★★★★★ (18.5)

Expensive, but worth it with the terrific texture and depth of flavour that is not won by chasing alcohol, but by nurturing vines. Now–2016. **£68.50, CeD, Fou, Wmb, WTr, You**

### Capiaux, Wilson Vineyard, California 2006 ★★★★★ (18.5)

Only 175 barrels are made of this wine, so



**Above: the Cape has great potential for adding Pinot to its repertoire. Hamilton Russell is among the finest exponents**

best of luck in finding any. Shockingly reserved, composed and completely and utterly lovely. Drink 2009–2015. **POA; VCI**

### Daedalus Cellars, Labyrinth, Oregon 2006 ★★★★★ (18.5)

Perhaps the entrancing nose, alluring flavour and romantic name did it for me. But on second taste I was even more transfixed. I hear that it is on its way to the UK very soon. Now–2014. **N/A UK; www.daedaluscellars.com**

### Littorai, Hirsch Vineyard, Sonoma County, California 2006 ★★★★★ (18.5)

A savoury, dense, delicious, multifaceted Pinot with incredible intensity, but no heat or unwanted oak on the finish (unlike 60% of Cal Pinots). A sensational wine. Now–2014. **£42.43; VCI**

### Caymus, Belle Glos Clark & Telephone, Santa Maria Valley, California 2006 ★★★★★ (18)

40-year-old fruit and a palate loaded with spice, smoke and almost Piemontese fruit notes, make this a valuable addition to the palette of first-class New World Pinot. Now–2013. **£31.50; Sel, WTr**

### Chehalem, Ridgecrest, Willamette Valley, Oregon 2006 ★★★★★ (18)

For goodness sake, can a UK agent put their hand up and import this wine! It's super-long and disconcertingly classy, like all of the others in the Chehalem portfolio, too. Now–2014. **N/A UK; www.chehalemwines.com**

### Elk Cove, Reserve, Oregon 2006 ★★★★★ (18)

One of the original Oregon heroes: great terroir, truthful, non-flashy winemaking. A glass makes you want the bottle, the bottle makes you want another. Very few Oregon Pinots can do that. Now–2013. **N/A UK; www.elkcove.com**

### Gary Farrell, Hallberg Vineyard, Russian River Valley, California 2006 ★★★★★ (18)

With bold, black cherry fruit and a firm kick of power and bravado, this is a rich, lusty, brooding Pinot with more intensity than many could handle. But have a go to see what's possible. Now–2013. **N/A UK; www.garyfarrellwines.com**

### Lachini Vineyards, Giselle, Oregon 2005 ★★★★★ (18)

Oregon is not famous for overtly sexy Pinot Noir, preferring the 'librarian-before-spectacle-removal-and-hair-shake-down' look, but this wine is utterly incredible with its phenomenal appeal. Now–2015. **£49.95; Hax, Vik, Vnd, WtB**

### Paul Hobbs, Russian River, California 2006 ★★★★★ (18)

I prefer this wine to Hobbs' pricier single-vineyard Lindsay, by virtue of its Zen-like control and flow of beguiling flavours. Not the strawberries 'n' cream flavours of many US Pinots, this is riveted to its soil. Now–2012. **£37.49; All**

### Au Bon Climat, Santa Maria, California 2007 ★★★★★ (17.5)

ABC's raspberry and cream entry-level Pinot is one of its finest wines. This estate cracked the code a long time ago – others still pay inordinate amounts to consultants who cannot even find their backside. Now–2012. **£18.50; 5RW, BBR, Evy, WFM, WnW, You**

### Domaine Drouhin, Cuvée Laurène, Oregon 2005 ★★★★★ (17.5)

A leader of the pack in Oregon, but one that was consistently reliable as opposed to truly outstanding – until this vintage came along. Well done! Now–2014. **£28; Rsv, You, Vyd**

### Marmesa Reed, Harvest Dessert 2006 ★★★★★ (16.5)

My joker in the pack: a sweetie with a boozy berry palate and sharp, cranberry finish. Utterly addictive and a bit of a laugh, but essential if you are a true Pinot freak. Now–2013. **£8.99–£10.49/375ml; Bib, CeD, WSh**

*For full UK stockist details, see p107*