



Williams-Selyem enjoys a near mythical reputation and holds an important place in the history of Californian wine. It was one of the first wineries to embrace the potential of the Sonoma Coast and Russian River, particularly vineyard designate Pinot Noir, and is described as the ultimate 'garage' winery by Robert M. Parker Jr.



Bob Cabral - winemaker

Vineyard & Winery



# Williams Selyem

**Russian River Valley, California, USA**

## The History:

Founded by Ed Selyem and Burt Williams as a home-winemaking project in a garage in 1979, in the southern corner of the Russian River Valley. They purchased grapes from growers on a handshake contract, and made small batches of wine from several vineyards within the Sonoma County, specialising in Pinot Noir.

Their big break was being named Winery of the Year in 1987, due to their first vineyard designate pinot noir, 1985 Rochioli Vineyard, and soon after the wines achieved cult status and defined Russian River pinot, setting the benchmark by which American pinots were and are judged. Throughout this time the philosophy was strictly about quality, not profit, and still is. The entire production sells by mailing list, allocations are small and all customers pay the same price, including restaurants.

In 1998, a move that shocked the wine world, Ed Selyem and Burt Williams retired simultaneously and sold Williams Selyem to John Dyson, a New York based winery owner, wine connoisseur and investor.

## Now:

John Dyson has been involved in every aspect of the winery. He was quoted as saying about Williams Selyem, "I have never worked so hard to change nothing in my life." Along with the talented winemaking staff headed by Bob Cabral, he and wife Kathe have successfully maintained rewarding relationships with the very growers that helped to put Williams Selyem on the map originally: Allen, Rochioli, Precious Mountain, Ferrington and Coastlands among others.

In 1998, Williams Selyem developed its first estate vineyard, Drake Estate, near Guerneville, CA. It is located literally on the Russian River, with the same soil type as the other top vineyards in the Russian River Valley, Yolo silt loam. John has worked with Bob to apply their agricultural and viticultural knowledge in planting this site to selected clones and rootstocks with modern close spacing of plants. After three years of negotiations, John acquired for Williams Selyem another choice site in the Russian River not far from the Allen Vineyard on Westside Road. These two estate vineyards will allow Williams Selyem to control the wine from "our ground to your glass."

