



If you were a cool, progressive person who had gone through your thirties, put in your time working in the big city and wanted to get away from the hustle and bustle of the world, what do you think you might do to keep yourself busy, interested and fed? Aside from being independently wealthy or opening a bookstore in a coastal resort town, how does being a distributor for City Lights Books of San Francisco and making really great Pinot noir sound? To this writer, reader, cellar rat and wine drinker, it sounds like a damn fine existence. In the little town of Monroe, Craig and Carol Broadley live this appealing and hard working life style.

Broadley Vineyards is hardly a household name in these parts, even amongst somewhat knowledgeable wine folk. Broadley is a small winery that produces about 2-2,500 cases of wine each year. They make Pinot noir. They have, to their chagrin, made Chardonnay in the past but the Broadleys feel that it takes up space in their vineyard that could be better used by Pinot noir, so they have gotten rid of it. In fact Craig dismisses his 1992 Chardonnay as "not very good." (This unusually candid sentiment I think is born out of his dislike for the making of Chardonnay. Their Chardonnay is, in fact, quite decent.)

A whole winery committed to Pinot noir? Even a small 3,000 case winery most often produces at least a handful of varieties. But Craig believes, as do many people, that Pinot noir is the pinnacle of vinifera (winemaking) grapes. The grape offers many possibilities to the winemaker and, thus, a range of flavors and characteristics to the wine drinker. When done right Pinot noir invites you to mix your emotions with the pure sultry physicality of the wine. Oregon Pinot can seduce you with an elegant softness backed up by beautiful fruit tastes and a spicy finish. This is what is known as "Classic Oregon Pinot."

But Pinot noir is Burgundy. That is, the grapes grown in the Burgundy region of France are Pinot noir grapes. Burgundy, too, comes in many styles, but it is really best known as a rich, robust wine full of deep dark fruits and oak flavors complemented by extraordinarily subtle tastes, the most notable of which are leather, tobacco and tar. While classic Oregon Pinot may be an elegant temptress, a well done Brugundy is an alluring lover who knows exactly what she (or he) wants. The wine can take you in a way you never thought possible. Some people would be moved to describe it as decadent. (You would be surprised, with a group of hardcore wine people who have put down a bottle or so each of some good wine, at how often the descriptions of wine turn to sex. And vice versa.)

The point of all this is that Broadley Vineyards Pinot noir is a rare find in Oregon because it is true Burgundy. The 1992 Reserve is a beautiful wine. It is a deep ruby red with the beginning hints of some amber around the side of the glass. It is a feast for the eyes. But laying your hands on it is not easy. They are sold out at the winery and, I believe, Liner & Elsen on 21st in NW Portland is the only place around that carries this wine. Oregon is just not a big Burgundy state so Broadley's market is primarily in big cities like San Francisco and New York. However, the limited supply thankfully does not translate into a huge price. At \$13 or so for a bottle of this you should consider a 3 bottle minimum purchase to ensure having it around for at least a little while.

Craig broke out a bottle for me to try while we talked. (As he went to get it I surreptitiously checked out his computer which had some book orders on it -- the winery and book distributorship share the same building -- and the orders posted would make the supporters of Censorship Measure 19 go through all sorts of weird bodily contortions.) Along with this bottle he opened up a bottle of the 1986 Reserve which was Broadley Vineyard's first vintage. In 1987 this wine was released to fairly substantial acclaim for a first wine. The ever-so-prestigious magazine *The Wine Spectator* asked for a sample to review. When the much anticipated review finally came out it simply said, "Dark ruby colour, plummy fruit, decadent. Score: 73." 73? 73 in *Wine Spectator* is a way of saying, "Don't buy it unless it is really cheap!" But why decadent to go with a 73? Isn't decadent good? Well, decadent means too much of a good thing. Apparently the tasters/critiquers just couldn't handle decadence. Their spouses/spousal equivalents must feel so let down.

Here at the Upper Left Edge we embrace all sorts of decadence and would run it for office if we could. And that word still applies to Broadley's Pinot. I pitted the '92 Reserve against a 1987 Amity Winemaker Reserve and a 1991 Knudsen Erath Vintage Select. The Broadley is \$12 and \$3 cheaper than these two wines respectively. It completely surpassed the Knudsen Erath and more than held its own against Amity's premier wine. While these two wines are vastly different in style it was a joy to drink them side by side. Both are superbly crafted, well organized wines with lots to offer. The Broadley is probably easier to appreciate than the Amity but certainly not lacking in character or complexity. I am looking forward to a horizontal tasting (same year, different wineries) of the Broadley with an Autumn Wind 1992 Reserve and an Adelsheim 1992 Seven Springs Vineyard. These are the premier Burgundies that I have located in Oregon and tasting them side by side by side will be quite illuminating.

Monroe is located between Corvallis and Eugene on Hwy 99W. Monroe will likely not become the Dundee of the Southern Willamette Valley. The winery, located at the southern end of the town, is shaken every minute or two by huge log trucks which spill out of the Coast Range. Tasting at the winery gives proof positive that the logging of old growth forests is alive and well enough in this part of the world. The town's economy rests largely upon surrounding tree farms, a feed store, a bar, a diner and a small grocery store. The town, despite having a handful of nice wineries in the area, will probably not seek to rebuild its economy around them. Craig describes Monroe as one of those small country towns where when you drive by everyone waves. If you're naive you think it's because they are really friendly, but if you know them (or grew up in a similar place, like the state of Maine) you know it's because they are saying "That's fine, don't come any closer."

Broadley's uniquely situated east facing vineyard promises to offer a beautiful 1994 vintage. Craig was a bit late for our meeting because he had the disease known as *winemaker's harvest amnesia*. The symptoms are forgetting literally everything else because of the stress of the harvest. Monroe is nestled into one of the hottest microclimates in Western Oregon so the warm summer we experienced this year was even warmer in their part of the valley. The yield will be low, as everyone's is, but the quality of wine promises to be, well, decadent.

So go visit them or seek out their wines when you are able to. At the winery right now, which is open on weekdays from 12-5, they are only pouring their Chardonnay and their non-vintage Pinot (a very decent wine for \$7). Odds are you can get a tour of their barrel room and see the whole works happening. Maybe you could get Craig to let you peruse the book section as well. Craig was the business manager of City Lights and has met the likes of Kerouac, Bukowski, and so on. Take a break from the road and visit one of the lesser known but high quality and completely cool wineries that Oregon has to offer.

Recommended Winery Tour for November: Odds are you probably missed the fund raiser for 1st Congressional District Candidate Bill Witt (R -- for Right Wing) that featured Pat Buchanan (yes, Mr. Cultural War himself) at Montinore Vineyards (proving that not all Oregon wineries are easy going kinds of places), but there's lots to do this month so don't despair. 1. Serendipity Cellars (Monmouth) does a vertical tasting of their Marechal Foch from 1982-1993 each weekend. Do not miss. 2. Nov. 19th and 20th at Autumn Wind Vineyards (Newberg), a pre-Thanksgiving case discount sale. Great deals (25% off, I think) on excellent wine and (maybe) the release of the 1992 Pinot noir which will be the best bottle of Pinot for under \$10 in Oregon. 3. Thanksgiving weekend. Lots of crowds but a great way to get rid of parents, kids and relatives or friends visiting from wherever.

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