

ROBERT STEMMLER

KOEPPEL ON WINE

Excellent

Robert Stemmler Winery Estate Grown Pinot Noir 2005

This finely knit and supple pinot noir is more about power now than elegance. It's dense and chewy, almost viscous, and its spiced and macerated black cherry and plum flavors are steeped in tea and moss, earth and minerals, and it's got that touch of beet-root that Michael Broadbent described so many years ago in his Pocket Guide to Wine Tasting, first published by Christie's in 1968 and by Mitchell Beazley in England and Simon & Schuster in the United States, somewhat revised, in 1982. Scrounge around for a copy; it's essential reading for anyone serious about tasting wine. Anyway, we drank this wine with a roasted chicken, which was a perfect foil, but it might be more accessible (unless you like slightly bruising pinot noirs) after 2009.

Excellent

Robert Stemmler Winery Nugent Vineyard Pinot Noir 2005

Wow, this pinot is so ripe, warm and appealing, it's like comfort food. Black cherry, black raspberry and plum flavors are infused with smoke, cola and cranberry and dried spice that leans toward the exotic. It's a substantial wine, broad and mouth-filling, bursting with the dynamism of vibrant acid and grainy tannins. Those tannins, in combination with mossy, earthy elements and a burgeoning oak influence, furnish the wine's finish with some austerity and distance. Best from 2009 through 2014 or '15.

Very Good +

Robert Stemmler Winery Ferguson Block Pinot Noir 2005

Stemmler's Ferguson Block Pinot Noir '05 is deep, earthy and mineral, packed with dried baking spices, elements of dried and fresh black fruit, smoke and oolong tea. Firm oak and powerful spicy qualities come down pretty heavily, and from mid-palate back, the wine just tastes and feels like oak. A few years more may settle it down; try from 2010 to 2015 or so.