

# Anne Amie Vineyards: Wines with a New Spirit

Going back a few years, the wines I had sampled from Anne Amie Vineyards were technically fine, but lacked spirit and sophistication. When I visited Anne Amie Vineyards before the 2009 IPNC, I was happy to find that the current releases show a new vitality and the staff's esprit d corps is infused into every bottle. Wine is really all about the people, and proprietor Dr. Robert Pamplin, Jr., has gathered an impassioned staff to pursue the goal of producing world-class wines. Winemaker Thomas Houseman, viticulturist Jason Tosch and sales manager Kim McLeod have guided Anne Amie to the top echelon of Oregon wineries while kicking up their heels and thoroughly enjoying themselves along the way. Their spirit is evident in the photo below (from L to R, Houseman, Tosch, Prince, Kim).



Dr. Robert Pamplin, Jr., is a man of varied talents who has earned eight degrees in business, economics, accounting, education and theology. He is Chairperson, President and CEO of the R.B. Pamplin Corporation and is the founder of the Portland Tribune newspaper, Columbia Empire Farms, and Your Northwest retail stores. He is the author of 13 books. His record in philanthropy is commendable with 10 percent of pre-taxed profits of the R.B. Pamplin Corporation donated to nearly 200 charities nationwide.

Dr. Pamplin bought the former Chateau Benoit Winery in Carlton in 1999. The name, Anne Amie, is in honor of Dr. Pamplin's two daughters. The initial winemaker, Scott Huffman, was a holdover from Chateau Benoit and some credible wines were produced. The 2002 vintage Anne Amie Vineyards Pinot Noir was one of the top rated Pinot Noirs in Oregon according to the *Northwest Wine Press*. Huffman was succeeded by Thomas Houseman. Houseman's story would make a good movie. He was an accomplished modern dancer living in New York and traveling the world when he began to assist his company's lighting director in making beer. Sufficiently intrigued by fermentation and its after products, he left New York and enrolled in the enology and viticulture program at University California Fresno. His love for Pinot Noir led him to winemaking jobs at Husch Vineyards in the Anderson Valley of California and Bleinheim Winery and Bell Hill Winery owned by the Giesen brothers in North Canterbury, New Zealand. Upon returning to the states, he was mentored by Dick and Luisa Ponzi at Ponzi Vineyards in Oregon before becoming Director of Winemaking at Anne Amie.

The important role of a viticulturist in the production of Pinot Noir cannot be underestimated. The Director of Viticulture at Anne Amie, Jason Tosch, is an Oregon native who came to Anne Amie from Ponzi Vineyards. He has transformed all the Anne Amie estate vineyards to LIVE (Low Input Viticulture & Enology) and Salmon Safe certification. He notes, "Encouraging the vines using balanced and sustainable practices in the vineyards creates the stage for what Pinot Noir in Oregon soils is meant to do: perform beautifully."

Anne Amie farms several vineyard sites. The Estate Vineyard (photo below with winery in background) surrounds the winery and consists of 18.7 acres of Pinot Noir (115, Pommard) planted between 2001 and 2007, 6.4 acres of Riesling and 15.37 acres of Müller-Thurgau in Willakenzie soil. The Boisseau Vineyard was planted between 2000 and 2007 to 11.9 acres of Pinot Noir (114, 667, 777, Pommard), 3.3 acres of Chardonnay (76) and 1.6 acres of Pinot Gris (146) in Laurelwood soil. Louise Vineyard was planted in 2003 and 2007 and contains 5.5 acres of Pinot Noir (777 and Pommard), 3.1 acres of Pinot Gris (146), 3.1 acres of Pinot Blanc and 2.1 acres of Chardonnay (95) in Laurelwood soil. Marilyn Vineyard is planted to 4.6 acres of Pinot Gris (146). Justin-Grant Vineyard was planted in 2007 to 9.5 acres of Pinot Noir (113, 667, 777, Wädenswil, Pommard) and 6 acres of Pinot Blanc (French 07, Italian 05, 06) in Laurelwood soil. Robert Vineyard is the youngest with 18.35 acres of Pinot Noir (667, 777, 828 and Wädenswil) in Laurelwood soil. Many of the vineyards are not yet in full production. The future holds great promise for Anne Amie Vineyards as Houseman will have a widely varied site and clonal palate to work with. Anne Amie also sources grapes from several prominent vineyards in the Willamette Valley.

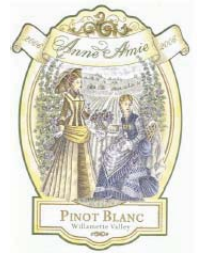


Houseman is an unpretentious figure who is a minimalist in the winery. For Pinot Noir, grapes are de-stemmed and 80% of the berries reach the open-top fermenters intact. Fermentations are extended up to 28 days and beyond on the skins, for Houseman believes this leads to better resolution of tannins and wines with softer textures. The wines are moved by gravity flow and bottled with no fining or filtration.

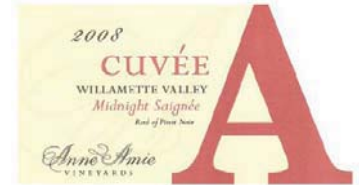
Anne Amie is located in Carlton on just west of Highway 99 at 6580 NE Mineral Springs Road. The wines are sold on the website and at the winery's tasting room which is open daily from 10:00 to 5:00. A vineyard and winery tour is available Wednesday through Sunday at 11:00 AM by reservation (503-864-2991).



**2007 Anne Amie Vineyards Pinot Blanc** 12.5% alc., 550 cases, \$25, released March 2009. Whole clusterpressed, cold fermented, aged in 60% new French oak on the lees for 8 months. Sourced from Helmick Hill Vineyard. *Pale yellow color. Pleasant aromas of pears, white peaches, apples and bananas. Charming marriage of pears and citrus fruits, a hint of oak, and zippy mineral-infused acidity on the refreshing finish. A perfect OTC (Other Than Chardonnay) white wine that performs well as an aperitif or with lighter summer fare.*



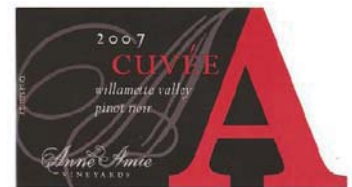
**2008 Cuvée A Midnight Saignée Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Rosé** 13.43% alc., 309 cases, \$15, released May 2009. Grapes are de-stemmed, cold soaked for 5 days, with a saignée on the second day to concentrate flavors. The wine is a blend of all Pinot Noir saignée lots representing multiple vineyards and AVAs. Barrel fermented in neutral French oak barrels to dryness, remaining on the lees until blending. *Pretty coral color. Aromas and flavors of fresh summer strawberries, cranberries and cherries with respectable mid-palate richness. Clean, pure and satisfying.*



**2007 Cuvée A Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.3% alc., 3,200 cases, \$25, released February 2009. The difference between the Cuvée A and Winemaker's Selection Willamette Valley bottlings is the tasting decision with the Cuvée A featuring more red fruit and softer tannins. Primarily sourced from volcanic (Jory) soils. Grape are cold soaked for 4-7 days followed by extended maceration for 28-40 days. Aged on lees in 11.5% new French oak barrels for 10 months and



aged 8 months after bottling before release. *This is the winery's value play Pinot Noir and fits the bill perfectly. Bright scents of red cherries, strawberries and cream soda. Light and soft in the mouth with a red fruit punch flavored core underlain with spice and citrus notes. A perfect back porch sipper.*



**2008 Cuvée A Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (barrel sample blend trial)** *Darker in color with more body and richness than the 2007 vintage. Intense dark cherry fruit with soft, restrained tannins. Should eclipse the excellent 2007 version.*

**2006 Anne Amie Vineyards Winemaker's Selection Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.4% alc., 3,400 cases, \$35, available. *Very aromatic with scents of raspberries, cherries and herbs. The flavors echo the aromas with an added underpinning of earthiness. Smoothly textured with fine-grain tannins.*

**2007 Anne Amie Vineyards Winemaker's Selection Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 13.6% alc., 3,500 cases, \$35, November 2009 release. An 8-vineyard blend of clones 113, 114, 115, 667, 777, 828, Pommard and Wädenswil grown on all three of the Willamette Valley's main soils - Willakenzie, Jory and Laurelwood. A true representation of the entire Willamette Valley. *Moderately light garnet color. Elegantly styled with bright acidity. Vivid raspberry flavors with a touch of minerality and forest floor. More austere than the 2006 vintage of this wine but will compliment food nicely.*



**2008 Anne Amie Vineyards Winemaker's Selection Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (barrel sample blend trial)** *Intense garnet color. Brioche and dark berries on the nose. Lush darker fruits with notable tannins. This will be a crowd pleaser.*

**2007 Anne Amie Vineyards Estate Pinot Noir** 13.5% alc., 150 cases, \$50, November 2009 release. A 9-vineyard blend of clones Pommard 4, Wädenswil, 115 and 667. Grapes are de-stemmed into 2-ton open-top stainless steel fermenters, followed by a 5-day cold soak, inoculated with yeast, racked into 27% new French oak barrels and aged for 11 months. Blended and bottled unfiltered and unfinned and bottle aged for 18 months before release. *Admirable that the producers chose to release this wine only after adequate integration of its components. A huge nose of summer stone fruits that really grabs your attention. Luscious cherry and berry core with a compliment of earth and briar flavors. Deft use of oak and supple tannins that caress the fruit nicely. A wine of glass-filling presence.*



**2007 Prismé Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Blanc** 14.1% alc., 390 cases, \$45, November 2009 release. Named after the word prism which is splitting of white light into its corresponding colors. With this wine the reverse is being done, that is, making a white wine from Pinot Noir. Grapes are gently pressed, liberating free run juice but no inclusion of the color or tannins from the skin. 100% Pinot Noir, Pommard clone, barrel fermented in French oak puncheons (25% new), lees stirred, full MLF, and aged on its lees for 18 months before bottling. *Aromas of pear, lemon, smoke and wax. Flavors of yellow raspberries, green apples, brioche, and slightly toasted oak. Very smooth and creamy on the palate ending with a lengthy impression. Big in stature like a full-blown Chardonnay. A unique wine that forces you to abandon your ideas of traditional Pinot Noir and look for new expressions of the grape.*



**2006 L'iris Willamette Valley Pinot Noir** 14.3% alc., 1,200 cases, \$75, Released May 2009. A blend of Anne Amie Estate (33%), Boisseau, Louise, Hawk's View, and Deux Vert vineyards (Yamhill-Carlton and Chehalem Mountain AVAs). Clones 115, 777 and Wädenswil. 5-day cold soak, 10 day fermentation. Free-run juice aged in 62% new French oak for 18 months, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, and aged an additional 18 months in bottle. *This is essentially a reserve wine but is not turned up in amplitude. Marvelous aromas of crushed berries, bramble and roasted nuts. A wine of mouth filling richness that coats every nook and cranny, yet is light on its feet. Beguiling flavors of cherry, raspberry and blackberry fruits with hints of vanillin and mocha. The tannins are so fine as to be imperceptible and the texture is Elvis on velvet soft. The powerfully aromatic finish is stunning.*

