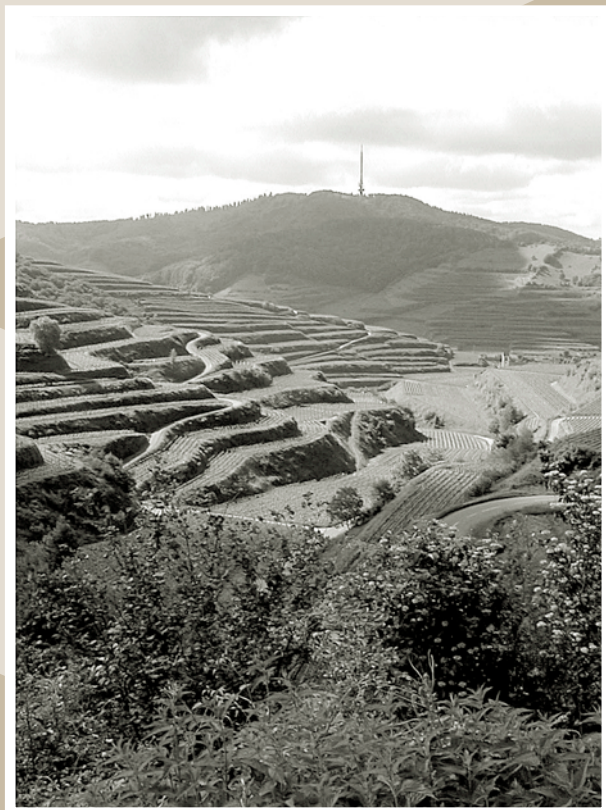


# CHEHALEM

S U M M E R / F A L L 2 0 0 2



## DOPPLEGANGER, *or There's Another World Out There!*

By Harry Peterson-Nedry

Looking beyond phalanx after phalanx of aggressively growing vines, verdant and breathing silently in early summer optimism, looking out over layers of pewter hills in the distance, each grading lighter as it fades into the sky at sunset, there is comfort as well as beauty, because this is home. Or is it? Could this be halfway around the planet?

There are philosophies and religions and science fictions that argue parallel worlds exist. Perhaps. The ticklish thing would seem to be moving between these enantiomeric worlds, giving credence to each by acting in both. And then, perhaps to bring something back upon return.

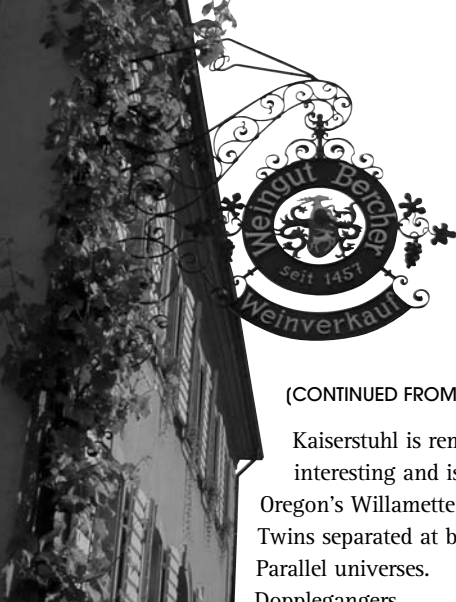
In May I visited southern Germany with my daughter, Wynne, freshly graduated from college and yet tolerating another wine event in her life as we represented Oregon at the International Pinot Gris Symposium. And, although we confronted a strange glottal, multi-syllabic language and postcard narrow cobblestone street villages with clocktower gates, it seemed strangely familiar. As we were to find, the

little-exported wine region in Baden known as the (CONTINUES NEXT PAGE)



PHOTO: DR. CHRIS HOFMAIER

(Above) Terraced Vineyards in the Kaiserstuhl ♦ (Below) Harry and Wynne at PG Symposium Grand Menu Dinner, with Chamber Music, 30 pinot gris over 8 courses and 2am ending!



(CONTINUED FROM FRONT)

Kaiserstuhl is remarkably interesting and is almost Oregon's Willamette Valley. Twins separated at birth. Parallel universes. Dopplegangers.

There's such a thing as a "cellar palate." If you taste your own, or your region's wines exclusively, eventually you get a myopic view of the wine world. You miss the differences that add to the richness of the wine experience, you miss the strides made by an always improving and dynamic worldwide wine industry, and you miss the fun. If nothing else, the 2002 International Grauburgunder Symposium in Endingen was a great cellar palate cleanser. With appropriately PC subtlety acknowledging the other names of pinot gris and pinot grigio, the gathering attempted to bridge differences on behalf of a cool climate grape varietal of which we at Chehalem are very fond. We found the differences worth investigating. But the similarities were unnerving.

All significant regions in the world growing pinot gris were represented. We were the only Americans. We were welcomed as long-lost friends returned, our petty German attempts excused as an opportunity for them to practice school or TV English, delivered with great humor and friendly inclusion in activities and meals that stretched well into tomorrow, a time travel fueled by after dinner drinking of wine and schnapps or eau de vies. Our hosts observed that the French drag out meals interminably drinking all their wines in contrived pairings and leaving after the last course, whereas Germans eat their meal with a little wine, then hang around drinking double what was consumed in the meal during conversation and Brueghel revelry.

Differences in the Kaiserstuhl include pinot

gris styling, with very heavy, new oak fermented, low acid dry wines as the new style, replacing an older reflection of the variety called Rulander that is even heavier and very sweet, reflecting a late, warm ripening. The new style was initiated in the mid-eighties to reinvigorate the variety, being given the Grauburgunder name to differentiate it, while those slow to collaborate continued a sweeter late-harvest style. The same innovators urging this change, primarily Eckhardt Bercher from Weingut Bercher in Burkheim, also began the Symposium, the event being partially a promotion for the region in a similar way that the International Pinot Noir Conference (IPNC) promotes the Willamette Valley. Martin Bercher, his son, having visited Chehalem during an around-the-world backpacking tour several years back, was our translator and primary host, receiving us as first and second generations of our winemaking family. Martin himself moved his young family into the ancestral winery home in January, his parents moving downhill into the village, as Martin assumed control, the eleventh generation on this site since immigrating from Switzerland in the 1400s!



*Wolf Salwey, Oberrotweil innovator, having used 27 months in new oak for Pinot gris, with some success—called it "in extremis"*

And since the 1200s this region has had its complement of grape varieties, brought in by monastic orders whose ruins still stand in Burkheim and in which the first Symposium was inaugurated. Here is where the similarities begin to be significant, especially considering the grapes, topography, soils and adjoining lands. The Kaiserstuhl grows primarily pinot noir (spatburgunder). The whites are pinot gris and pinot blanc (blauburgunder), with a little riesling, sylvaner, muller-thurgau and chardonnay. Since the

beginning. Like us.

The growing region is very much like ours, the Kaiserstuhl name given because the hillsides approximate a grand, regal chair or stool, with the parallel Vosges mountains to the west and the Black Forest to the east the two arms of the chair, and the low volcanic hillsides in-between, where the grapegrowing is done, is the seat. Simple maps of the Willamette Valley reveal our twinship, with the Coast Range to the west, Cascades to the east, and our volcanic

uplifts in-between the well-known grape-growing hillsides of Red Hills of Dundee, Eola Hills, Chehalem Mountains, etc. Their soils are volcanic, except in lower areas where there is a blown sedimentary called loess, similar to our Laurelwood soils in the Chehalem Mountains. Elevations are almost identical. And, although they are at the cool 49th parallel as far as latitude, whereas we are at the 45th, heat accumulation is very close.

The Kaiserstuhl region is separated only by the Rhine and fifteen or twenty miles (and several major wars) from Alsace, our German-French speaking standard for pinot gris, pinot blanc, gewürztraminer and riesling. (It was interesting to have Eckhardt and Christiane Bercher accompany us to visit our single Alsace producer for the trip, crossing the Rhine on the way to Strasbourg, startling to realize it was a trip almost never taken between regions, even though from their vineyards you can look across the Rhine to Colmar and Alsace's vineyards).

In this global communications and travel environment, there were few surprises technically in grapegrowing and winemaking, although differing approaches always stimulate reappraisal and experimentation, especially when wines are very good but differ-

ent stylistically. Dijon clones are the newest plantings; small amounts of drip irrigation augment the shallow soils on the tops of southern-facing terraces; with facades and cellars that are ancient, equipment and tanks and technologies are what you'd expect from German engineering.

For example, Bernard Huber's winery is as intelligently engineered as any I've ever seen and embodies all modern approaches for pinot noir winemaking we know. He, plus others such as Heger, Bercher, Salwey, Johner and others (even in more distant regions, like Werner Knipser in Pfalz), makes pinot noir that would be indistinguishable from the best Oregons: The same coopers we use; the same fermentors and punchdown processes, with strange names and new innovations in stainless steel; use, and possibly overuse, of wine manufacturing machinery like concentrators in only a couple cellars; cooperative organic and biodynamic groups, plus sensitive recycling extending to capture of rainwater.

There is comfort in finding others like you, in reconnecting with long-lost kin, even if you never knew them or even if they aren't. There is reassurance that you are on the right path, that you could help or seek help from each other—that there's intelligent life out there and we are not alone. 🍷



## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### CHEHALEM'S ANNUAL RESERVE RELEASE AND ART SHOW

August 24-25, 11 to 5, at the winery  
*Great Art: Liquid and Solid, The Ultimate in Mixed Media.* This year we welcome back painter Humberto Gonzalez and fusion glass artist Carmen Reynolds and welcome anew photographers Ron Dobrowski and Mike Haverkate, batik artist Cheryl Rogers, printmaker Susan Murrell, as well as Bonnie Meltzer, who creates elaborate figures from discarded objects, and Pat Condron, who creates hand crafted paper pieces. We will sample all three of the new releases plus offer a special formal tasting of our 1999 Experimental Pinot Noirs with the winemaking team.



Humberto Gonzalez and Kris Butters at a prior show.

### CHEHALEM WINEMAKER DINNER AT THE HERBFARM

August 22, 2002. Washington's French Laundry equivalent, this is to many the best restaurant in the state, especially so since rising from the ashes of a fire several years ago phoenix-like and moving to a very convenient Woodinville location as keystone of a resort complex including the Willows Lodge, an upscale inn and spa. One of the most impressive restaurant wine cellars in the country. Call the Herbfarm directly at 206.784.222.

### OREGON WINE MARKETING COALITION TASTINGS

Portland, OR 8/26; Seattle, WA 8/27;  
Phoenix, AZ 9/4; Los Angeles, CA 9/5.  
Current wine releases will be available for taste, and there will be a seminar in each city on *Oregon Pinot Gris: Born Here and Best Here.* Consumer tasting in Portland only. For information, call OWMC at (503) 631-3176 or email, [owmc@ccwebster.net](mailto:owmc@ccwebster.net). Registration for trade online at [www.owmc.net](http://www.owmc.net). 🍷



# NEW RELEASES

By Dan Beekley, National Marketing Manager

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY, IN THE NORTHWESTERN CORNER OF OREGON, is farming territory, its shape defined by spectacular mountains. To the west of the Willamette River is the coast range and the Pacific Ocean; to the east, the mighty Cascades and the Oregon high desert. The climate and soil of the Willamette Valley make it a rich agricultural center—for vineyards and for materials needed in the kitchen. This valley sustains over 200 year-round agricultural crops—from hops to clover to grass seed to berries to nuts. Mushrooms are hunted year round.

Summer brings out the best of the Willamette Valley's bounty and marks the release of three wines from our cellar suitable for its natural fare:

## 2001 CORRAL CREEK VINEYARDS DRY RIESLING RESERVE

This is our wine of choice when we want to startle someone in a good way. We love the complexity and concentration of this wine, and love the reactions when others realize it, their faces going from an "OK, sure" tolerance to the "Wow" excitement. Aromatically, the wine leaps from the glass with peach nectar, pineapple, and white flowers. There is excellent palate weight

but bracing freshness to match. This is a dry wine that screams for summer sausages on the grill, a sloppy crab dinner, and soft cheeses. Only 170 cases made.

## 2000 RIDGECREST VINEYARDS PINOT NOIR

There is a lot of pinot noir coming from Oregon these days. It's important to have a vineyard site that's a standard bearer for all the others. In terms of pedigree and maturity, there are very few places that can compare to this now 22-year vineyard. This is a low-density, dry-farmed vineyard that yields grapes of unusual complexity and grace. This bottling features a great core of black fruit aromas, some spice box ingredients, and a lengthy, complete finish. Big and chewy, but elegant, expect this to vanish quickly as did the highly lauded '99. Grab some now but open it on Thanksgiving with a roasted duckling and some wild mushrooms.

## 2000 IAN'S RESERVE CHARDONNAY

Entirely Dijon clone, this is our attempt to make a fine white Burgundy, complete with richness, balance and great acid structure for aging. It is an elegant, ripe, and generous Chardonnay which delivers spices, tree fruit and light butterscotch impressions building on a core of tropical fruit and melon. Dijon clone is the key; already reviewed nationally as press builds for Dijon clone Chardonnay from our cool climate, this wine received 91 points, finally recognizing the world-class nature of modern Chardonnay from Oregon. We are collaboratively talking to press and touring markets with six or seven winery friends in the valley who are equally impassioned about Dijon chardonnay. This is a wine you could drink tonight with a dinner of roasted pork tenderloin, citrus salad, and a chilled soup of summer fruits. 🍷



## WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

*Wine Enthusiast Magazine*, July 2002 "Dijon Clones Make All the Difference" by Paul Gregutt  
...Dijon Clones--are making wines that are a quantum leap better; thrilling wines that belong with the best in the country. Chehalem's Harry Peterson Nedry is one of a group of Northern Willamette Valley winemakers committed to redefining cool-climate chardonnay using the Dijon clones...the natural balance, complexity and elegance of the fruit, combined with vivid acidity...  
**2000 Ian's Reserve Chardonnay:** 91 Points. Young and Sassy, this wine is already showing lovely nuances of toast, spice, lees and mineral. Complex, vivid and beautifully balanced, with a lot of fresh, leesy texture and the tangy fruit riding on top. Classy winemaking, elegant and sophisticated.  
**2000 Willamette Valley Chardonnay:** 90 points. Review out this month.

*Decanter*, March 2002 "The Stars of Oregon" by Michael Schachner  
Harry Peterson-Nedry, co-owner and founder of Chehalem, a top wine producer in Oregon's Willamette Valley, is smiling... the wines that are on the market today or will be coming onto the market over the next couple of years, particularly the Pinot Noirs, are as good as any the state has made in its 30-year modern winemaking history...

*K&L Wine Merchants*, San Francisco, CA, April 2002  
...keep an eye out for Chehalem's 2000 single vineyard pinot noirs! They were amazing! ...The quality is so high and the wines will show fantastically upon release. I would not miss an opportunity to buy some remaining 1999s ...1999 Chehalem Rion Reserve Pinot Noir...

*Epicurious.com*, May 2002 "Pinot Noir: The Heartbreak Grape" by Anthony Dias Blue  
...Pinot Noir is the ultimate challenge... the Holy Grail of the vintner's art... When it succeeds, Pinot Noir can transport you with its sheer beauty. It's sensuous, ripe, and fruity, yet always retains an earthy quality that recalls the soil in which it was grown... Oregon's Willamette Valley has become one of the most promising Pinot Noir regions in the New World, with a climate that very closely resembles that of Burgundy...

*Northwest Palate*, July/August 2002

**2000 Corral Creek Vineyards Pinot Noir:** Highly Recommended. Bright garnet color. Carmel toast and red fruit aromas. Bright and vibrant on the palate, with flavors of cherry fruit and spiced oak. Long, juicy cherry finish balances youthful tannins...

**2000 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Noir:** Highly Recommended. Garnet color. Graham and black cherry aromas. Concentrated, focused flavors of black cherry and wood spice. Sweet plum finish balances youthful tannins.

The Cellar Door, Portland, OR Bryan Shuttleworth

**2001 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris:** Being my usual, critical self, especially when it comes to so many Oregon Pinot Gris, it was a thrill to taste what I thought was one of the best Oregon Pinot Gris that has ever crossed my lips. This wine is utterly ... seamless, and is one that more Oregon producers of Pinot Gris should take a look at...

*Diversion Magazine*, May 2002 Matt Kramer

...California for all its marketing muscle and vineyard acreage, is not the epicenter of pinot gris. Instead, the American homeland for pinot gris is Oregon...Although California now has more pinot gris vineyards than Oregon...it is Oregon that *identifies* with pinot gris...

*Oregon Wine Report*, May 2002 "Good Grief, Oregon Pinot Gris is Great!"

Chehalem Proves It: Pinot Gris Ages Gracefully! At a recent vertical tasting of Chehalem Pinot gris wines, it was conclusively shown that as much as pinot gris can be a great drink-it-while-it's-fresh wine, it can also add new depths of character and delight with age.

**2000 Pinot Gris Reserve (OWR Premier Selection)** Silvery yellow lemon color with fresh straw, flint and stone fruit aromas. Soft leesy character in the mouth with bright tasty grapefruit and fresh apple flavors. Wonderfully balanced with soft mouth feel and bright acids. Finishes very long with great citrus peel flavors. ❖



