

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Belle Glos****2005 Pinot Noir, Clark & Telephone Vineyard
(Santa Maria Valley)**

Caymus Vineyards gained its greatest acclaim as one of the first Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon producers to leap its pricing into the stratosphere. In the early 1980s, following a cover story in the *Wine Spectator* asserting that Caymus arguably made the best Cabernet in the valley, the property raised the price for its Cabernet to more than \$100 a bottle, thereby jump-starting the craze for higher priced Napa wines.

Chuck Wagner, son of the founder Charlie, has always had a secret passion for Pinot Noir, and his Reserve Pinots of the earlier era were very good, but rarely classic or widely accepted. Wagner grew Pinot in Rutherford for years, but over time it was obvious that the land was wasted on that variety when Cabernet was so much in demand and could be sold for a lot more money. As a way of exploring Pinot, since the mid-1980s Chuck bought nearly 200 acres near Santa Barbara and more smaller parcels in the Sonoma Coast. The Pinot project began in 2001 and the following year Chuck's son, Joseph, was placed in charge of making the wines, with assistance from Caymus ace John Bolta. The family called the project Belle Gloss.

One reason this is such shockingly fine wine is that the vineyards the Wagners bought are quite mature and contain none of the latest high-tech clones that seem to dominate the Pinots that have gained acclaim elsewhere. This assertive wine delivers a bright and exciting fruit aroma of dried berries and cherry with complex herb notes such as clove. There is mouth-filling depth here, but perfect acidity for aging.

Reviewed May 16, 2007 by [Dan Berger](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Belle Glos](#)

Vineyard: Clark & Telephone Vineyard

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Pinot Noir

Appellation: [Santa Maria Valley](#)

Grape: Pinot Noir

Price: \$39.99

THE REVIEWER**Dan Berger**

Dan Berger has been reviewing wine for 30 years, always seeking character related to varietal type and regional identity. He has never used numbers to rank wine and doesn't plan to start any time soon. He believes that weight and concentration aren't the only worthy aspects of wine and is especially smitten by cool-climate and food-friendly wines that offer distinctiveness.