

# THOMAS GEORGE ESTATES: **NEW** Roots For An Old Winery



**Young guns. Winery President Jeremy Baker with Thomas George's winemaker, the "light-handed" Chris Russi.**

In 1973, an old Russian River winery built in the 1920s would be taken over by Sonoma pioneer Davis Bynum. Bynum, in turn, passed the baton when he sold it to father and son Thomas and Jeremy Baker in 2008. Bynum, you may recall, was the first to produce a single-vineyard Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley; still hearty at 89 years old, he spends time, and consults with, the Bakers.

Now with 63 acres abounding, 30 of them under vine, the fabulous Bakers have transformed this old working winery into a spectacular, modern working winery. With the estate Baker Vineyard already under their belt, they added two additional vineyards: Cresta Ridge and Starr Ridge, which they bought from Gary Farrell. A massive restoration is still underway, most notably the underground cellar and caves, where we tasted through current and future releases of their progressive, artisan Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays.



**With a block-by-block approach to farming and winemaking, the small-production wines from Thomas George have rich character. The 2009 Starr Ridge Estate Pinot Noir (SRP \$60) is generous in its bounty, its fruit and**

**acidity lifted and showy, with layers of fruit and soil. "2009 is when we found our identity," Jeremy Baker states.**