

# Stephen Tanzer's, *International Wine Cellar*

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## 2008 Chardonnays, Pinot Noirs, and Zinfandels



HARTFORD  
COURT

**93**  
POINTS

**2008**  
SEASCAPE VINEYARD  
SONOMA COAST  
CHARDONNAY

Pale, hazy gold. Pungent aromas of pear, grapefruit peel, saffron and smoky minerals. Juicy, intense and mineral-driven, with impressive extract to the flavors of lemongrass, orchard fruits and citrus pith. The wine's vibrant acidity adds delineation to a long, juicy, intensely stony finish. I really like this wine's interplay of richness and energy.

**92**  
POINTS

**2008**  
FOUR HEARTS VINEYARD  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
CHARDONNAY

Bright, greenish yellow. Pungent aromas of lime and orange pith, lemongrass, iodine, crushed stone and anise, plus a suggestion of jasmine. Juicy, savory and dry, with a gripping, tactile quality to the bracing flavors of citrus and orchard fruits. Mint and smoky mineral notes add cut to the long, sappy, penetrating finish. Lots of Wente clone here, says winemaker Mangahas.

**91**  
POINTS

**2008**  
STONE CÔTE VINEYARD  
SONOMA COAST  
CHARDONNAY

Lightly hazy yellow. Smoky aromas of white peach, fig, wild herbs, iodine and vanilla. Round and fleshy on the palate, with intriguing flavors of tangerine, pit fruits, smoky lees and flowers. There's lively acidity here, but it comes on late, adding energy to the wine's sweet fruit. Silky, understated chardonnay with impressive finishing sappiness and cling.

**92**  
POINTS

**2008**  
ARRENDELL VINEYARD  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
PINOT NOIR

Vivid red. Heady aromas of red berry preserves, Asian spices and anise, with a strong floral overtone. Lively strawberry, raspberry and herb flavors stain the palate, with bitter cherry skin and mineral notes adding cut. Leaves smoky mineral and floral qualities behind on the strikingly long, sappy finish, which also features an exotic note of blood orange. Lots going here already.

**91**  
POINTS

**2008**  
SEVENS BENCH VINEYARD  
CARNEROS  
PINOT NOIR

Vivid red. Sexy, highly perfumed bouquet of strawberry, raspberry, potpourri and minerals, with a bright note of blood orange gaining strength with air. Impressively pure, with fresh red berry and floral flavors and a seductive sweetness. The finish strongly echoes the raspberry note and leaves a tangy trail of minerals and candied flowers behind. The wine's intriguing blend of sweet and tangy should make it extremely flexible at the table.

**91**  
POINTS

**2008**  
HAILEY'S BLOCK  
GREEN VALLEY RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
PINOT NOIR

Ruby-red. Smoky raspberry and cherry aromas are complemented by cinnamon, dried rose, musky herbs and sexy oak spices. Supple red berry and floral flavors are firmed by silky tannins and pick up a suave spicecake quality with air. Suggests dark fruits on the broad, penetrating, persistent finish. This benefits from aeration.

**91+**  
POINTS

**2008**  
MACLEAN'S BLOCK  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
PINOT NOIR

Bright ruby. Seductive aromas of red and dark berry preserves, cola and smoky herbs. Sweet, sappy black raspberry and cherry-cola flavors are framed by velvety tannins and gain weight, spiciness and a licorice pastille quality with air. The spice and cola notes carry through a long, alluringly sweet, youthfully gripping finish. I'll bet this will be better with a few more years of aging.

HARTFORD

**92**  
POINTS

**2008**  
DINA'S VINEYARD  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
ZINFANDEL

Opaque ruby. Explosive aromas of dark berry compote, cola, vanilla bean and incense, along with suggestions of exotic spices and licorice. Large-scaled, broad and impressively deep, with a liqueur-like quality to its boysenberry and mulberry flavors that's given bite by sneaky acidity. Finishes quite sappy and penetrating, with lingering notes of sweet cola and dark berries.

**92**  
POINTS

**2008**  
JOLENE'S VINEYARD  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
ZINFANDEL

Vivid ruby. Fragrant bouquet of raspberry, redcurrant, rose, white pepper and smoky, spicy oak, plus a whiff of star anise. Suave and sweet on entry, then tight and minerally in the middle, with lovely lift and perfume to the raspberry, floral pastille and herb flavors. An edge of acidity focuses the wine's sweetness and amplifies the impression of inner-mouth perfume. This has the structure to reward a few years of cellaring but it's pretty delicious now.

**91**  
POINTS

**2008**  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
ZINFANDEL

Bright ruby. High-pitched aromas of crushed dark berries, bitter chocolate, licorice and Indian spices. Juicy, dense and spicy, with sappy, intense dark berry flavors lifted by zesty minerality. Quite dry but ripe and penetrating, with a building element of exotic Christmas spices. Finishes with gentle tannins and very good persistence. These vines reportedly average around 85 years of age.

**90+**  
POINTS

**2008**  
HIGHWIRE VINEYARD  
RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY  
ZINFANDEL

Bright, saturated ruby. Youthfully brooding aromas of blackberry, mulberry, cocoa powder and licorice, with slow-mounting spiciness and a hint of dried violet. Deeply pitched dark berry and bitter cherry flavors are slow to unwind, showing serious structure without coming off as hard. The gripping finish is a touch rigid but packs a lot of rich fruit. Give the wine a little bottle age.