

## ***The Hanes Wine Review, December 2016 Edition***

Nothing to say except that this edition of *The Hanes Wine Review* basically closed on November 28<sup>th</sup> and here it is December 18<sup>th</sup> and the final touches and formatting are only now being completed. That's life.

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**This month's big winners...** First time tasting Olga Raffault's high end Chinon bottling "La Singulière." This the 2010 vintage. Was surprised by the ripeness of the fruit, unsure if a sign of the approach to this bottling or of the vintage (or both). Will give remaining bottles many years to settle into itself. While Terre Nere's basic bottling offers consistent value, it can be hit or miss with the higher end stuff. Luckily the 2014 Terre Nere wine from Sicily's Etna region called "Feudo di Mezzo Il Quattro delle Rose" was a hit. Plenty of power and makes an impression for sure. Well worth \$30. A sign that Hanes likes Turley Zinfandel from the Ueberroth Vineyard. Hoarded the bottle waiting for the "right moment" then almost forgot to drink it. Anyway, the 2013 is another strong offering and pretty much worth the \$48. Enjoyed the 2012 Chardonnay from the Jura's Domaine de la Pinte called "Fonteneille" even though it had this persistently distracting toastiness. Don't drink much Pinte, probably should if Hanes were not too busy drinking other wines.

**The best \$20 and under picks....** Had an old favorite which showed well once more. The 2014 version of Château Massiac's Minervois red blend showed lovely fruit and gamey qualities and at \$16 falls into the "steal" category so check it out. A swell pal brought back a bottle from Canada, the 2015 Riesling from Ontario's Norman Hardie Winery. Nice stuff, think it converts to about \$16 USD. Reminds Hanes of a fun trip taken many years ago to the Ontario wine region. Alas, so little of these Canadian wines get into the US and heck Riesling doesn't sell anyway. Pick up a bottle when next in Toronto or something. Ferrando from Italy's Piedmont region is a steady value across the board and their Canavese Rosso called "La Torrazza" is a winner in 2014 for \$20. Great structure without foregoing fruit, lots of personality. Yummy. Not the easiest wine in the world to find but the 2015 De Angelis "Offida" from the Pecorino grape is a feisty little drop and quite the bargain at around \$13, once more shows the diversity of Italian white wines. In 2014 the Domaine des Pierre Seches fashioned a nice little Syrah from the Rhône's Ardèche area. Good acidity and zip and "grape typicity" for about \$20. Guillaume Clusel (of Clusel-Roch) has produced an excellent Gamay called "Traoubles" from the Coteaux du Lyonnais in the Rhône. In case you don't know it yet, Rhône Gamay is one of the next big things so get with the program. \$17 is quite fair for what you get. While not a "wow" wine the 2014 Carignan from Domaine la Manarine is what you used to get across the board from France – cheap gulpable wine at like \$12. The wines are still out there but harder to find (notice that the "best values" category is still dominated by France and Italy with nary a Californian wine to be seen). If you like offbeat wines, one of the more affordable wines from Spain's Canary islands is the Frontón de Oro "Tinto Tradicional" from the Listán Negro grape. The 2014 is a solid effort with a diverse flavor profile that should appeal to people who like Etna wines. \$16 is very fair for this wine.

**And the disappointments...** Was not blown away by any of the 2015 Clos de la Roilette wines, the normale and the Cuvée Tardive as well as the Cuvée Christal. The Tardive was too stern and the normale bottling too fruity. Go figure. Unlikely to cellar either. Was bummed that the 2015 "Pinoir de Soif" bottling from Les Vins Contés was underwhelming as Hanes loves this producer and their prices remain good. Any time you can find decent Pinot Noir for under \$20 it's noteworthy. Maybe next vintage. First ever release from Once & Future, new winery from Joel Peterson of Ravenswood fame. Tried the 2014 Bedrock Vineyard Zinfandel. Good wine but not great, seems made to impress as well as more for aging than immediate consumption. Have one more bottle to age so we shall see. Cost \$42. Will keep buying from this winery for further data points. On the Bedrock Zinfandel tip, while had a few very nice wines from them this time around the 2014 Monte Rosso Vineyard Zinfandel was not that enjoyable. This perhaps amplified by memories of how many Zins from this vineyard Hanes has enjoyed in the past. And so it goes. More new data points that Hanes does not "get" the Chenin Blanc wines from Sandlands. Witness the 2014 "California" bottling which was found to lack life and expressivity of fruit. Have an extra bottle to age so maybe that will do the trick. In any event, everyone wants to try Sandlands wine so having extra bottles around to share is usually a good thing. First time trying a wine from Domaine Pêcheur of the Jura and the 2014 Trousseau was so-so. Just a bit too twiggy and leafy and lacking in prettiness. But it's the Jura so to be cool Hanes will continue to try a few more bottlings from this producer. About \$28 which is the norm for wines from here. Historically Hanes's favorite bottling from Huet is their Vouvray Clos du Bourg Demi-Sec. But the 2015 is more evidence that Huet now really wants to focus on Sec wines and not so much Demi-Sec. Just bland wine and fairly

expensive at \$42. Probably one of the least enjoyable wines Hanes has had in some time was the 2015 Beaujolais "Exspectatia" from Christian Ducroux. To be fair, the retailer makes it clear that the wine brings the funk. But this wine really brings it to the point of being too volatile to consume. Maybe Hanes should have given it a five day decant prior or something. Thankfully was only \$15, whew. Natural wine always tastes good, always.

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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/oldervintages2016.html>

If you are interested in reading tasting notes by Hanes on *beer* he has recently consumed, these notes are gathered here: <http://www.haneswinereview.com/reviews/beer.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 December!

## CALIFORNIA RED

Turley

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Ueberroth Vineyard

Zinfandel

2013, \$48.00, 15.8%

Strong garnet red influence to the fuzzy purple core, not close to opaque, moderate surface shine at best, color-wise looks like it feel asleep in the sun before putting on sunscreen. Syrupy strawberry, blueberry, cherry fruit infuses the nose, black licorice, coconut, anise and butterscotch, the enjoyment of these marred some by alcoholic fumes, over time you can note orange peel, sage and fennel. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with a gluey texture which makes it near impossible to remove it from the mouth, goes on forever. Same emphasis on licorice with a bigger spotlight on sour orange and pine to garden herbs. Has sufficient savoriness to balance out all the sweetness of the blueberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit. Marshals both energy and focus. 92

Turley

Central Valley, Lodi, Kirschenmann Vineyard

Zinfandel

2014, \$35.00, 15.1%

The purple at the core is washed out by ruby to brick red hues, remains clear if not always fully transparent, the rims a solid brick to sunset red, minimal saturated glow. Very berry nose of raspberry, strawberry, cranberry to blueberry fruit, undercurrent of caramel, sprig of mint, hint of orange peel, basically everything past the fruit lurks at the edges, overall has good freshness. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, seems to have more acidity than most for wines from this grape. Juicy and sweet, stopping short of sugary, again minimal oak trace, just touches of caramel or butterscotch. More pine sap, sweet garden herb and licorice notes here. The blackberry, raspberry, strawberry fruit displays firmness and flow. Comes so close to a fruit love fest that you wish it would just let loose. 90

Bedrock Wine Co.  
Russian River Valley, Carlisle Vineyard  
Zinfandel  
2014, \$38.00, 14.9%  
Dull purple core, not fully opaque, any interest in heading to ruby swallowed up by crimson and sunset red hues. Smooth butterscotch and toffee notes grease the somewhat heavy blackberry, blueberry, cherry scents, minty with lower level of eucalyptus, as it opens there's more buttery popcorn and coffee notes. Full-bodied, close to syrupy in how it clings to the mouth, this even as there's a drying clumpiness at the end. But really nothing can get in the way of the exuberance of the blueberry, boysenberry, blackberry fruit, by far the star of the show. Caramel, toffee and mint here, but in lesser degree. Over time develops a spicy savoriness which pairs well with the sweetness of the fruit. If the texture was less uneven, it would be more impressive. 89

Harrington Wines  
San Benito County, La Cienega Valley, Siletto Vineyard  
Trousseau  
2014, \$30.00, 14.1%  
The violet hues are subsumed in more of a bright cranberry red, strong right through the rims, perfectly clear and shiny yet manages to pool into the glass as well. The nose has a smoky, burnt edge to it, more wet fur than leather, light merde notes, white grapefruit, tends to push the cherry, pomegranate, blackberry scents into the background. Medium-bodied, has a super-tangy profile with white pepper, cut green grass, white grapefruit and lesser mineral notes all playing parts. Lots of snap in the raspberry, cherry, strawberry fruit as well, this without sacrificing juicy ripeness. The acidity able to refreshen things as needed. The animal sweat funk actually fills in the lower register well. There's a certain relentless to it which will either captivate or turn you off. 89

Bedrock Wine Co.  
Russian River Valley, Papera Ranch, Papera Ranch Heritage Blend  
2014, \$38.00, 14.5%  
Reddish black core yields to fairly broad scarlet red rims, more menacing than brightly saturated hues, no filminess. Floral perfume and cocoa crisp to caramel soften the nose and allow the juiciness of the blueberry, blackberry, raspberry fruit to flow unimpeded, very primary and at times alcoholic, provides no window into future development. Medium-bodied, streamlined enough to flow well and finish cleanly. Pine, sage and basil, maybe even salty now and then. Mixed sour citrus peeks through and it has a

pleasing interplay between sugary and tart in the blueberry, cherry, blackberry fruit. While it could use more punctuation at the end leaves you happy after you swallow. Approximately 45% Zinfandel, 45% Carignane, 10% Valdigue, Petite Sirah, Syrah. 89

Once & Future  
Sonoma Valley, Bedrock Vineyard  
Zinfandel  
2014, \$42.00, 13.77%  
Very good clarity, heightens the red magenta influence to the otherwise violet core, while transparent and clean there's a flatness to the light ruby red rims. The nose gives you crushed raspberry, blackberry, blueberry fruit with a touch of licorice, touch of forest bramble yet on the whole comes off as primary although not fruity per se. Medium-bodied, gains gravitas from the strong tannic framework. Slow paced fluidity to it without plodding. Mint, pine and anise help give some lift, as does the orange citrus notes. Despite its freshness, here you get plum to prune alongside the raspberry, cherry base. At times seems a bit hollow. Still, sturdily built and suggests itself capable of developing nuance with bottle age. 89

Arnot-Roberts  
Regional Blend, North Coast  
Trousseau  
2014, \$36.99, 13.0%  
Pale, almost brownish red purple in color, washed out rims, easily transparent. Slightly sugary nose yet with a brightening grassiness, under that some earthiness, shows ripe unto reduced and jammy raspberry, strawberry fruit scents while on the whole remains delicate. Light-bodied with a tingly mouth feel, more lemon zest to pair with the grass, stone notes. At times has an almost leathery touch which adds weight and presence. Enough sourness to balance out the sugary qualities of the strawberry, red cherry, raspberry fruit, even creates some pucker at the end. Displays above average thrust for final punctuation. Grapes sourced from Luchsinger Vineyard (Lake County), Bohan Ranch (Sonoma Coast), Bartolomei Vineyard (Mendocino County). 89

Harrington Wines  
San Benito County, La Cienega Valley, Siletto Vineyard  
Sangiovese  
2014, \$30.00, 14.1%  
The liquid is unblemished yet there's a translucent layering and darkening from the purple core to the crimson to brick red rims, deeply colored throughout. The nose betrays a little alcoholic heat, however, it's mainly pretty mint, vanilla, cherry to raspberry fruit, and potpourri, beyond that a touch of earth and matted

straw. Medium-bodied with a certain heaviness to it, loaded with sugary cherry, plum, blackberry fruit, the ripeness is close to off the charts. Caramel and butterscotch mostly fend off white citrus notes. Not especially endowed with tannin nor acidity. Tarry finish with more earthiness. Not the most harmonious drink but has a joie de vivre and oodles of fruit. 88

Bedrock Wine Co.

Sonoma Valley, Pagani Ranch, Pagani Ranch  
Heritage

Blend

2014, \$39.00, 14.5%

Deep glow to the dark purple ore, wide magenta red rims, great deal of saturation. There's an underlying woodsiness to the nose, otherwise dominated by blackberry, boysenberry, black cherry scents, goes light on the flowers and does not display a noticeable oak presence. Medium-bodied, feels slimmed down if not exactly sleek. More orange peel ginger notes here and there is also additional caramel butterscotch, this without seeming overtly oaky. Curious lack of juiciness in the plum, blackberry, blueberry to cherry fruit. The tannin is moderate yet manages to stay firm overall for its general weight. Not bad but not great. Unspecified percentages of Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir, Lenoir, Carignane, Mourvèdre, etc. 87

Bedrock Wine Co.

Sonoma Valley, Monte Rosso Vineyard  
Zinfandel

2014, \$42.00, 14.5%

Warm, semi-opaque purple core which segues to an almost crimson red along the rims, more brooding than bright. Flowers, lavender, cranberry to raspberry fruit give the nose some lift, slightly mentholated with a touch of craggy, rocky earth, tends to lack momentum or forward movement in the nostrils. Full-bodied, its tannic punch evident from the start, puckering and drying. Showing a considerable amount of vanilla, burnt buttered toast to butterscotch notes, adds more sourness than sweetness as a patina on the red cherry, raspberry, cranberry fruit. Mint and basil, oregano, sweet garden herbs add dimension as does spiced orange peel. That dryness and sourness prevents fluidity through the finish, can't soak into the palate. 87

## CALIFORNIA WHITE

Sandlands

Regional Blend, California

Chenin Blanc

2014, \$24.00, 12.0%

On the pale side, touch of green in the yellow gold base, flat surface, fairly dense given the lack of hue. Decent tautness to the nose, minerals and stone, the apple, peach scents of good freshness, not especially spicy, more sour lemon to orange notes, fairly inert. Medium-bodied, firm here as well and on the dry side with broad acidity which cloaks the palate. As much snap as juice in the apple, pear, peach, apricot fruit, reduced further by a saline note. Wet stone, chalk adds to the dullness, lacks minerally sparkle. Any vanillin or yeasty influence holds off to the finish. Attractive sourness but needs more liveliness to make a truly positive impression. Grapes sourced 40% Lodi, 40% Amador County, 20% Napa Valley. 87

## CANADA WHITE

Hardie, Norman

Ontario

Riesling

2015, \$15.99, 9.8%

Full golden core, diminishes some at the rims, not especially shiny but does glow well. Fresh nose of orange marmalade, pineapple, nectarine and guava fruit with a healthy dose of rubber accents, light milkiness, some mintiness, good fullness while able to clearly express complexity. Full-bodied, muscularly taut while retaining a sense of progression through the mouth. Here the pink grapefruit, lime, tangerine citrus bursts to the fore. The acidity wipes most of the milkiness but that rubber remains a major factor. Star fruit, green apple, pineapple, nectarine and peach lend welcome juiciness as well as sour pucker at the end. The stony notes get a bit lost in it all. High energy wine with good length at the end and attractive bite. (Screwcap) 89

Darius, Domaine

Ontario, David's Cuvée

Blend

2015, \$20.99, 12.2%

Rich golden color that verges on orange at certain angles, on the whole flat and dull and more blockish than layered. The nose is heavy but aromatic and perfumed, tangerine zest, pressed flowers, peach, apple, pear scents, more minerally than expected, touch of lanolin, ends fresher than its initial impression. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, the acidity strong enough to make it a much more compact experience. Smoky with stone and mineral notes. While dry there is a tropical pineapple to kumquat bite alongside the apricot, apple, pear flavors, broadens some if allowed to warm. The orange, tangerine citrus not as forceful here. Short finish. Pleasant wine and nicely dry for the blend, more aromatic than loaded with flavors.

Unspecified percentages of County Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Muscat, Watson Auxerois. 87

## FRANCE RED

Massiac, Château  
Languedoc/Roussillon, Minervois  
Blend

2014, \$15.99, 13.8%

The opaque purple core has a fuzzy warmth to it, contrasted nicely by the sunset red to orange rims, looks dense in the glass. There's a meaty, almost sweaty quality to the nose, earthy as well, able to shift the plump cherry, plum scents out of the spotlight, takes some time to unwind before you can catch a glimpse of any orange peel or flowers. Full-bodied, really layers itself on the tongue and here the blueberry, blackberry, cassis fruit is sweet and enveloping. Retains that gamey edge while also offering flowers, mint and a touch of caramel. The tannin is soft yet in no way absent, not sloppy due to its girth. Packed with flavor, maintains character, and admirably does both at a competitive price. 75% Syrah, 25% Carignan. 90

Raffault, Olga  
Loire, Chinon, Les Picasses, La Singulière  
Cabernet Franc  
2010, \$39.99, 12.5%

More black than purple in the core, brick to ember red rims with above average brightness, while on the whole transparent it is visually dull. There's a confluence of ash, sand, loam and leather to the nose then bell pepper, molasses glazed meats and a touch of animal fur, the cherry, plum, blackberry scents are succinct without being evanescent, clogs up some in the nostrils. Medium-bodied, the acidity has keen bite whereas the tannin nibbles at the edges. Quite ripe, even the bell pepper seems so, more floral here with orange zest and a meadowy breeze. Uptick in merde and earth, gamey qualities step back. Throughout the most consistent element is the ripe, verging on syrupy, cassis, cherry, plum fruit. Vanillin waft at the end. Needs time to focus on a path forward. 89

Pierre Seches (Sylvain Gauthier), Domaine des  
Rhône, Ardèche  
Syrah  
2014, \$19.99, 12.0%

Clear, trim ruby-violet throughout, lush red ruby rims, shiny surface as well. The nose starts off earthy and twiggy and then throws in some olives before bright red cherry and red currant scents ensue, on the whole clean to the point of losing length. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, the acidity is mouthwatering from the first sip. Here you get leather, tar, coal and stone

accents to make it much deeper in dimension, some mild greenness at the finish. Grapefruit and sour orange citrus rev up the raciness inherent in the cherry, plum, blackberry fruit, angular and quick paced. The tannin accrues sufficiently to deaden the finish some. Very good Syrah flavor for the price. 89

Grand'Cour (Jean-Louis Dutraive), Domaine de La  
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Chapelle des Bois, La Part des  
Grives

Gamay Noir  
2015, \$36.99, 14.5%

Light violet to brighter cranberry red color, transparent, has a warm glow throughout. Excellent lift in the nose, almost regal, cherry, strawberry, raspberry fruit, stone dust, has so much purity that it doesn't coalesce enough to enunciate the nuances. Light to medium-bodied, the acidity is a touch rambunctious which adds to the perception of higher alcohol. Smooths out when the layered strawberry, raspberry, blueberry fruit settles in. Mocha, almost coffee at times, the supporting flavors make it sweet without sacrificing structure. Violets, roses, potpourri and some orange peel. No palpable tannin, all pleasure and were it not for the alcohol fumes it would be more exemplary. 89

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)  
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Cuvée Tardive  
Gamay Noir  
2015, \$21.99, 13.0%

Dense purple core but not opaque, red magenta rims which veer off from any pinkish tint, nice shine to the surface as well. The nose has a meaningful dusty, stony component and a matching element of dried grass, comes across as more rugged than expected, follows up with orange peel, potpourri and bright cranberry, rhubarb, pomegranate fruit scents, ends with a broadening tarriness. It's full-bodied and here too a bit stern, arguably enjoyably so as the tannin is allowed to play a big role and set it firmly in the mouth. Even dustier here with stones, pebbles and more sand than earth. The floral dimension gets paired up with twigs and leaves giving it an autumnal feel. As it passes through the mid-palate you start to get the raspberry, cherry, strawberry fruit, never sweet but not entirely cloaked by the structure. Could be interesting to track over time. 89

Clusel, Guillaume  
Rhône, Coteaux du Lyonnais, Traboules  
Gamay Noir  
2015, \$16.99, 13.0%

Garnet-violet of solid depth, well-hued throughout, the rims a purer cherry red, average surface luster. Sour cherry, raspberry fruit scents with touches of challah bread and cocoa, enough stone and poor dirt to

prevent excess sweetness, the herbaceousness adds lift in the nostrils. Full-bodied with density that slows it down to a crawl through the mouth. Add in a solid tannic grip and there's no lack of muscularity. But it has the cranberry, cherry, blackberry fruit to support, more tang than dulcet whispers. On the whole it's stone and earth quotient is respectably high and there's enough citric bite to energize the finish. Loses that yeasty stuff here. No nonsense demeanor, keeps you on your toes. 89

Texier, Eric  
Rhône, Saint-Julien en Saint-Alban  
Syrah

2014, \$23.99, 14.0%

Basic violet core, more crimson than ruby, this even more evident along the wide sunset red rims, has clarity and depth both. There's a pleasing stone dust to the nose, ash, dries out the cherry, currant fruit to make it a more linear experience, eventually there's some twigs and fallen leaves, at times white citrus and dried garden herbs, attractive purity and lack of funk. Light to medium-bodied, the fairly high level of tannin helps it stay focused and brisk of pace. Stony and earthy but not grassy, more tar and ash and higher toned white grapefruit. The red currant, cherry, plum fruit more sour than sweet, however, retains very good length. Now and then something like cocoa powder appears. Firm but not hard, good for medium term consumption. 89

Lapierre, Marcel  
Beaujolais, Morgon  
Gamay Noir

2015, \$25.99, 13.5%

Ruby-purple and on the dark side, its immaculate clarity alone allows you to see through it, more scarlet at the rims, sleek surface throughout. A little gassy funk needs to blow off in the nose but when it does there's candied cherry, strawberry fruit, lavender and potpourri, overall it's plump and youthful and devoid of just about anything but fruit. Medium-bodied, soft and smooth, can't say there's much tannin nor acidity to provide a skeletal structure. Much ginger to clove spice and orange peel here, less floral, has a certain gamey quality to it. The fruit is clearly sweet but is more concentrated than fluid thus you get a burst of raspberry, cherry but it's not prolonged. The finish is a little turbulent. Too soon to call with certainty. 88

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)  
Beaujolais, Fleurie  
Gamay Noir

2015, \$16.99, 13.0%

Spotless, at the core the purple closer to black than red, the rims though a borderline brooding cranberry

red, looks heavy in the glass. While there's a pretty floral perfume to the nose, it delivers on its appearance and hugs the nostrils, musky and sugary cherry, black berry fruit scents, damp earth, lemon pulp, not easy to parse things out. Full-bodied, sappy texture here as well, soaks in quickly. The tannin is more palpable than acidity, not entirely sure the phenolics caught up fully. Nice stoniness and a light meadowy grassiness. The cherry, blackberry closer to plum than raspberry. The lemon to white grapefruit citrus sweet and concentrated. Ends with a bit of baking spices. Hard to see through the baby fat. 88

Manarine, Domaine la  
Rhône, Vin de France, Le Carignan  
Carignan

2014, \$11.99, 13.5%

The purple core leans towards black yet it's clean and mostly transparent, the rims a broad burnt sunset red hue. There's a smoky and leathery fullness to the nose, tobacco ash and tar, yet likewise you get moments of burnt caramel too, the fruit is red cherry to red currant but gets lost in the shuffle, aggressive pungency overall though. Medium-bodied, slithers forward across the palate and sheds weight lithely. The acidity gives it a nice jolt and helps to bring out blueberry, strawberry flavors alongside the cherry base. Cleaner here yet still has the animal to leather element. Garden herbs and lemon add pep to the mid-palate. Attractive for all that energy, well-fruited without being simple. (Composite Cork) 88

Pêcheur, Domaine  
Jura, Côtes du Jura  
Trousseau

2014, \$27.99, 12.5%

Almost rosé-like in its paleness and transparency yet there is a shining brightness to the cranberry red hued core, slight fade to a more orange-red along the rims. The nose shows barnyard funk when first opened and then levels off into basic strawberry, red cherry fruit scents and quiet lemon and stone notes, gracefully inert. In the mouth it is medium-bodied and has a high enough level of both tannin and acidity to make you notice it right off. Sour bite to the cherry, raspberry fruit, aided by boisterous lemon to white grapefruit notes. There's a sort of twiggy, grassy quality lurking in the background but nothing "green" per se. Ends with a tarry earthiness that brings out a more savory dimension. 88

Pacalet, Christophe  
Beaujolais, Moulin-à-Vent  
Gamay Noir  
2015, \$21.99, 14.0%

Inky dark and glowing purple core, opaque, with clean and luminescent magenta rims. Tutti-frutti nose, borderline bubblegum, floral paste, extremely full to the point of immobility, no citrus notes, touch of mocha. Full-bodied, dusty and oddly tannic given how thickly the plum, cherry, blackberry, cranberry fruit gets layered on the tongue. Here it's more stony, earthy with a glimmer of white grapefruit. Curiously for its heft it lacks length, perhaps too tightly wound. In the mouth there's minimal, if any, bubblegum notes. Even extended air time barely budges it. 88

Bertrand, Yann  
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Folie  
Gamay Noir  
2015, \$27.99, 12.5%

Warm violet core, consistent through to the red magenta rims, nice shine to the surface. Open nose with good lift, almost peppery, has an earthy side, snappy red cherry, raspberry scents, good naturedly rugged, turns sour at the end, this without much citric support. Medium to full-bodied, round and firm and without hard edges. Denser cherry, blackberry fruit here, on the whole more sour than sweet and ends up in a pleasing floral musk. Mixes in moments of cocoa, stone, lemon peel and stony, untilled earth. Much more tannic than acidic. 88

Chidaine, Domaine François  
Loire, Touraine, Rouge  
Blend  
2015, \$11.99, 12.5%

As much garnet in the core as purple, dark if unblemished, extends fully into the vibrant rims. There's a persistent earthy, damp straw undercurrent to the nose with lighter touches of white pepper and orange peel, the cherry, mixed berry scents steady as they go, if unremarkable. Medium-bodied with a nice layered texture on the tongue which sets it well and allows the flavors to extend. Thicker volume to the fruit, more blackberry, cassis to dark cherry fruit, fully ripened. No real bite to it, there's momentary passes of grapefruit, violets and stone. Snap pea and stone but nothing close to sustained grassiness or earthiness. More pleasing as you sit with it for awhile but you still never quite get excited about it. 50% Cabernet Franc, 35% Côt, 15% Pineau d'Aunis.(Composite Cork) 87

Vins Contés (Olivier Lemasson), Les  
Loire, Vin de France, Pinoir de Soif  
Pinot Noir  
2015, \$18.99, 11.5%

While cloudy there's still a brightness to the pink magenta to violet hue, full ruby rims, looks "natural." Loam, damp earth infused nose, close to barnyardy, there is bite to the red cherry, raspberry scents, assisted by a palpable jolt of white grapefruit, does not display any undue greenness, there's a rugged fluffiness to it as it texturally fills the nostrils. Medium-bodied, has more than adequate tannin and acidity yet still tends to clump a bit as it chugs forward through the mouth. The white citrus adds energy and there's a nice smoky, flinty edge at times. Mostly sour cherry, cranberry fruit flavors. Overall, seems to offer more chewiness than grace but its wears its flaws honestly and without pretense. 87

Coudert  
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Cuvée Christal  
Gamay Noir  
2015, \$16.99, 13.0%

Bright ruby-violet color, good clarity given its luminescence. Lively cranberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit, lightly floral, really not as expressive as expected, light lingering dusty stone accents. Medium-bodied, given its strong skeleton it offers mainly strawberry, watermelon, raspberry fruit. Bubblegum notes scurry around the edges. Again, good firmness without seeming too tannic. Lemony in the center, followed up by stone, tea leaf and sweeter garden herbs. Kind of chugs to the finish line like it needs to catch its breath. 87

Ducroux, Christian  
Beaujolais, Vin de France, Exspectatia  
Gamay Noir  
2015, \$14.99, 12.5%

Super-cloudy and opaque magenta to purple hued core, fat glow in the scarlet red rims, looks like it settled in the glass over the course of days. The nose brings all the advertised funk: wet animal fur, foxy, heated rubber, peanut shells, muddy earth as well as extra-roasted cherry, red berry fruit, to the point of reduction, minimal floral or citrus presence. Full-bodied, heavy as if folded on itself, mocha, peanuts, merde and more of that animality which even after some air time barely budges. No real tannin nor acidity to be found, just a lot of volatility. That said, the fruit is fully ripened to an array of plum, cherry, blackberry fruit. At least here the florality does turn pungent at the end. It sure is natural. 85

## FRANCE WHITE

Puffeney, Jacques

Jura, Arbois

Chardonnay

2014, \$33.99, 13.0%

While it's somewhat dull overall, there is a glow to it which holds the light inside, green tint to the basic yellow straw hue, average penetration through the rims. The nose is softened by a buttery and doughy side, shows mint and licorice notes to aid lift, good amount of peach and apricot scents keep it primary and nudge the stone and stream water notes to the side, good overall fullness. Full-bodied in the mouth too, the acidity presses into you broadly and there's a dry, tacky residue left behind at the end. Here you get an elevation in the smokiness and wet stone. Lemon curd, anise and lilacs display contrast to its general muscularity. The doughiness persists but does not really sweeten the apple, apricot, peach fruit. Nice contour to it and should develop well over a 6-10 year horizon. 89

Pépière, La

Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Clisson

Melon de Bourgogne

2012, \$25.99, 13.0%

Rich golden color, somewhat flat, the hue lasts well to the rims. Lemony and doughy nose, like a lemon custard pie, apple sauce, mint, cinnamon, the stoniness comes as an afterthought, broad nostril presence that hovers more than lifts. In the mouth it's full-bodied and noticeably dense, the acidity is so-so and there no attempt at attaining laser like precision. Floral with that mintiness. The doughiness is consistent yet here the granite, mineral element elevates its game and brings needed freshness. Peach, apple to pear fruit, as much snap as juiciness. The lemony aspect most present at the finish, adds energy. The extended time on the lees gives it volume but in this case perhaps robs it of verve. Not sure aging will be rewarded with meaningful difference. 89

Pinte, Domaine de la

Jura, Arbois, Fonteneille, Pupillin

Chardonnay

2012, \$23.99, 12.5%

Worn gold color, more fuzzy than flat, almost like an amber block but not quite that dark, hard to even differentiate the surface, well-hued into the rims. The nose shows strong toastiness and equally powerful smokiness, tangerine to lime citrus, stone, the peach, apricot fruit does not blossom fully, overall too blunt to be linear and such. Full-bodied, spicy with overtones of caramel, butterscotch and more of that tart lime juice. The acidity is negligible but the wine is not

flabby. Damp earth to clay more than minerals, less smoky here. The pear, yellow apple, apricot fruit shows more thrust and particularly shines through the finish. Sets itself with broad contours and no real rough edges but you have to accept that toastiness. 89

Huet, Domaine

Loire, Vouvray, Clos du Bourg, Demi-Sec

Chenin Blanc

2015, \$41.99, 13.0%

Deep golden hue, clean but does lack shine, the hue pushes well into the rims, the standard blockish appearance. Soft nose of apple sauce, peach skin with a light milkiness to it, spiced orange peel and a whisper of florality, no palpable smokiness nor stoniness, marked most by its quietness. Medium-bodied, just gathers up sufficient acidity to create some forward momentum. Honey and molasses represent most of the sweetness, again has that spiced orange accent with a ginger emphasis. Quince, apricot, peach to pear fruit, flavorful without getting anywhere near tropical. Retronasally you get some sauna stone smoke but it lacks bite. There's an inoffensive blandness to what's going on here. 88

Rolet Père et Fils, Domaine

Jura, Arbois, Tradition

Blend

2009

\$27.99, 13.5%

Deepening golden color that stays this side of amber, pools deeply into the glass at the core with a close to hueless diminishment at the rims. There's an element of band-aid and alcohol which destabilize the nose, impedes the full expression of the green apple, apricot fruit and orange marmalade scents, the yeastiness and nuttiness fare much better, curiously much smokier when colder than when warmer. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, the acidity has a flatness to it but no lack of energy. Very dominant nutty, yeasty component, hard to work past it. Pear, apricot, apple fruit with more richness than the nose suggests. Moves here from orange to more lemon citrus. The stone, smoke nuances recede further back. Regardless of temperature, leaves you feeling it needs a solid few hours of decanting before consumption. 50% Savagnin, 50% Chardonnay. 88

Lauverjat, Karine

Loire, Sancerre

Sauvignon Blanc

2015, \$13.99, 12.5%

Glassy green-gold straw hue, plenty of luster and shine, loses most of the hue at the rims. Softly textured nose of whipped cream, vanilla fudge, orange sherbet, mint and yellow apple, pear fruit, light touch of



wet stone but no noticeable smokiness. Medium-bodied, a touch flat on the palate, not that it lacks acidity but just the same not displaying much energy. Lemon trumps the orange here bringing more sourness and heightening the presence of an underlying grassiness. Deeper ripeness here in the apricot, peach, apple fruit, longlasting. Conversely, the stone element just can't get it going. As a result, it's more of a fruit-driven and sugary Sauvignon Blanc than "steely" Sancerre. But, again, lots of flavor. (Composite Cork) 87

## FRANCE ROSE

Clos Cibonne  
Provence, Côtes de Provence, Cuvée Spéciale des Vignettes  
Tibouren  
2014, \$31.99, 13.5%  
Deep orange hue, shrugs off the usual pinkish tint, fades a little at the rims but its eerie glow has it that you'd hardly notice. The nose is minty with a medicinal freshness, orange peel, lavender, cinnamon with persimmon, apricot, cherry fruit scents, loses some shape due to the ripeness, needs to warm but even then there's not much lift and hence not as much separation among the scents as one might want. Full-bodied, while there's more flow here, it still tends to lack differentiation among the parts. More stone, stream water here as well as mixed citrus. But the acidity lacks the will to drive things with authority. Juicy cherry, strawberry, rhubarb to apricot flavors, keeps broadening near room temperature. The mint, lilacs and licorice seem to float out of reach. More pleasurable than cerebral which is not always the case with this wine. 89

## FRANCE SPARKLING

Val de Mer (Patrick Piuze)  
Burgundy, French Sparkling Wine Non Dosé  
Chardonnay  
NV, \$21.99, 12.0%  
Moderate surface fizz, dissolves off swiftly, very good core of streaming bubbles in the glass center, here lasting for some time. Noticeably dark golden hue to the liquid, looks older than it is. Taut nose of green apple, peach pit fruit, breadly with a chalk dust underpinning, whisper of pressed flowers, not really giving much. Full-bodied, while dry this does not stop the full on march of the yeast and bread elements. More lemon and minerals here to buttress the stone, chalk. Nowhere near as much fizziness in the mouth as visually suggested. Riper peach, apricot flavors, get out in front of the tart apple. Comes off as simple and

without any one characteristic to really recommend it. (Disgorged 04/28/2015) (Composite Cork) 87

## ITALY RED

Ferrando, Azienda Vitivinicola Luigi  
Piedmont, Canavese Rosso, La Torrazza  
Blend  
2014, \$19.99, 12.0%  
As much garnet red to the core as purple, dark and unblemished, dusky sunset red hued rims. The nose is straight up grapefruit spritz, twigs and dried leaves, doesn't get close to sous bois, hints of both leather and potpourri, the plum to cherry scents are dense and do not unfold as much as you suspect they might. Medium-bodied, hits you immediately with a one-two tannin and acidity punch, bracing. The grapefruit just as brawny here, at times verges on pickled. Considerable ripeness in the rhubarb, cherry, currant fruit, thick and layered on the tongue. The forest earthiness and tar remains, albeit clean and proportionate to the fruit. Good naturedly pugnacious. Approximately 70% Nebbiolo, 30% Barbera. 90

Terre Nere, Tenuta delle  
Sicilia, Etna Rosso, Feudo di Mezzo Il Quattro delle Rose  
Blend  
2014, \$29.99, 14.5%  
Dark purple, almost black were it not for the clarity, cough syrup red further out, youthful bricking at the outer rims. Creamy vanilla first in the nose then floral water, anise, pine cone and freshly tilled earth, not showing any real volcanic ash presence, maraschino cherry, some raspberry scents, overall displays a pleasing erectness in the nostrils. Medium-bodied, nicely wound up and coiled, plenty of tannin without it disrupting flow. Close to candied ripeness to the cherry, strawberry, raspberry fruit, at times pushes into stewed tomato territory. Pine, licorice, glimmer of white grapefruit, garden herbs. Cement, asphalt, here the volcanic influence greater. The oak treatment comes off drier and woody than creamy. Confidently broad shouldered. Unspecified percentages of Nerello Mascalese, Nerello Cappuccio. 90

Bussoletti, Società Agricola Leonardo  
Umbria, Ciliogiolo di Narni, 05035  
Ciliogiolo  
2015, \$16.99, 13.0%  
Crystal clear and bright violet to cranberry red in hue, high level of luster and completely full to the outer rims. Displays a nose of floral paste, strawberry to cherry fruit, squeezed lemons, tea leaf and wet wool, more woody than earthy, thick enough to not become too high-toned, dissipates on the swift side. Medium-

bodied with a much thicker mouth feel than suggested by the nose, glues itself to the palate. Only the tannin seems dry things out enough to lift some. Same array of strawberry, raspberry to cherry fruit, all red in complexion. A little more twiggy, leafy here with a medicinal component. The lemon to grapefruit citrus shows up mostly at the end and retronasally. Could be too sour for some but has its charms. (Composite Cork) 88

## ITALY WHITE

De Angelis  
Marche, Offida  
Pecorino

2015, \$12.99, 14.0%

Kind of amber inflected gold hue, even some time after the pour there's a granular fizz throughout the liquid, empties out into hueless rims. There's a cellar ripened quality to the peach, apricot scents, yet it retains decent erectness due to the mineral water, stone elements verging on smoky, lightly nutty as it warms. Medium-bodied, the acidity really tightens it up and gives it firmness without drying out the flavors. Stony and vaguely grassy, has a lemon to sour orange edge too. Taut peach, pear, apricot fruit keeps the generally genial nervousness going. Broadens as it finishes into a more relaxed florality as well as some nuttiness. Leaves you admiring its moxie, willing to see if its reach exceeds its grasp. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

## GERMANY WHITE

Christoffel Erben, Weingut Joh. Jos.  
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Erdener, Treppchen, Spätlese AP #7  
Riesling

2015, \$28.99, 8.0%

Flat white to green straw in hue, a blanket of tiny fizz clings to the glass sides, some translucent distortion as you peer into it. Extremely ripe nose that just veers away from tropicality, green melon, pear, peach to apricot scents with a spoonful of whipped cream on top, sweet tangelo to lime citrus accents, floral paste, mint, entirely unevolved. Full-bodied, on the soft side, the acidity is average, maybe average plus, but does not leave the impression it can carry things over the long haul. That said, here it blends in persimmon, kumquat and banana to the apricot, pear base, densely fruity. Tangerine, pink grapefruit here, moderately more bite. Big floral musk at the end. Then a glimmer of smokiness. No idea what will happen once the baby fat starts to dissolve. (Screwcap) 88

Weiser-Künstler, Weingut  
Mosel Saar Ruwer, QbA AP #10  
Riesling

2015, \$19.99, 10.0%

Extremely bright and shiny yellow straw color, as if just cleaned with Windex, good amount of tiny bubbles cling to the glass long after the pour, sparkles actively. The nose has an undercurrent of whipped cream, vanilla yet on the whole remains nicely stony with stream water accents, the fruit inclines towards strawberry and cherry in addition to pear and apricot, something about it gently resists your efforts to parse the scents. Medium-bodied, a touch flat-footed as the acidity lacks raciness and it is just dry enough to not flow juicily. More floral here with a lemon zest nuance, the fruit returns to a base of apricot, pear and peach with a touch of pineapple as it warms. Elevation of both rubber and wet smoke. It's not until the finish that any of that whipped cream shows. If someone told you it was Australian you might believe them. (Screwcap) 87

## GREECE WHITE

Hatzidakis  
Santorini  
Assyrtiko

2015, \$21.99, 13.5%

There's a faint glow to the worn gold color, diminished hue along the rims, trace amount of fizz clings to the glass sides. Lemon, caraway seeds, anise and flower water give the otherwise compact nose some breeziness, hints at more than delivers in terms of stone and smokiness, succinct apricot and peach fruit, needs to warm up to get the smokiness to expand. Medium-bodied, spicy and tangy with lemon to grapefruit citrus, something like clove and then more sour, tropical pineapple, papaya, nectarine fruit, noticeably different than the fruit array provided by the nose. The acidity has a blunt power to it, no lack of strength. At times you'd almost say there's an underlying nuttiness. Does a good job of staying familiar enough but then now and then challenging you with an element that is hard to describe. 89

## SPAIN RED

Frontón de Oro  
Canary Islands, Gran Canaria San Mateo, Tinto Tradicional  
Listán Negro

2014, \$15.99, 14.0%

Clear and effulgent cherry to cough syrup red, the luminous glow is almost eerie at the rims, the core more black than violet, fills the glass given the high degree of transparency. Loads of black pepper to the

nose, close to equal white grapefruit, hard candy nature to the strawberry, raspberry scents, quite clean yet shows a bit of leather and ash. Light-bodied, the acidity helps it sandpaper the palate and then create lift. Peppery here too with that ash, volcanic rock, tar sort of stuff, more rocky than earthy. The grapefruit holds off to the mid-palate where it lends some zing to the otherwise sugary strawberry, cherry fruit. Interesting mix of sour and dry ash left as afterimage. 89

Terroir al Límit Soc. Lda.

Priorat, Històric

Blend

2015, \$28.99, 13.5%

Resonant saturation in the clear cough syrup red to red ruby hue, starts to brick some near the rims, sleek surface, lots of visual sexiness. There's a barnyard funk to the nose which impedes the release of the red cherry, strawberry, watermelon fruit as well as floral musk, probably needs a very extended decant to let the purity sing. Medium-bodied, closer to lighter than fuller, yet displays more grip than easy flow, this without strongly discernible tannin or acidity, at least until the finish. Stone, slate notes abound, wildflowers and old pulped lemons. More hard candy than juicy appeal in the strawberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit, lingers adequately. No real "wowie" moment. Unspecified percentages of Garnacha, Cariñena. 87

## AUSTRALIA WHITE

Hidden Sea of The Limestone Coast, The

South Australia, Limestone Coast

Chardonnay

2015, \$20.00, 13.5%

Dull, washed out gold color, flat until it starts to look like a solid block, decent transparency in spite of this. Honeyed nose, melon, apricot, pear fruit that's more ripe than tropical, sweet orange pulp, bready but not oaky, powdered sugar, quite user friendly. Medium-bodied, packed with orange to pink grapefruit, lemon citrus that is more sweet than sour. Has better acidity than expected but that may not be saying much. Here you get pineapple, papaya, guava above and beyond the nectarine, cherry, pear fruit, curiously this is more sour than sweet in spite of the ripeness. Yeasty and doughy in a complementary way. Not over the top but heading in that direction. (Screwcap) 87