

# Thomas T. Thomas Vineyard

Thomas T. Thomas, proprietor

During a trip to Burgundy in 1999, Thomas T. Thomas took a tour through the underground cellars of Maison Joseph Drouhin conducted by Veronique Drouhin. The highlight of the tour for him was a taste of Chambolle-Musigny, a Pinot Noir from the Côte de Nuits.

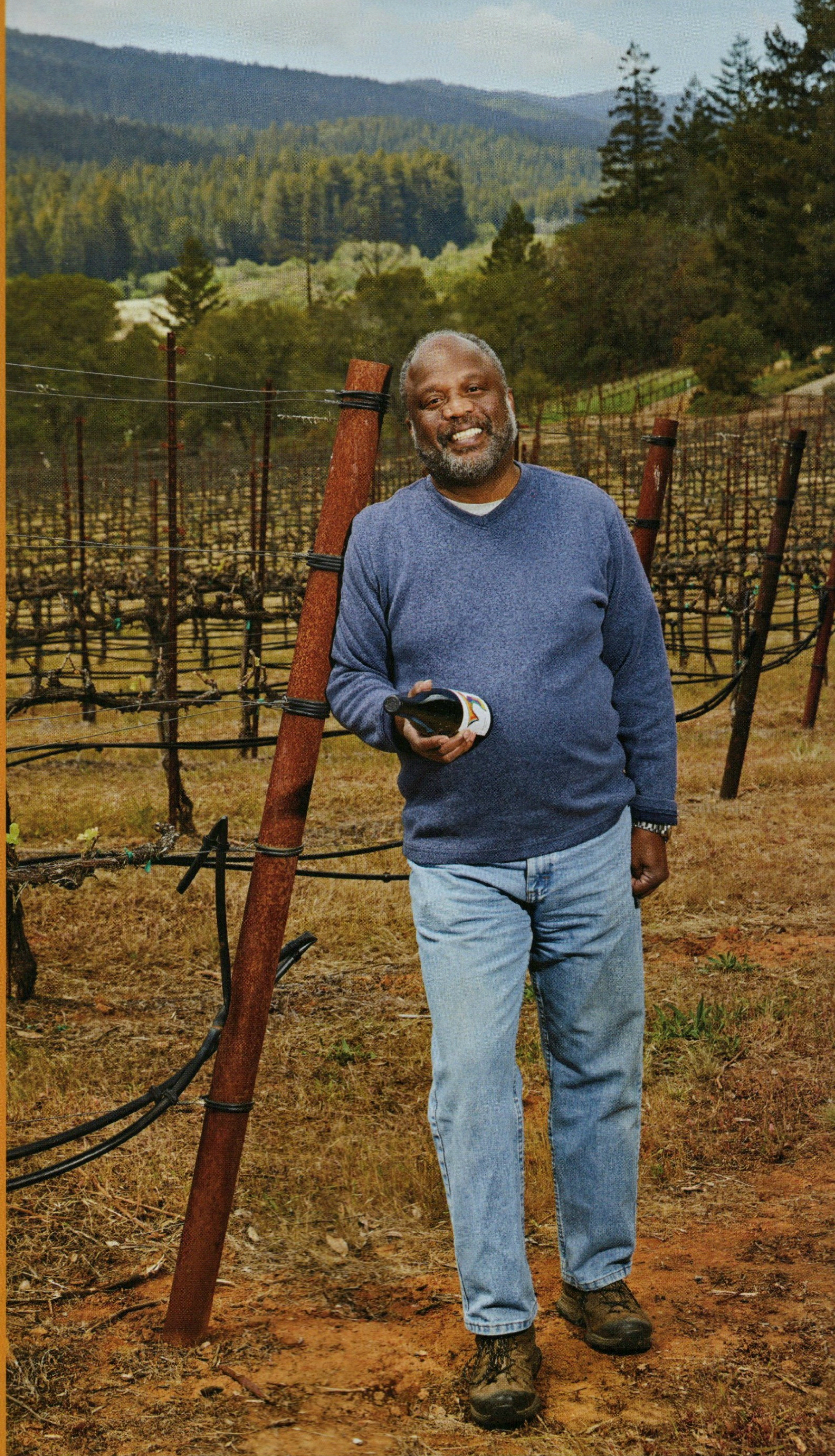
"It was like drinking liquid flowers," says Thomas, who at the time had an undergrad degree in music and a master's in finance, but no career in wine. "It was the most beautiful wine I had ever tasted. I remember thinking, 'I want to do this; this is the coolest thing I've ever seen.'"

So Thomas, then treasurer for biotech firm Genentech, started on a path to grow Pinot Noir grapes in Anderson Valley and make wine from them. He bought 37 acres on a hilltop near Philo in 2001, planted three acres in 2008 and in 2017 became a commercial winemaker with the help of Randy Schock at nearby Handley Cellars.

Soon came an outstanding inaugural 2017 Reserve Pinot Noir and then even better 2018 and 2019 expressions, which show gorgeous fruit flavors backed by great structure and balance.

His annual production of 500 cases from his meticulous hillside blocks are bottled as Estate Grown, Buster's Hill, Reserve and T. He uses up to 30% whole clusters in the fermentors after a three-day cold soak, ages the Pinots in 30% to 40% new, tight-grain French barrels for up to 17 months, and is now letting them bottle-age for another 18 months before release.

Thomas' wines typify the new generation of somewhat lighter, laser-focused wines that land in the mid 13% range for alcohol content (compared to commercial California brands that can top 15%) and are more bright than purely rich in taste. He says it's a fine line to walk. "I like a wine that I can drink by itself, but not so ripe that it overwhelms the food."





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