

The Hanes Wine Review, April 2008 Edition

So, Hanes got a few ideas for mini-articles and here's one. A topic not necessarily obvious because, on the whole, bubbles look like bubbles. But not all sparkling wines are created equal and here's why.

The wine producing region in France called Champagne is by far the most famous area for sparkling wine. So much so that "Champagne" almost become a generic term for sparkling wine sort of like "Windex" is for glass cleaning solution or "Google" is for searching for information online. Champagne is made in the "méthode champenoise." This is because champenoise in the French language means something like "of Champagne." So, it is actually a very truthful way of describing how Champagne is made!

This method is very complex. It involves a primary fermentation as with any still table wine and then an intentionally induced second fermentation in the bottle which adds the fizz as newly added yeasts consume newly added sugar creating trapped carbon dioxide bubbles. During all this the bottles get stored all kinds of crazy directions as they are aging, even upside down! Then bottle necks got frozen, bottles spit out some frozen stuff and corks get put into bottles. Usually in that order. Et, voila, Champagne!

Lots of places outside of Champagne make their sparkling wines in the same manner. But since 1994 European Union law forbids any European producer outside of Champagne to describe their wines as being made in the "méthode champenoise." That would be cheating and deceitful as their wines are not from Champagne proper. But, don't worry, recently France increased the size of the Champagne appellation by an additional 38 villages so there will still be plenty of labels which say "méthode champenoise" on them. That's cool. Producers outside of Europe can still put "méthode champenoise" on their labels. But maybe these wines can't be legally sold in Europe. Hmmm.

If a winery makes wines like they do in Champagne they can use other legally and morally sanctioned descriptors for sparkling wines such as "méthode traditionnelle," "méthode classique," or "méthode traditionnelle classique." These terms don't have to be in the French language per se, they can be in any language. But French is pretty.

You'll see some labeling descriptors such as "Fermented in This Bottle" or verbiage to indicate that secondary fermentation occurs in the bottle. There's also effervescent wines which are less fizzy than Champagne and may or may not be made similarly to the méthode champenoise. These can be labeled "vin mousseux" or "vin pétillant" or "crémant" or "méthode ancestrale." Or.

Hanes right now is not so interested in describing the méthode champenoise or Champagne. However, it is important to note the terms utilized throughout the world to designate sparkling wines made along the lines of the méthode champenoise. This is very informative, especially if one wants to buy a sparkling wine which is produced according to the méthode champenoise. People do care about these sort of things and they have a right to know.

Hanes is interested in mentioning sparkling wines *not* made along the lines of the méthode champenoise. These sparkling wines are rarely labeled as being made in any particular fashion. There's a reason. A lot of these wines are made in much larger vats and along larger commercial lines. That's not a sexy selling point (even if the end quality is very good).

The primary mode of making sparkling wines without secondary fermentation in bottle is called the "Charmat method" after its inventor Eugene Charmat who formalized the procedure in the early 20th century. Rather than add yeast and sugar to the base wine in the bottle, they are added to the base wine in a large sealed and pressurized tank. This is where the secondary fermentation takes place to the bulk liquid. Any detritus such as dead yeast (i.e., lees) gets filtered out of the tank and doesn't get into the bottles. The production cost for this method is much, much lower than sparklers made via the méthode champenoise.

The wineries most often utilizing the Charmat method come from the Veneto region of Italy and are known by the name of the grape used, Prosecco. German sparkling wines called "Sekt" are also on the whole made via the Charmat method. Italian wines labeled as "Spumante" can be made in the méthode champenoise or Charmat method as the term "Spumante" has no legal regulations applied to it. In the United States only the really cheap brut sparkling wines from producers such as André, Cook's, or Tott's are made using the Charmat method. Mmmm, Cold Duck.

Wines made via the Charmat method are generally fresher with more fruit emphasis than other sparkling wines and are meant to be consumed young. Some can be aged for about five years but Hanes is not sure why.

Extremely cheap sparkling wines [cheaper than Cold Duck?] get their fizz on in the same manner as common soda does, with compressed carbon dioxide blasted into the still wine. But we never drink these sort of wines, do we? Quick, hide the bottles...

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This month's big winners... As has been the case of recent months, most wines consumed (and there were a lot) were older wines and thus captured on the website's "Reviews of Older Wines" page. Duh. A pal turned Hanes onto something new and untried as of yet, the fine wines of the state of Ohio. While not great wines per se they are recommendable as both (a) wines that can be consumed and (b) from Ohio. Let the fruit of the vine hang unto ripeness across the land! Not many 2005 Bordeaux wines are gonna pass through Hanes's lips but for \$22 took a flyer on a bottle of Château Lanessan. Good wine but not exactly the bargain wine it used to be. Whine, whine, whine. Cirò Rosso wines aren't on most people's radar but they can prove to be nice change of pace wines, as evidenced by Ippolito's 2005 "Liber Pater" bottling for around \$16. Plus you can entertain your houseguests endlessly by saying "Gaglioppo." Bonus.

The best \$15 and under picks... Scarce availability makes it difficult to recommend some wines but Paso Robles producer Caparone has fashioned a very nice wine from the 2004 vintage and the Aglianico grape for a touch under \$15, certainly noteworthy if it can be tracked down for consumption. Picked up on a whim, Hanes got quite lucky with another Portuguese dry red table wine. For \$8 much value to be had in the Conde de Vimioso "Vinho Regional Ribatejano" 2005 bottling. Write it down because you'll forget the name before you get to the corner.

And the disappointments... Zinfandel has all but fallen off ye olde Hanes radar. Gosh, was it really just like 12 years ago when it was Hanes's favorite grape for red wine? Sigh. Anyway, got to try the 2005 Downing Family "Fly by Night" and no problem letting it keep on flying away. Hanes has no one to blame but himself. He lets enough time go by and then forgets that 99% of the time he don't like no New Zealand Pinot Noir. Time had passed, dollars were spent, 2006 Kahurangi Estate Pinot Noir was sipped and disappointment was had. The cycle of life reborn anew.

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Unlike *those other* professional reviews, Hanes only will share what he likes if it is *currently available* in stores for immediate purchase. If these wines are not to be found in some of your local stores, they suck and that's not Hanes's fault.

If you are interested in reading tasting notes by Hanes on the older (or non-imported) wines he has recently consumed, these notes are gathered here: <http://www.haneswinereview.com/reviews/oldervintages2008.html>

Here's the order in which Hanes humbly provides the wine review information:

Winery/Producer Name
Region of Origin, Appellation, Brand Name/Wine Style, Single Vineyard (if any applicable)
Grape Type
Vintage Year, Price Hanes Paid (if available), Alcohol Percentage (if available)
Tasting Notes, Hanes's Numeric Score (on the traditional, yet inane, 100 point scale (which for Hanes truly begins at around 80 points and more or less ends around 94 points)

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And here's Hanes's wine reviews for April!

CALIFORNIA RED

Caparone
San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles
Aglianico
2004, \$13.99, 13.2%
Burnt crimson influences the base purple core, fiery red rims, spotless with nice clarity. Leathery nose of animal hair, some rubber type notes as well, anise seed, orange spice, full and firm plum, cherry fruit scents, given its weight in your nostrils lifts well. Medium-bodied, smoky and metallic with notes of iron shavings and leather. Strong element of white grapefruit and tangerine citrus. Lots of punch in the raspberry, blackberry, cherry fruit, a damn good thing since the tannins pack an even bigger punch, dries your tongue into a husk by the finish. Some of the ripeness comes out by the end, semi-prune. Remarkable typicity while still speaking of its place. 89

Downing Family
Napa Valley, Oakville, Fly by Night
Zinfandel
2005, \$32.99, 14.9%
Consistent ruby-purple from core to rims, mild lightening at best around the rims to red-magenta, hint of filminess throughout. Sweet, liqueur-like raspberry, strawberry, red cherry scents, cut grass, lemongrass, heavy eucalyptus, with its wide array of elements still pulls up short. Medium-bodied, dry texture and a dried fruit character obtains and restrains the juiciness in the semi-sour raspberry, cherry, cranberry fruit. This is attenuated by a biting herbaceousness. Minimal discernible oak presence, whisper of chocolate or caramel. Some orange peel though. Flat presence on the palate, broad, not deep. Tightens near the finish line. Not a flawed bottle, what's up here? 85

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Herman Story Wines
Santa Ynez Valley
Roussanne
2006, \$28.99, 15.9%

Golden amber hues deepen the already dark gold coloration, nice translucent shimmer below without detracting from its luster. Creamy orange to lemon sherbet driven nose, pairs up with inviting nuttiness and sweet baking spices, full peach, apricot, nectarine scents linger well, anchors itself in your nostrils and then expands like a rubber balloon. Full-bodied and as soft as oversized down pillow, covers the palate completely with little downwards pressure. Sweet, not quite poached, apricot, peach, pear, green melon fruit flavors, the surprisingly active acidity helps here. Honey glaze and candied lemon peel fill out the finish followed on by a spoonful of vanilla pudding. Lacks the expected nuttiness in the mouth. Fun, smooth drinker. 89

OREGON RED

Serene, Domaine
Willamette Valley, Monogram
Pinot Noir
2005, \$250.00, 14.5%

Mild filminess through the glowing ruby-violet core, seamless transition to straight-on ruby to red-magenta in the fully saturated rims. Hard cream in the nose bespeaks of well-chosen oak, fullness with pushiness in the broad toast, cocoa powder and coffee bean accents, not much airiness in the red cherry, raspberry scents, on the whole chooses to sink deeper and deeper into your nostrils rather than lift. Full-bodied and layered with clove, ginger spice, orange reduction, caramel and coffee flavors. The raspberry, red cherry, strawberry fruit stays broad and not heavy, easily cruises fully to the finish line. A light grassy streak helps enliven the brown damp earth element. Betrays no alcoholic heat. Caramel fumes rise through the finish. Understated but not skimping on the bling either. Grapes sourced from Evenstad Estate, Jerusalem Hill Estate, Winery Hill Estate. 89

NEW YORK WHITE

Paumanok
Long Island, North Fork, Semi-Dry
Riesling
2006, \$19.99, 10.0%

Fully transparent with the lightest of white straw hues, really only along the rims do you get green and light gold colors. The ripe, pear, apricot, peach fruit most prominent in the nose, good swirl in the flowers, cinnamon, orange infused water, mint, airy yet not too light in weight. Medium to full-bodied, plenty of powdery sugar at first, dusts the peach, apricot, melon, pear fruit with friendliness. Bright, juicy tangerine, lemon, pink grapefruit citrus a big component and adds vibrancy. High floral as well, keeps it pretty. The acidity is soft but not non-existent. Simple profile yet so positive and upbeat your brain shuts off with the first few sips and you just enjoy it. 87

OHIO RED

Kinkead Ridge
Ohio River Valley
Cabernet Franc
2005, \$17.99, 13.2%

Clear and light violet color, no problem moving into vibrant red-ruby swiftly, fashioning broad rims, not a blemish in sight. The nose immediately betrays that oak cream is in major effect to cover up any flaw, real or perceived, behind this veil you can find some appropriate bell pepper scents,

black pepper, grass and dried potpourri, the cherry, raspberry scents have a hard candy feel. Light-bodied, again, the oak provides what weight there is. The acidity moves the show forward, with air time highlighting the bell pepper, leather and merde over the brightly sour raspberry, red cherry fruit. The lack of inherent richness brings the caramel, vanilla flavors back out towards the finish. If you know where it's from and all, you have to give it the benefit of the doubt and some extra credit. 85

OHIO WHITE

Kinkead Ridge
Ohio River Valley
Blend
2006, \$14.99, 12.6%

Half dull, half sparkling white-green straw color, much greener around the rims, seems like a solid cube in the glass. Herbaceous nose with a certain nuttiness, fairly salty too, furnishes pear, apple, apricot fruit with youthful fuzz, very loosely knit which tends to have it dissolving quickly. Medium-bodied, lean, tart and focused enough to get the claws out as it digs into your palate. Highlights lemon, orange citrus, bitter nuts, stones and dried flowers but everything comes and drifts away swiftly. The acidity stays at a level above the primary material, makes it hard for the pear, peach, melon, nectarine fruit to fill out. And arch enough to pull up some before the finish. Shows a credible amount of varietal character for a blend, but, uhh, still shows its roots. 63% Viognier, 37% Roussanne. 85

FRANCE RED

Vins Contés (Olivier Lemasson), Les
Loire, Vin de Table Le P'Tit Rouquin 2ème Mise
Gamay Noir
2006, \$12.99, 12.0%

The deep purple core more gauzy than filmy, achieves opacity without drawing attention to the fact, the violet shades darken the otherwise ruby rims. There's a bit of earthy, barnyardy stink to the nose at first but this segues into layers of raspberry, blackberry, cranberry fruit scents, sticky enough that the flowers and mixed citrus components never gain meaningful separation. Medium to full-bodied, more herbaceousness upfront, particularly given the aggressiveness of the tannins and acidity during the attack. Finds its pacing and inches forward from there, gaining sparkle from the mixed white grapefruit, lemon, orange citrus. The mineral and stone parts are chunky, more like broken bits than powder. Merde and tilled earth take up a great deal of the territory as it nears conclusion. Certainly very long and thick but might have benefited from more freshness. 88

Puffeney, Jacques
Jura, Arbois, Cuvée Les Bérangères
Trousseau
2005, \$32.99, 13.5%

Light, gleaming ruby-violet color, clear and spotless, stays consistent through to the rims with an added hint of orange hue. Lively, perfumed nose of strawberry, raspberry, green apple fruit, adroitly blends in dusty white pepper, white grapefruit and chalky white stones, hovers like a pregnant cloud in your nostrils. Medium-bodied, very refreshing with crackling, but not withering, acidity which just adds polish to the grass, pepper, leather elements as well as the strawberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit. Starts to get borderline hyperactive and loses some direction, the

tannins grip towards the end, drying things out more. Very stony, parched earth accented finish. 88

Lanessan, Château
Bordeaux, Haut-Médoc
Blend
2005, \$21.99, 13.0%

Trim appearance with a sleek surface which melds the violet core into the red-ruby rims at a measured pace. The nose, even after some air time, plays its cards close to the vest with wildflowers, bell pepper, tobacco and cedar in the lead and a frugal parsing out of the black cherry, raspberry scents, all that said lingers for some time. Medium-bodied with a strong skeleton of tannins which gives it a certain immobility. No greenness or immaturity in said tannins and overall feels natural enough. The bell pepper lower and the cedar, wildflowers, leather and tobacco higher. Additional nip of mixed white citrus and tea leaf as well. The blackberry, cherry, currant fruit in no way weak but lacks the juiciness of youth too. All-in-all it's quite good but requires a lot of concentration to enjoy. 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot. 88

Bachelet, Domaine Denis
Burgundy, Côte de Nuits-Villages
Pinot Noir
2005, \$39.99, 12.5%

Very light violet in the core, as much influenced by pink-magenta as darker basic ruby hues, high degree of integration and cleanliness. Dried cow patties and earth, matted straw lend depth to the nose, as the lemon to orange citrus and cinnamon start to come out it gets steamrolled by the raspberry, cranberry, cherry scents, overall splits the difference between fruit and a more rugged profile. Medium-bodied, makes a point of displaying its tannin and acidity as a point of pride. With lemon peel, lemongrass, stone shards, parched brown earth it is a serious wine without ramming its terroir down your throat. Wiry red cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit rides the acid express to the finish. Tight end, very clear enunciation but no room for any given element to move. The time has not come today. 88

Noiraie, Domaine de la
Loire, Bourgueil, Cuvée St. Vincent
Cabernet Franc
2006, \$17.99, 12.5%

The purple hued core deep enough to beat the red back towards the rims, there it darkens the pink-magenta color towards ruby, clean throughout. There's an earthy, sandy, mineral dryness to the nose, more flowers evident than bell pepper, more merde and mixed white citrus than cherry, raspberry scents. Medium to full-bodied, puts on weight as it progresses through the mouth. While the bell pepper and grassiness raises a few notches in the mouth the mineral and stone dust as well as ash and leather are so in control the former can't claim more than a brief chorus for itself. It's the cherry, red currant, pomegranate fruit that benefits from the growing weight, good traction by the end. Tannins and acidity both match the depth of the primary material, no party-poopers. That said, could use time in a decanter to unclench before the guzzling commences. 87

Lesec Sélections, Patrick
Rhône, Côtes du Rhône, Bouquet
Blend
2005, \$13.99, 14.0%

Warm purple core of full opacity, noticeably broad red-magenta to scarlet rims, spotless throughout. Fairly quiet nose, at most you get a spritz of floral dew on cherry, plum fruit, suggestions of leather and barnyard notes, remarkably empty so nothing to say. Medium-bodied, the cherry, blackberry, plum fruit covers more territory here and as a result carries the florality with it. Touch of cedar and orange spice without much effect by the mid-palate. The tannins very drying and deaden the palate a great deal with each additional sip. Around the finish line you might find some cocoa powder or fried butter swipes. At first glance you might want to call it understated but semi-clenched probably more accurate. No way to wash the tannins out of your mouth at the end. Approximately 70% Grenache, 30% Syrah. 86

FRANCE WHITE

Vaults (Domaine du Closel), Château des
Loire, Savennières, La Jalousie
Chenin Blanc
2006, \$20.99, 14.0%

Rich yellow gold in color with a tinge of ochre, very full through the rims with a strong distortion below the surface. Fresh in a muscular way in the nose, punches into you with powdered stone, saline, grass, grapefruit to orange citrus and a light smokiness, the pear, apricot, apple scents angular and zip off before fully enjoyed. Full-bodied with a stern lack of give, like it wants you to feel its muscles when you push it. Keenly edged white to pink grapefruit with lemon and orange citrus backup, sufficiently sour to dampen any honeyed notes. A little wooly, more so than waxy. Minute traces of herbaceousness given no room to breathe. The acidity carves up the peach, pear, apricot, apple fruit in a manner that shortens it slightly. That said, the honey and flowers come through nicely at the end in support of the fruit. (Synthetic cork: Diam) 90

Villaine, Domaine A. et P. de
Burgundy, Bouzeron
Aligoté
2005, \$17.99, 12.5%

Straightforward yellow straw in color, light enough that there's no appreciable different at the rims, lacks luster but on the whole transparent and clean. The nose has a certain coiled nature to it, dusty in a chalky way but nothing swirls it's more bound up lemon peel, dry apple, pear and peach fruit and a pinch of flowers. Full-bodied, more expressive in the mouth without giving up a firm acidic spine. More room to breathe for the mint, flowers and lemon/grapefruit citrus, at times almost appears spicy. A larger element of stream water, white pebbles and chalk crowds out the apple, pear, peach fruit which, as in the nose, isn't intent on hogging the spotlight anyway. A generalized sour bite lends pucker to the finish. A nice wine that's honest enough that it deserves credit for that. 87

Latour, Maison Louis
Burgundy, Montagny, La Grande Roche
Chardonnay
2005, \$19.99, 13.0%

Very clear and transparent golden straw color, hints of green and white gold around the mostly hueless rims. Pleasing smokiness to the nose, activates the lemon and orange citrus in addition to a brisk florality, the peach, pear, apricot fruit scents wiry and scramble about more than soak in. Medium-bodied, round with an emphasis on pushing outwards rather forming a solid core. Very light toasty qualities yet, again, it much more about the general smokiness. Texturally has good grip for its weight and you feel its presence through to the finish. More cut than richness to the peach, pear, apple fruit. Discernible mineral water and white pebble accents come to the fore before the end. While nothing prodigious about it, honest and well-mannered wine without flaws. 87

ITALY RED

Ippolito, Cantine Vincenzo
Calabria, Cirò Rosso Classico Superiore, Liber Pater
Gaglioppo
2005, \$15.99, 13.5%

Purple in the core swept away by burnt red and orange tones, especially so around the mostly brick colored rims, very good clarity throughout. Herbaceous and earthy notes in the nose struggle against the candied cherry, raspberry fruit scents, leather and animal fur turn the tide towards the former, more punch than purity. Light to medium-bodied with bracing acidity, your palate tingles from the first sip. This causes the orange citrus, dried grass and metallic stones to rise up way before the sweeter, softer raspberry, strawberry, red cherry fruit, granted the latter isn't weak at all. Leather, wood shavings and a general dustiness permeates the mouth past the mid-palate, obviously has tannins in spades too. Luckily the beacon of the fruit never wavers making it on the whole enjoyable rustic rather than excessively chewy. A "doesn't take shit from nobody" lightweight wine. 87

Maccari, Feudo
Sicilia, ReNoto
Blend
2006, \$14.99, 13.5%

Fat, glowing violet core with thin, if expressively dense, ruby-magenta rims. Some breeze of pine, lemon juice in the nose but don't doubt that it's the jammy plum, blackberry, cherry scents which take up 99% of the territory, a bit of flowers and straw surface before the dissolve. Medium-bodied, the tannins add a pockmarked texture to the attack and prevent too much sweetness in the raspberry, strawberry, red cherry fruit. Overall, it is a touch too rustic in nature to have the lemon/orange citrus and flowers achieve full breadth. Chocolate flavors soften things through to the finish. The Syrah appears to add heaviness through the finish. 85% Nero d'Avola, 15% Syrah. 86

Coltibuono (La Badia)
Tuscany, Chianti Classico, RS
Sangiovese
2005, \$13.99, 13.0%

The purple based darkened by scarlet red hues, moderately clear, the rims pretty much all red, minimal ruby peeking through. There's a swirling floral lift to energize the thick, bottom heavy cherry, blackberry scents

in the nose, splash of cedar or garden herbs but overall leans heavily on the fruit to impress. Full-bodied and semi-clumsy, turns like it's happy to see you but then steps on your toes in the process. The acidity comes in whispering sheets making the tannins have to do the hard work trying to get all the elements on the feet and moving sprightly. Fluffy wildflowers, white citrus and herbs contribute to the cotton ball texture in the mouth, even the cherry, red currant, blackberry fruit feels whipped up into a froth. Easy drinking, ends prematurely but one could say better that than it be entirely unstructured and more fruit dependent. 85

AUSTRIA RED

Bauer, Weingut Anton
Donauland, Wagram
Zweigelt
2006, \$15.99, 13.0%

Deep ruby-purple color of equal clarity and saturation, switches to a glowing pink-magenta around the rims, attractive in the glass. Lively, fruity nose of strawberry, raspberry, cranberry juiciness as well as lemon juice, features some chocolate powder too, too heavy for any grassiness or stoniness to initiate liftoff. Full-bodied, if you combine the extremely bottom-heavy plum, blackberry, black cherry fruit with the thick tannin blanket it doesn't budge more than honey left out in the sun for an hour. Again, fruit-driven with lemon accents to play off the chocolate elements. Passing clouds of leather, earth, stone or grass barely cast a shadow. Eminently approachable yet, at the same time, would be hard to peg as a certain grape or place. Which may be good, may be bad. (Screwcap) 88

PORTUGAL RED

Vimioso (Falua Sociedade de Vinhos), Conde de
Ribatejo, Vinho Regional Ribatejano
Blend
2005, \$7.99, 13.5%

While dark there's zero loss of clarity in the ruby-purple core, the wide rims full-on and glowing ruby-magenta, a full glass could serve as a night light. The nose makes no attempt to hide that it's 99% raspberry, blackberry, cherry fruit, the remainder coconut custard, chocolate chips, pressed flowers and lemon pie. Medium-bodied, refreshingly broad tannic skeleton ensures that the cherry, blackberry, raspberry fruit won't be too juicy nor move in an haphazard manner. The cocoa and vanilla powder stuff toned down here, yet the lemon to grapefruit citrus and dried flowers take up some space. Cedar, stones and leather not absent. Fruit lasts fully through the finish. Portugal seems to stand alone at being able to produce such competence at this price. Unspecified percentages of Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Cabernet Sauvignon. 87

NEW ZEALAND RED

Kahurangi Estate
Nelson
Pinot Noir
2006, \$22.99, 13.5%

As much red-ruby throughout as violet, while shiny at the core, the brick red coloration of the rims dulls it out some. The nose is smoky like a campfire the next morning, mixed with some muddy earth in addition to sour raspberry, cranberry, red cherry fruit scents, only a whisper of any

flowers or citrus. In the mouth it's medium-bodied and displays a fair degree of green tannin which along with the acidity makes for a mouth puckering attack. This also elevates the white grapefruit and cut grass components, making them equal in proportion to the tart cherry, raspberry, pomegranate fruit. The jagged mouth feel inhibits the floral element from spreading out. Here the smokiness all but gone and a hard stoniness replaces any "loose" earthiness. Bunch of stuff in there yet they're more randomly presented than expressed in one voice.
[Screwcap] 85