

## Fledgling wines deserve to fly

2 Nov 2010 by Jancis Robinson

Keen followers of this site and its idiosyncrasies will know that one of our favourite charities is [Room to Read](#), John Wood's incredibly successful campaign to spread literacy throughout the developing world. (With The Benevolent, the UK wine and spirit trade charity, Room to Read will be the major beneficiary of Purple pagers' tenth anniversary champagne celebration next month.) In its first 10 years, Room to Read's schools, scholarships, libraries and books have reached more than four million children in Asia and Africa and they are on course to reach 10 million children by 2015 - all in conjunction with local families and expertise and with minimal overheads.

Now, Room to Read has its own wine – or rather, Twitter (like Room to Read, based in San Francisco) has come up with a pair of wines, a 2009 Chardonnay and Pinot Noir called Fledgling, which are being sold in aid of Room to Read. The wines are made by the enterprising custom-crush outfit Crushpad at their facility in the Napa Valley but, to judge from the AVA, the fruit is quite widely sourced. Most importantly, each bottle sold generates a donation of \$5 to Room to Read.

I tasted a few Fledgling samples in [rather strange circumstances](#) in a Singapore hotel room last May but had a chance to taste the two finished wines recently (tasting notes below) while I was in the US and was most agreeably surprised. These are not just excuses to raise funds. They are wines I would be very happy to pour for friends - and I was most impressed by the subtlety of the Pinot Noir in particular.

You can buy these wines for a very reasonable \$25 a bottle online from [www.fledglingwine.com](http://www.fledglingwine.com). Bulk orders are also available for those who might like to consider corporate gifts - contact Noah Dorrance at [noah@crushpadwine.com](mailto:noah@crushpadwine.com). To learn more about the Fledgling project, contact Sonia Torres at [sonia.torres@roomtoread.org](mailto:sonia.torres@roomtoread.org) or Claire Williams at [claire@twitter.com](mailto:claire@twitter.com). I believe for the moment sales are restricted to those in the US - in fact, knowing how complicated shipping wine is in the US, I suspect it is even more limited than this, alas.

### **Fledgling Chardonnay 2009 California** 16 Drink 2010-11

Like the Pinot, this blend is attractively restrained while having not an ounce of meanness - as one would expect of a wine associated with such a laudable project.

### **Fledgling Pinot Noir 2009 California** 16.5 Drink 2010-11

The background notes on the Fledgling website promise that this wine 'exudes tons of "Pinot-osity"' but what I like about it is that it is far from heavyweight but is actually a very attractive, textbook example of delicate Pinot Noir fruit that finishes dry. If every Bourgogne Rouge tasted as good as this, I would be very happy. The fruit was apparently sourced from Amber Ridge, La Encantada and Doctor's vineyards, among others. Well made, Crushpad!