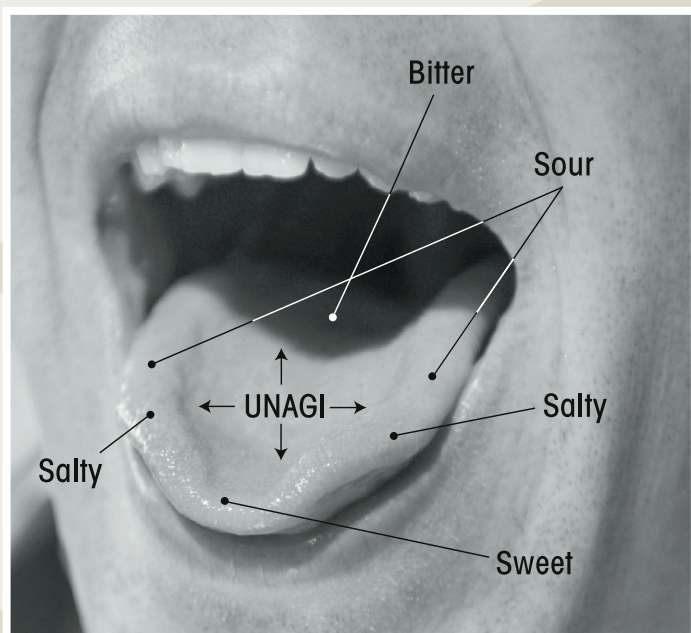


CHEHALEM

FALL 2007



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SATYRICON, or, Amuse Bush, to Start?

By Harry Peterson-Nedry

The public media and trade presses have been awash in recent wine-related breakthroughs about which you might be interested, since they promise to change the wine industry radically over the next decade. We've recapped the tastiest bits of news below, and, as in all things at Chehalem, there is a nugget of truth or principle imbedded here within a hard-surfaced rant or cotton-candy billow of frivolity. *Please Note: Read at your own risk—we know we may not have gotten everything quite right!*

FOOD-AND-WINE PAIRING BREAKTHROUGH!

Representatives of this newsletter, dressed as dental hygienists in marshmallow shoes and lift-and-separate undergarments (they aren't as comfortable as females let on, by the way), have successfully counted and characterized taste organelles in the mouth of taster-savant Robert Parker in a pre-dawn cellar raid. The feat was tantamount to finding another prime number or measuring the gravitational deflection of light as it passes by the sun to prove the physicality of the photon. In other words, it was, like, cool.

Literally bristling with taste buds, gifted tasters like Parker taste vividly in all five taste dimensions: salty, sweet, sour, bitter, and *unagi*. Through careful study of the mother lode of taste

that is his palate, it was determined that the fifth dimension had earlier been misidentified, a little like the planetary gaffe that Pluto became. Those less skilled than us understandably confused *umami* (pronounced yo-mama in the South where I grew up), a Japanese concept that permits MSG and soy sauce to be included in the USDA food pyramid in a cosmically unified and balanced way (a little like a food *feng shui*), with *unagi*, fresh water eel. It all seems so reasonable now that *unagi* has taken its rightful place in defining what perfect taste is all about. Follow me to Fuji's Sushi, and you'll see that all I order has *unagi*: python, caterpillar, *unagi nigiri*, and probably even miso soup—it is the Japanese bacon! Once you've found and reached peace with your personal *unagi*, perfect matches are easy, everything beginning to taste a little like chicken, resonating with

(Above) The Tasting Palate: As seen in this news-breaking photo of the taster-savant's palate—his taste organelles just bristling in their many forms—it's obvious why he has such refined taste and we are dumb as stumps. But, he has to live with all those road-map arrows and dots on his tongue, we don't.

[continues next page]

Chardonnay or with Merlot. Follow your *unagi*, and it will set you free, or maybe that will be caused by the sausage you found in the back of the refrigerator.

Novel Sensory Regions in the Human Body Discovered

A PAULING SEXUAL FINDING: Funded by a consortium that includes Consolation Brands, the American Chemical Society, Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate* in association with Rupert Murdoch, Chehalem (an Oregon winery), Dow Chemical, and *Hustler* magazine, research from the California Linus Pauling Vitamin *Si* Institute has identified a zone adjacent to salivary glands in 90% of humans that reacts to specific trigger compounds and stimulates orgasm-like autonomic responses. The response compounds that volatilize upon tasting include certain flavonoids found only in red wine varieties such as Pinot Noir and Syrah grown in cool climates.

Although counterintuitive that cool climates can induce hot responses, some theoretical researchers from Germany and Ontario have deduced that it is either an unexplained uber-coolness of Pinot Noir at work or global climate change inverting world orders to where Republicans are protecting the rights of immigrant farm workers and Democrats are balancing budgets and protecting family values. Spin-off research is focusing on scratch-and-sniff technologies as a delivery mechanism for concentrated versions called Pinot Noir-Noir. Trials are planned for the spring of 2009 in both the *Wine Advocate* and *Hustler*.

The U.S. government has all trials under intense scrutiny, including those involving tertiary derivatives called Pinot Noir-Noir-Noirs, which are being investigated for intelligence uses in Washington D.C.-area laboratories and escort services. Applications are rumored to include interrogation and photographic aids for CIA prisons like Abu Ghraib, foreign service cocktail kits for the Middle East, and executive branch indoctrination therapies to humanize inevitably dull U.S. vice presidents. Former President Bill Clinton reputedly was subjected unknowingly to some of the earliest trials of Noir-3, but the trial response range was not great enough to show statistically significant differences over his elevated background libidinous levels.

Short News Items from the Trade Pubs

KUDOS TO THE OREGON WINE INDUSTRY

for bringing worldwide reputation, long-awaited scads of tourists, and a blossoming of the tax base! And in thanks, how about additional onerous taxes by counties in successful areas of the state to pay for extra highway patrols for all the drunks and to maintain roadways from all the wear and tear tourists inflict? Such taxes were proposed in the Oregon State Legislature this year by

wine-country senators who take little care in covering their prohibitionist leanings, but who have no problem selling personal property at all-time record-high prices. Or, how about county commissioners denouncing charities in the heart of wine country for accepting wine, and prohibiting them from receiving public funds if they run any auctions that involve donated wine products? These same officials permit wineries donating money to charities (and their campaigns), but suggest not asking how the wineries get it. (Although funny to imagine, this is true and so not very funny. Just funny-strange. Funny-ironic and funny-I-feel-like-a-criminal.)



Small vines, tiny vineyards, and miniscule AVAs are a possibility now, with big bucks a possible result. Small yields are of course another result. But, like bonsai, this is a hobby for many anyway.

EVEN SHORTER NEWS ITEM: Small grape plants developed by bonsai consultants to a group of Oregon wineries have been introduced to a secret vineyard site in what vintners hope will be designated the smallest AVA in the United States. The plants were designed to take bona fide small-lot ego wines a step further. Counting on microscarcity driving the commercial viability of the project, vintners told reporters they plan to aggressively pursue the Mini-Cooper, Japanese, and dollhouse-crafting markets, using miniature bottles and corks. They have approached vendors to supply temperature-controlled wine cabinets for desk drawers. And, of course, they need tiny corkscrews. Not a big wine, but refined!

Discussions continue with the U.S. Treasury's TTB seeking a novel "mobile AVA" status permitting movement of vines regularly to follow good weather, wine tourists, and NASCAR races.

Grape Cloning Offers Potential for On-Vine Winemaking

FROM GRAPE PLANT TO WINE PLANT:

Australian biotech researchers have simultaneously successfully integrated cloning and nanomachine technologies to create what ostensibly is winemaking *in situ*, or full-complement red wine production ON the vine. Grape vines have been modified genetically to

stimulate production of a growth hormone at ripenesses of 27 brix, which then activates heretofore-passive yeast blooms on grape berry surfaces. The result is a spontaneous fermentation on-vine, timed to begin at a specified level of overripeness.

AND BARREL ANYONE? In addition, genetic sites have been identified on grapevine DNA that are responsible for flavor and aroma compound precursors resembling barrel vanillins and other spices, as well as lactic notes found after secondary fermentation. Again, not only can they be turned on and off in digital fashion, but they can be adjusted to give varying degrees of artificial flavoring. Algorithms have been programmed, controlling both parameters in concert and allowing an unnaturally strong joint extraction to customize wine sizes. Parker constants have been calculated for ready correlation of product to price points and resultant near 100-point quality levels. In an attempt to logically extend these breakthroughs, nanomechanical designers at Japan's Ishikawajima Heavy Industries have in collaboration devised and successfully transplanted machines only two microns in size into grape clusters that clean the resulting fermented product, yielding an acceptable but slightly turbid wine for bottling. The bot mites have been given the name Zamboni by Canadian members of the research team. Beer and organ music accelerated cleanup in early trials. This suggests that the Industrial Revelation is not over yet.

RUSTICA CELLARS STRIVES FOR AUTHENTICITY: A new communal Oregon winery's founding principle is veneration of the natural, emulating the way it used to be done: Field blends of intermixed grape varieties (reds and whites) make up Rustica Cellars' vineyards. *Pigeage au naturel* is their preferred method of punchdown for red wine ferments. Fermentations are exclusively native with American Indian shamans officiating at the beginning of ferments and rabbis conferring the Jewish tradition on special bottlings known as "Indian Kosher," designed to be drunk with Hebrew National franks. Olive oil and paraffined rag closures have been reinstated as wine bottle seals. Laissez-faire viticulture is practiced; communal maharishi, family member, and pharmacist T. M. Goldberg was quoted as saying "biodynamic protocols are too technical and rational, dude," proceeding to describe all the things commune members (their neighbors call them communists for short) don't do to their vines. Rustica is seeking LEEDS certification for its teepee winery building. The structure's features include passionate heating and cooling linked to members' biorhythms, with CO₂ and hookah recycling to a mini vineyard greenhouse; a burro-powered water pumping wheel; and a child-size carbon footprint with burro compost between the toes. Rustica receives only bicyclists and hikers at their tasting room, with trade sales utilizing a one-tier local system and wine deliveries limited to Portland and Salem vegan and organic restaurants. Deliveries are made with a mule-drawn wagon during cool times of the year, so long as Country Faire isn't happening in Eugene.

SCREWCAP UPDATE: Ohmigod, apocalyptic warnings just in from the cork industry suggest that screwcaps, not winemakers, are responsible for "reduced" wines; that there is a dangerously short supply of helixes in natural reserves, caused by their use in making the curvy thingy in the screwcap; and that data now correlates screwcap use to low Parker scores and even to body counts in the Iraq war. Closure is difficult in many arenas.

NEW RIEDEL GLASS: George Riedel has just announced a new "Scheisse" glass to go with its modern "O"-shape family of glassware. The glass was created to complement wines with musty TCA-infected natural corks and wines from regions known for their barnyard characteristics, i.e., black humus earth, fecal wafts, Brett Band-Aid, and sweaty saddle heaviness (as if one were thrown from a horse in less than ideal paddock situations). The design is flat and cow-pie shaped, with the bowl lip turned in on itself to compound aromatic pungency, to make tasting difficult, and to facilitate its use as a petri dish for plating the infections for identification.



Shuttle sommelier is now a reality, as NASA permits wine in orbit. And it looks like this one has selected well. Can we anticipate holiday excursions, with open bay doors, lawn chairs, and Tim McGraw booming on the sound system?

SPACE SHUTTLE FLIGHTS TO FINALLY PERMIT WINE: Reversing previous policy, NASA administrators have agreed to permit alcoholic beverages such as wine on board space-shuttle flights beginning in 2008. The policy previously attempted to reflect the current administration's conviction that drinking wine is not Christ-like and therefore sinful, whether on Earth or in orbit. Restrictions were relaxed when advisors convinced them to read forward in the Bible to where Jesus drank wine and actually made and distributed it himself to multitudes of people. W was enthusiastic, saying: "This reading thing—we call this thing with books reading—is neat since it uses the same words we talk!" There was no change to policy prohibiting loaves and fishes in space, as fish fries and shrimperos compromise orbital hygiene.

FEDERAL RESEARCH BUDGETS INCREASED FOR WINE-DELIVERY SYSTEMS: Defense and space program budgets have been modified at the request of administration officials to focus increased attention on wine-delivery systems for wartime and space travel

applications, defense department spokespeople disclosed Tuesday. Key among technologies designated for accelerated work within the next six months is scratch-and-sniff, an established sensory strategy used in publishing and perfume marketing

in smelly fashion magazines, that will be improved to quickly dissolve in dilute alcohol solutions, producing a drink not unlike a glass of Keno Jackson Chardonnay or a cute cartoon animal Aussie Shiraz, one being a white and the other a red wine (I think).

EDITOR'S NOTE

CRITICS CRY FOWL: Chicken

jokes amuse some people, some people aren't amused. It's not clear what this means, but wine critics are in here somewhere. And they aren't going to have a job anymore with wine becoming so easily manipulated and most of it tasting and looking the same, whether it's Cabernet, Grenache, Pinot Noir, or Riesling. If all scales are calibrated to the same wine



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line and type, or what we here call linotype, and production efficiency makes them all Two-Buck-Upchuck price levels, then what's a wine critic to be critical of? Maybe doping scandals in baseball or Washington D.C.—influence peddling? Or maybe Chehalem newsletters?

Or where on the *unagi* scale certain bar foods fall, like how much so-called buffalo wings taste like chicken, not cloven-hoofed beasts? ♣

(Above) Here's a chicken, in case you haven't had frog legs or rattlesnake or fresh water eel recently. Bright? No. But it reminds me of the thousands I grew up with—maybe that's the joke. Looks a little like Aunt Edna.

ANNOYANCES, or It's Not Supposed to Be That Way

If this newsletter doesn't stimulate you or make you chuckle or make you a tad angry, you may be dead. At least it should annoy you. If not yet annoyed, pick from the following tidbits and eek out a small rant.

TALK DRY, DRINK SWEET — Ever notice how most casual wine drinkers insist on only "dry" wines, but prefer noticeably "sweet" wines in reality?

OH, I ONLY DRINK RED — An expectation foisted on the public by our wine industry, critics, and trade that white wines are not a destination, just a milepost along the way to understanding wines, with the ultimate experience being expensive, big red wines. This ignores the fact that the search is really for interest, complexity, nuance, finesse, and food compatibility. Wineries have been complicit by not focusing equally on white wines and by not demanding their white wines be complex. Great Riesling, Chardonnay, and the like have been marginalized in the process. Remember that at the turn of the last century great wine lists sold white wines like German Riesling and White Burgundies for more than the first-growth Bordeaux.

BIGGER IS BETTER — Similar to above, except taken to another level of abstraction, or is it extraction, by critics like Robert Parker, with terroir and uniqueness suffering in a flood of big, fruity, oaky New World (and recently Old World) red wines.

ANOTHER CHICKEN JERK — Could I have the jerk chicken or blackened snapper so I can't taste the food? Then the big butt red wine might work. Our food traditions are "stone age or chuck wagon" in David Bergen's words, about how to cover up flaws or how to quickly deal with what you've foraged—grilling, saucing and spicing, or boiling the bejuices out of it. Puritan constraints still suck the joy out of food and wine (and music and art).

When will local sourcing and a cultural approach to food and wine be the norm? Maybe as climates slow us down to a Mediterranean pace.

WHEN WATCHING'S NOT ENOUGH — When the observation itself influences what's being observed, things begin to smack of Quantum Theory realities. When Fox News makes the news instead of reporting it, when NBA referees begin betting on the outcomes of games they officiate, or when critics' influences encourage winemakers to make wines for submittal rather than just submitting what they've made, we've gone too far. We're asking to be had. Objectivity has its place and, clench your jaw and hold on, maybe we have to be the sheep that refuse to step off the cliff just because the others around us have. Independence begins at home (or, perhaps stubbornly, in Missouri).

SINGLE-VINEYARD WINES ARE SUPERIOR TO BLENDS — Yeah, just like other generalizations, it all depends. On whether the site is really special in someone's besides the vineyard owner's mind, shows consistent characteristics year after year, and is not subjugated by the winemaker's style. Blends can be superior when complementary cuvées make, through synergy, a wine no vineyard component alone could have made. They also are more likely to be consistent in final character with a talented winemaker. Key: ask the winemaker's opinion and don't generalize.

WHEN WINEMAKERS DRINK ONLY THEIR OWN WINE — Some winemakers may be just as stuck in a rut as you. I wouldn't trust their opinion. Our job is to be open, inquisitive, technically curious, and objective. A cellar palate fights all of that and is all you'll have if you appreciate your own work too much. We learn from others, what they do, and the differences they create. We can be proud of our own creations, but should stop short of re-creating that old brand, Narcissist. ♣



WHAT THEY'RE SAYING



2006 INOX™ Chardonnay

Food & Wine, October 2007, "American Wine Awards '07" Best Chardonnay \$20 and Under This year's list of winners...is packed with many unexpected choices, including a top Chardonnay from Oregon. "For the first time ever an unoaked Chardonnay came out on top," said Editor in Chief Dana Cowin in a press release about these highly acclaimed awards. In the magazine, notes included: "...a palate-pleasing leanness that brings those juicy peach, apple and tropical-melon flavors to the fore. Unhindered by oak, it's all pure Chardonnay."



CHEHALEM

Wine & Spirits, November 2007, "2007 Winery of the Year" Included in the TOP 100 WINERIES OF THE YEAR. How many wineries are there in the world? We are honored to be included on this prestigious list!

2004 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Noir

93 *Pinot Report*, April 2007, Gregory S. Walter Ripe, earthy, spicy flavor, silky texture, sweet oak, good structure and balance; long finish. Beautiful aromas and flavors...

2004 Reserve Pinot Noir

92 *Pinot Report*, April 2007, Gregory S. Walter Deep, rich, dusty cherry flavors with earthy, herbal notes; sweet oak, good structure and balance; long finish. Deep and complex with a great core of cherry fruit...

2004 Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir

92 *Pinot Report*, April 2007, Gregory S. Walter Herbal, dried cherries, complex, earthy notes; sweet oak, silky texture; good structure and balance; long finish. Ripe and delicious Pinot with a great palette of interesting aromas and flavors.

2004 Ian's Reserve Chardonnay

91 *Wine & Spirits*, October 2007 This incandescent chardonnay seems sunlit, its golden apple and nectarine aromas lifted and bright. It's a rich wine, balanced with succulent pear and peach flavors that are held in check by clean acidity. Everything is poised, gentle, and golden...

2006 INOX™ Chardonnay

Sunset, August 2007 "Hold the Oak: Look for Lighter, Crisper Chardonnays in the Market," Sara Schneider A nose full of minerals and stone fruit, followed by tropical notes (mango) lurking with crisp, tart citrus on the palate. One of Six "Our Picks".

2005 Reserve Dry Riesling

Oregonian, July 15, 2007, "Surviving Summer with Worthwhile Whites," Matt Kramer This is impressively dense, austere riesling that displays a surprisingly mineral-inflected flavor...Bone-dry and possessed of superb acidity, this is a riesling that will improve and become more flavor-resonant with upward of a decade's worth of aging in a cool cellar.

Northwest Palate, September/October 2007, "Rieslings 'R' Us," Cole Danehower Oregon's Rieslings also turned heads...The Chehalem wine [2005 Reserve Dry Riesling] was taut and young with promise...it sat comfortably among the assembled global Rieslings, and occasioned much side comment about its power and aging potential. No wonder it is a cult classic among American Riesling cognoscenti...

2006 Reserve Dry Riesling

90 *Wine Review Online*, July 3, 2007, "Mind-Altering Riesling," Patrick Comiskey A generous wine that retains a healthy precision, the fruit aromas seem to fall between pear and white peach, ripe and full. Its flavors, more peach than pear on the palate, are broadly rendered, with an impressive amplitude, the mouthfeel rich and juicy, but constrained by a fine acidity.

Northwest Palate, September/October 2007 Highly Recommended: Tangy flavors of apricot and peach frisk across the tongue, animated by a gripping acidity...Clean, balanced, and energetic, this is a Riesling to lay down in the cellar...

2006 Reserve Pinot Gris

★★★^{1/2} *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 18, 2007, "West Coast Pinot Gris/Grigio," W. Blake Gray This wine is for Chardonnay fans. Flavors of ginger and vanilla are boosted by nice minerality and earthiness and a dense texture. It takes Pinot Gris about as far in the rich/big direction as it can go...

2005 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris

Wine & Spirits, August 2007, "Year's Best Pinot Gris & Grigio" Rich without being the least bit fat, this wine's honeyed pear and marzipan flavors are kept aloft by a fine, mineraly cushion of acid. ONE OF THE TOP SIX AMERICAN PINOT GRIS.



NEW RELEASES

2006 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Blanc Threads of green hay shine through this brilliant platinum wine, with bright aromas of honeysuckle, pear, and tropical yellow fruits. The entry is soft, with hints of vanilla and spice. Rich and full, with balanced acidity and a dry, warm finish.

2006 Reserve Dry Riesling Stereotypical Chehalem Riesling as blended from the three vineyards, with effusive white blossoms of orange, apple, jasmine, and gardenia, centered by a fleshy mouthful of tangerine, lime, and apricot flavors, and structured with firm, bright acid. Will age well, despite the richness and early approachability. Balance was nailed!

2006 Reserve Pinot Gris From a fully ripe year, this is a concentrated, yellow- and orange-fruited, rich and honeyed Pinot Gris. It carries fleshy ripe peach, orange gelées, and tropical yellow fruit as well as spice all the way to anise or fennel. The wine is well balanced despite higher alcohol, thanks to extremely full fruit, threshold RS, and great acid and pH. The weight is impressive, the finish bright, and the mid-palate full and creamy. Lush, but with a great food-wine potential.

2006 3 Vineyard Pinot Noir Cherry red with amazing clarity. Cherries are also apparent on the nose, with notes of lavender and dried herbs. A bright, sweet entry gives forth to a rich, supple texture with flavors of ripe red and black fruits, cherry cola, white pepper, and cocoa as well as a finish touched with toast and cedar. Complex, ripe, and one of the best we've done. Harbinger of a great vintage.


2005 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Noir Fine, firm, and classic, the 2005 Stoller shows both Pinot Noir typicity and the uniqueness of this lovely Dundee Hills vineyard. From a warm site, despite the cooler vintage, this wine is fully ripe, showing moderate-to-deep garnet and purple colors and a sappy and fleshy mouthfeel that is lush and broadly covers the palate. The aromatics are of mineral, rock, or earthiness (you choose your identifier), black cherry, and dried herbs. With a soft textural background, there is a fine, dusty tannin grip and a brightness that contributes to a well-balanced wine. As finely pedigreed a Stoller single-vineyard Pinot as we can do.

2005 Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir Classic Ridgecrest, with size and luscious fruit. The color reflects a fully ripe year, despite this being from our coolest site in a moderately cool vintage. Blue fruit (blueberry and huckleberry) and blackberry as well as warm spices and black tea suffuse the aromatics, showing pungency and a driving force of moderate alcohol. It is rustic on the palate, with moderate tannin and grip assuring ageability and a balance to the massive fruit. The wine is firm and bright. Very nice. 🍷 — HARRY



WHAT'S HAPPENING?

FREE SHIPPING! Cool weather has come to the rescue just in time for the holidays. Place your order by *October 31, 2007*, and get free shipping on all case orders sent FedEx ground anywhere in the U.S.

Harvest 2007 Online 

Check out www.chehalemwines.com to catch Harry's ongoing reports on Vintage 2007.

Wine & Spirits Top 100 Celebration

October 17, 2007. Each year *Wine & Spirits* magazine invites its Top 100 Wineries to pour their winning wines at a special Bay Area tasting. Harry will be pouring our 2004 Ian's Reserve Chardonnay and 2004 Reserve Pinot Noir at this year's celebration in San Francisco. For details, visit www.wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

¡Salud! Wine Auction *November 9 & 10, 2007.*

This spectacular wine event benefits vineyard worker's healthcare. Highlights include a Friday tasting at Domaine Drouhin, followed by a Saturday dinner at the Governor Hotel in Portland. For tickets, call 503.681.1850 or visit www.saludauction.org.

Fall Pre-Release Tasting *November 17, 2007.*

Taste our fall wines before the Thanksgiving weekend crowds! Noon to 5 p.m. at the winery.

Thanksgiving Open House

November 23–25, 2007. The perfect time to bring friends and family out to the winery! Taste our 2006 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Blanc, 2006 Reserve Pinot Gris, 2006 3 Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2005 Stoller Vineyards Pinot Noir, and 2005 Ridgecrest Vineyards Pinot Noir. Special case discount on new releases. \$10 fee (FREE for Tasting Panel members). Friday & Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Classic Wines Auction *March 1, 2008.* This

annual dinner and auction benefits a number of Portland-area charities. Expanded winemaker dinners will be held February 26 & 28, 2008. Call 503.972.0194 or visit www.classicwinesauction.com.

World of Pinot Noir *March 7 & 8, 2008.*

Join top Pinot Noir producers from around the globe, including Chehalem. In 2008, the event will take place at The Cliffs Resort in Shell Beach, California. For more information, visit www.worldofpinotnoir.com.

High Museum Atlanta Wine Auction

March 27–29, 2008. A three-day wine event (and the fifth largest charity wine auction in the U.S.) to support the High Museum of Art, the largest visual arts museum in the Southeastern United States. For details, visit www.atlanta-wineauction.org.