

2008 Merry Edwards Pinot Noir
Russian River Valley
Flax Vineyard

This vineyard has a lovely view of the Russian River from its hillside above Westside Road. Planted in 2002 by Phil & Toby Flax, last year it joined our family of estate properties when we leased it from them. From the first vintage of this wine in 2004, we saw the tremendous potential of this site, which is well matched to the classic Pommard clone of Pinot Noir grown here. With each succeeding year, the wines have shown increased weight and intensity.

Cherries are the hallmark character of the Pommard clone and they are generously featured here — dark Bing and Queen Anne along with fragrant cherry blossoms. Hints of red roses, spicy oak and brambleberries heighten the appeal of the wine's mouthwatering aroma. The focused palate displays black plums, licorice and hedgerow fruits. Ripe and rich in the mouth with soft, fine-grained tannins, this Pinot shows the superb balance essential for long-term aging.

Winners David and Cecilia Elliot submitted a recipe for *Slow Cooked, Country-Style Pork Ribs in Pinot Noir Sauce with Dried Cherries, Plums & Basil Chiffonade*. The name is a mouthful, but the crock pot preparation is easy. On a warm summer day, I put the slow cooker on my outdoor patio — we came home to a cool house and a ready meal! I served it over campanelle-shaped noodles accompanied by garden fresh Brussels sprouts. This delicious entry to our *Win A Magnum* contest has flavors that mirror those found in our Flax Pinot Noir.