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## Small Vines Wines

MAY/JUN 14

By Josh Reynolds

Kathryn and Paul Sloan, who entered the wine business via their vineyard management company Small Vines, are currently heavily involved with the propagation of their estate vineyard, which sits just outside their front door in western Sebastopol. Although watching over their clients' vineyards occupies most of their time, as their own vines come into maturity they expect that project--and the wines they make from it--to become a higher priority. The Sloans told me that while they have a certain style in mind for their wines, which are made with the consulting hand of Byron Kosuge, they aren't wedded to strict rules. Whole clusters are used in some cases but not others and new oak isn't avoided but neither is it emphasized. What is important, Paul Sloan said, is "maximum fruit intensity without too much weight" and an attempt to express the energy of Sonoma Coast fruit "without too much makeup."

### 2012 Small Vines Wines Chardonnay Sonoma Coast

90

(\$55) (vinified with all whole clusters and aged in 10% new oak): Bright gold. Powerful, mineral-laced citrus and orchard fruits on the perfumed nose. On the palate, chewy Meyer lemon, apple and melon flavors are braced by juicy acidity and a hint of candied ginger. An iodine nuance builds with air and carries through the long, penetrating finish, which leaves a subtle floral note behind. This fruit was sourced from a single site, Barlow Homestead, that's planted to Hyde Wente and Kistler Mount Eden and Wente clones.

### 2012 Small Vines Wines Pinot Noir Estate Cuvee Russian River Valley

91

(\$55) (made with 27% whole clusters, native yeasts and one-third new oak): Brilliant red. Sexy aromas of raspberry liqueur, potpourri and smoky minerals, with an Asian spice flourish adding complexity. On the palate, vibrant red fruit and floral pastille flavors put on weight with air while maintaining vivacity. This silky, approachable pinot noir finishes with excellent clarity and smooth, well-knit tannins that contribute shape.

### 2012 Small Vines Wines Pinot Noir Sonoma Coast

91

(\$55) (made from young vines in the Sloans' Barlow Homestead vineyard in Sebastopol; 25% new oak): Vivid red. Sexy, spice-tinged red fruit and floral aromas show very good clarity. Silky and open-knit, offering fresh raspberry and rose pastille flavors underscored by juicy acidity. Closes supple and long, with gentle tannins folding into the sweet fruit. Shows a very approachable character now.

### 2012 Small Vines Wines Pinot Noir MK Vineyard Sonoma Coast

91

(\$72) Bright ruby-red. Potent cherry pit, blackberry and floral aromas are lifted by a smoky mineral element. Supple, juicy and broad, offering energetic dark berry and candied rose flavors and a building spiciness. A licorice note builds through the youthfully tannic finish, which features sweet black raspberry and cherry-cola qualities.

### 2012 Small Vines Wines Pinot Noir Baranoff Vineyard Russian River Valley

92

(\$72) (made with 35% whole clusters and 25% new oak): Vivid ruby-red. High-pitched red berry, floral and star anise scents, complicated by subtle sassafras and vanilla qualities and building minerality. Shows excellent clarity and lift on the palate, offering sappy raspberry, boysenberry and spiced flavors that become sweeter with air. The mineral note adds cut to the incisive finish, which is firmed by silky, fine-grained tannins. (JR)

(www.smallvines.com)