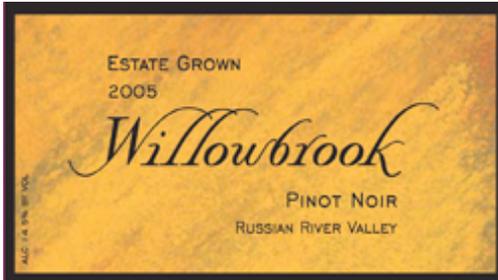


WINE RECOMMENDATION



Willowbrook Cellars

2005 Pinot Noir, Estate Grown (Russian River Valley)

Willowbrook Cellars 2005 Estate Pinot Noir is a hot and cold affair, starting with the hilltop vineyard where the grapes for this nothing-short-of-delicious wine get 180-degree sun alternating with the typical Russian River cool ocean breezes. The result is the perfect combination for complexity and balanced acids and sugars. The estate has some three acres of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay Dijon clones. This was handy because winemaker and partner Joseph Otos added a teeny amount of the Chard clusters at crush for color stabilization.

And the color is a deep, sensuous ruby. The nose of cherry and baking spices all but jumps out of the glass. The velvety mouthfeel of the wine is complemented by the black cherry, spice, and cocoa flavors. While chocolate seems to go best with Cabernets, this Pinot worked surprisingly well with bittersweet chocolate. The complexity of the wine offers new taste experiences with each sip and the structure suggests aging potential. But with your first sip, my guess is that most bottles will be consumed in the short term for the instant gratification. The crisp acidity makes for a wine that goes well on its own as well as with the typical food suspects for Pinot – lamb, salmon, pork, and mushroom-enhanced dishes.

Reviewed November 15, 2007 by [Michael Lasky](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Willowbrook Cellars](#)

Vineyard: Estate Grown

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Pinot Noir

Appellation: [Russian River Valley](#)

Grape: Pinot Noir

Price: \$34.00

THE REVIEWER



Michael Lasky

APPELLATION AMERICA's Senior Editor, Michael Lasky, has been writing about food and wine for over 20 years. His work has appeared in national magazines such as *Playboy*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Parade*, and newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Newsday*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. His wine reviews focus on the aroma, taste, and visual appeal of what's in the glass. He is decidedly not a wine snob and prefers to describe its virtues in conversational prose that speaks to everyone from wine neophytes to veteran connoisseurs. He only reviews delicious wines.