



# PinotFile

The First Wine Newsletter Exclusively Devoted to Pinotphiles

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*If you drink no  
Noir, you Pinot  
Noir*

## Columbian-born, French-trained, California-based Winemaker Achieves Remarkable Success

Woman winemakers are in the minority in California, probably making up only 10%-15% of current working winemakers. Woman winemakers from Columbia succeeding in California are so rare I know only of one: Bibiana González Ravez.

Bibiana dreamed of making wine since the age of 14, while growing up in Medellin, Columbia. Because that country had no wine culture, she studied chemical engineering. She preserved, went to work in the vineyards and cellars of Burgundy, the Rhone Valley, Bordeaux, Alsace and Cognac, and earned a Technician of Viticulture and Oenology degree in Angoulême, followed by a Diploma of Oenology with honors from the University of Bordeaux.

After an enlightening experience working at Château Haut-Brion, she moved to California in 2004, gaining winemaking expertise while working fourteen harvests at wineries that included La Crema, Peay Vineyards, Au Bon Climat and Qupé, before becoming the Director of Winegrowing and Winemaking at Lynmar Estate in 2009. Bibiana would leave Lynmar Estate in 2011 to become the winemaker for Pahlmeyer's Sonoma Coast project, Wayfarer. At Wayfarer she crafted exceptional Pinot Noir and Chardonnays that won widespread praise from the wine press including All-American awards from the *PinotFile*.



In 2015, she launched her own label, **Cattleya** (“Cat-LAY-a”), representing a culmination of a dream that began many years prior. Cattleya is an orchid, the national flower of Columbia, and is one of the most beautiful and delicate orchids in the world. Her small-production Pinot Noir and Chardonnays have instantly captured the palates of wine connoisseurs because of their rich, ripe flavors offered in a balanced and charismatic style. While many women Pinot Noir winemakers veer to the delicate, elegant style, Bibiana succeeds with more bold expressions of Pinot Noir.

A second, value-priced label, **Alma de Cattleya**, offers Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. Alma means “soul” in Spanish. These wines are also distributed in Columbia.

Bibiana most recently became the winemaker for all of **Pahlmeyer** wines, challenging her to divide her energies between the winery’s Napa Valley vineyard and winemaking operations and the winery’s Wayfarer Sonoma Coast project. I have spent some time with Bibiana and she is a very dedicated workhorse, juggling her time between winemaking and vineyard management, and her husband, Jeff Pisoni, the winemaker for Pisoni Vineyards, and their two young boys, Diego and Lucas.

The 2015 wines reviewed here include both spring and fall releases and are highly recommended. Sold through an allocated mailing list, they are not inexpensive, but they reflect the passion and experience of a talented winemaker using grape sources of the highest quality. Large formats are available. For more information, visit [www.cattleyawines.com](http://www.cattleyawines.com). All wines are produced and bottled by Cattleya Wines, Santa Rosa, CA, except the Alma de Cattleya that was vinted and bottled by Cattleya Wines, Rohnert Park, CA (winery on label may have had little to do with making the wine at the stated address).



**2016 Alma de Cattleya Sonoma County Pinot Noir** 14.1% alc., pH 3.64, TA 0.59, \$28. Sourced primarily from Sonoma Coast vineyards. Aged 10 months in French oak barrels, 15% new. Bottled unfixed and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Terrific aromas of black cherry, spice, vanilla, warm brioche and a bit of whole berry ferment. Mid weight flavors of raspberry, dark cherry and pomegranate backed by invigorating tannins. Streamlined with a silky finish, supportive oak and a modest finish. This wine veers into Beaujolais territory, and is a light-hearted wine to enjoy.*

**90cpoints.**

**2015 Cattleya Cuvée Number One Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.**

14.7% alc., pH 3.52, TA 0.67, 143 cases, \$50. Spring release. Very limited production. sourced from Lakeview Vineyard in the Green Valley of Russian River Valley. Pommard and 115 clones. Each clones fermented in its own open-top fermenter. 100% de-stemmed. 5 to 10-day cold soak, fermented on skins for 22 days. Each clone aged separately in French oak barrels for 11 months. *Moderate garnet color in the glass. Soaring aromas of Bing cherry raspberry, redwood grove and sous-bois. Intense on the attack with mouth filling flavors of black cherry and black raspberry fruits. A decadent, powerful wine that is yet demure in character with oodles of persuasive fruit goodness fueled by spirited acidity and backed by invisible tannins. The finish is exceptional long and endowed with uncommon generosity. I tasted this wine throughout a day’s time and it never wavered in its showy character. Wow!*



**96 points.**

**2015 Cattleya Donum Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir.**

14.2% alc., 50 cases, \$70. Sourced from the oldest (37-years-old) vines at Donum, the West Slope. Roederer clone. 25% whole cluster. 5-day cold soak, fermented on skins for 18 days then barreled down. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 50% new. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderately light garnet color in the glass. Lovely nose offering aromas of exotic spices, fertile earth, dark chocolate and blackberry preserves. Silky and seductive in the mouth with impressive harmony, displaying mid weight flavors of darker cherry, black raspberry and pomegranate accompanied by a stealthy earthy tone and the slightest thread of oak. Well structured but integrated tannins with a noticeably long finish that ingratiates with pleasure.*

**94 points.**

**2015 Cattleya Russian River Valley Chardonnay.**

4.2% alc., pH 3.45, TA .66, 200 cases, \$50. A blend of Old Went Davis selections, clone 4 and 78 grown at vineyards located in the heart of the Santa Rosa plain. Bladder pressed. Full malolactic fermentation. Aged 11 months in French oak barrels, 85% neutral. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromas of lemon curd, pineapple and brioche are replicated in the flavors with added notes of golden apple, nutty oak and a hint of butter. Pleasingly creamy in the mouth, with a bright and lemon-fueled finish.*

**90 points.**

**2015 Cattleya Pratt Vineyard Russian River Valley Chardonnay.**

14.2% alc., 65 cases, \$70. Clone 15 (an old Wente clone). Native fermented and aged 16 months in French oak barrels 66% new. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered. *Moderate golden yellow color in the glass. Aromatically alive with scents of lemon oil, honey, toast, baking spice and caramel. Mouth filling flavors of lemon, golden apple, yellow grapefruit and toasty brioche in a discreetly rich style with inviting brightness, gracious texture, exquisite balance and a lasting finish. An seductive wine by all measures.*

**94 points.**