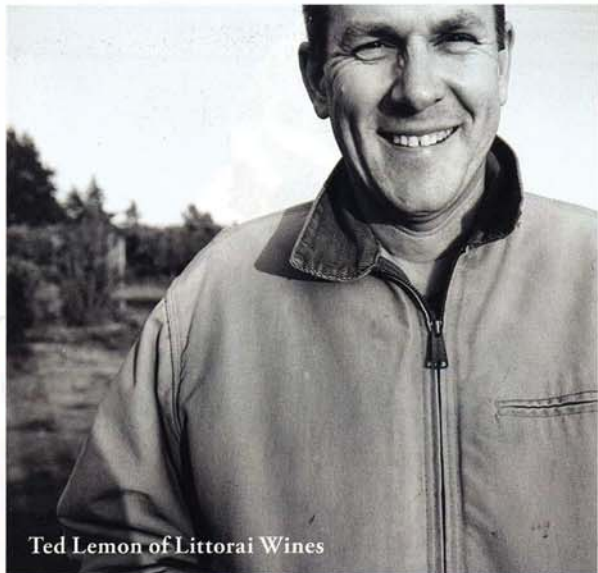
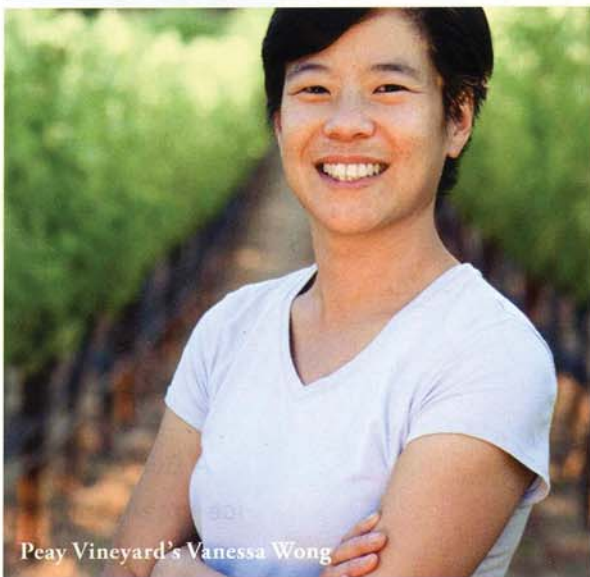




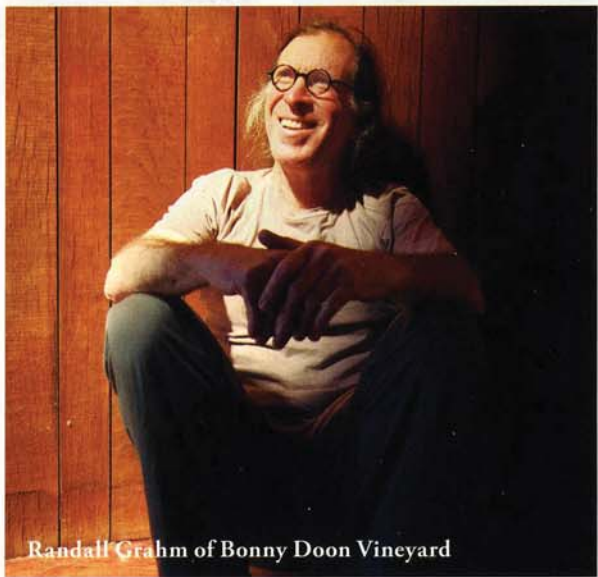
Will Bucklin of Old Hill Ranch



Ted Lemon of Littorai Wines



Peay Vineyard's Vanessa Wong



Randall Grahm of Bonny Doon Vineyard

Today's Pioneers

California has always attracted vanguard winemakers. Here are four who exemplify the state's renewed sense of viticultural adventure.

Will Bucklin is among California's growing ranks of natural winemakers. The old zinfandel vines on his Old Hill Ranch in Sonoma (dating to 1851) have deep root systems that mine for water, so Bucklin, 49, can forgo irrigation, keeping grapes small and dense and concentrating flavor. This is just one way he works with nature. "Yes, coyotes eat some grapes, but they also eat gophers," he says. "Gophers turn soil, and getting air down to the roots is important. Lizards live on the old vines and eat insects, and so it goes." —*Dara Moskowitz Grumdahl*

Ted Lemon is a standard-bearer for the new California focus on *terroir*. He studied winemaking at the Université de Bourgogne and became the first American to manage a Burgundian winery in 1982. At Domaine Guy Roulot he learned to "understand wines of place" and to cultivate "patience for things that deviate," including wines that stray from textbook development. At Littorai on the Sonoma coast, Lemon, 52, tends to specific vineyard lots to draw from them wines that telegraph the unique qualities of the landscape. —*J.B.*

Randall Grahm's Le Cigare Volant, a rich syrah-based red, catapulted him to fame in 1983. Dubbed "the Rhône Ranger" for his obsession with the grapes of that region, Grahm went on to make dozens of wines from grapes that had been overlooked in California. In 2006, Grahm sold off several labels from his Bonny Doon Vineyard and returned to the small production of uncommon varieties. "Bonny Doon is not for 'trophy' wine collectors," says Grahm, 57. "It's for sophisticated palates who have a sense of adventure." —*Karen MacNeil*

Vanessa Wong combines the best of new- and old-world winemaking. She followed up her 1992 U.C. Davis degree in viticulture and enology with studies at Bordeaux's Institut d'Oenologie and stints at Château Lafite Rothschild and Burgundy's small Domaine Jean Gros. At Peay Vineyard on the Sonoma coast, Wong, 41, makes technically precise yet personal wines with the artisan sensibility she acquired in France. "The whole family is involved," she says of Jean Gros. "They eat and breathe this existence." —*J.B.*

48 California Wines to Drink Now Whatever “rules” there were to California winemaking—maximize sugar, age in oak, accentuate fruitiness—are today being thrown to the wind. Vintners are making cabernet and chardonnay in fresh styles and playing with mourvèdre, viognier, and other grapes that are new to the state; they’re learning biodynamics and other methods from European growers; and they’re celebrating *terroir*. This focus on the personality of wine from specific sites rekindles a love for the land that is age-old in California, and it results in delicious and unique wines. Below, 48 of our new California favorites. (For purchasing information, and more than 50 additional favorites, go to SAVEUR.COM.)



LIOCO Charles Heintz Chardonnay 2008 (\$45) Wine-maker Kevin Kelley apprenticed in Burgundy before returning to make beautiful wines like this clean, precise chardonnay. Made from late-harvest grapes meticulously tended along the chilly, fog-shrouded slopes of the Sonoma Coast, this amber-hued chardonnay looks oaked but was made in stainless steel. It smells of heather and tastes like pineapple, honeyed pear, and apricot, balanced by bracing minerals.



Pride Viognier 2009 (\$42) *Sappy and luscious with waves of peach, nectarine, and grapefruit.*



Bonterra Viognier 2007 (\$19) *Certified organic and easy to drink; tangy with white peaches and minerals.*



Palmina Arneis 2009 (\$20) *Lip-smacking crispness with a mineral spine and almond-milk finish.*



Honig Rutherford Sauvignon Blanc 2009 (\$25) *Lilting melon and citrus; a polished white wine.*



Rubicon 2007 (Rutherford, Napa Valley) (\$145) *Plush, powerful cab, with formidable oak and cocoa*



Bonny Doon Vin Gris de Cigare 2009 (\$15) *Refreshing grenache-based rosé with a pleasingly bitter edge.*



Bonny Doon Le Cigare Volant 2006 (\$30) *A dark, sexy Rhône blend with exotic spiciness and minerals.*



Failla Sonoma Coast Chardonnay 2009 (\$34) *Cured olive, pear, and apple edged by delicate wood.*



Peay Estate Chardonnay 2008 (\$50) *Young, tense, with an edge of lime zest and a mineral intensity.*



Calera Central Coast Chardonnay 2009 (\$16) *Fleshy apple and fig balanced by a stony bite.*



Kunde Family Estate Chardonnay 2009 (\$15) *Lively pears and toasty vanilla from an eco-friendly winery.*



Newton Unfiltered Chardonnay 2007 (\$60) *Caramel-cream, peach, and green apple with richness and snap.*



Parducci Muscat Canelli 2006 (\$10.99) *Honeyed, apricot-and-musk dessert wine from a sustainable producer.*



Schramsberg Blanc de Blancs 2007 (\$36) *All-chardonnay sparkler with hints of tarte tatin, lemons, and ginger.*



Domaine Carneros Le Réve Blanc de Blancs 2004 (\$33) *A luscious, yeasty, and delicate organic sparkler.*



Bucklin Old Hill Ranch Zinfandel 2007 (\$34) *Brambles, plums, blackberries, and loads and loads of spice.*



Everett Ridge Estate Zinfandel 2007 (\$32) *Briar, spice, and cocoa from a winery dating to 1887.*



Clos Saron Cuvée Mystérieuse 2005 (\$35) *A pungent, salty, and plummy syrah-mourvèdre blend.*

Roederer Estate Brut Rosé NV (\$27)

The prestigious French winery Champagne Louis Roederer founded an estate in the cool Anderson Valley in 1982. This smooth, nonvintage sparkling rosé is dominated by pinot noir, which adds lovely fruit to the flavor and a nice dose of blush to the finish. It includes up to 20 percent oak-aged reserve wine and is characterized by subtle herb and red raspberry accents, but with a stiff mineral backbone.



La Clarine Farm Mourvèdre 2008 (\$23) *An exuberant wine with a dollop of licorice from the Sierra*



Donkey & Goat The Prospector 2009 (\$25) *An energetic mourvèdre with a leathery, cedaresque depth*