

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

Well, this edition was a long time in coming, what with getting married and the holidays and all. Recent trips to Washington DC and Wisconsin saw Hanes returning with lots of local beers so that has been a focus of late, to the detriment of drinking wine. Did find a few good inexpensive wines but it still seems like the \$25 to \$50 range is still where the most interesting action is (well, truthfully, the most interesting action is at a much higher price point).

Not sure what Hanes will be drinking over coming months, need to drink down existing stock as saving for May honeymoon commences. Though it is not easy to go cold turkey and stop buying wine. Life presents tough challenges.

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**This month's big winners...** Rediscovering romance for the wines of Clos de la Roilette, too oft overlooked. The 2014 Fleurie "Cuvée Tardive" was superb although was not quite sure what to make of the 2013 "Griffe du Marquis" bottling. Price remains fairly stable for the Tardive bottling, like \$25. Yawn, the 2014 La Pépière Muscadet "Clos des Briords" is great. Wow, news flash. \$20 well spent. That's it, nothing else really had Hanes all crazy excited.

**The best \$20 and under picks....** The master of the cheapie wine, Willie Gluckstern, has done it again with the Maestro del Pomodoro wine, an Apulian Sangiovese. Great everyday drinking value for rock bottom \$7 or \$8 price. A new bottling that over-delivered was the 2014 rouge blend from Chidaine, a steal at \$15, why even Mom liked it. Smooth and possessed of mass appeal. Domaine Chevrot reaffirmed their position as a credible sub \$20 red Burgundy producer, their 2014 Bourgogne Rouge delivering a satisfactory quaff for \$18. Finally found the correct "Martin" and the 2014 Domaine Yves Martin Sancerre from the Chavignol area was a worthy find, plenty of verve and a mere \$17. Two nice cheapie Italian whites this time around. First, the 2014 Cordero di Montezemolo Arneis which for around \$15 punches above its price point. Same can be said for the 2014 Verdicchio from Santa Barbara, packed with flavor and weight for under \$10.

**And the disappointments...** Was not sure what to expect from the Spanish 2013 Bodegas Ponce "Buena Pinta" wine made primarily from the famous Moravia Agria grape. But that's why they play the game. Alas, this started off funky and did not improve throughout the experience. For \$16, a worthy experiment but not sure when Hanes will lay down his coin for this grape again. Hanes always lauds the wines of Le Clos du Tue-Bœuf but let's call it like it is, their 2013 Gamay Noir from the Loire called "La Butte" is just no good. Si triste. Turley continues to confound and while this is the California mailing list Hanes has been on the longest, the quantity of bottles purchased will continue to go down unless the wines start returning to full throttle. The 2013 Cobb Vineyard Zinfandel was "good plus" but the 2013 Bedrock Zinfandel was ehh at best. Usually quite taken with the Tuscan blend from Rodáno called "Poggialupi" but the 2014 version was subpar, that's life. The 2013 B.R. Cohn Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley was uninteresting and way expensive at \$48, albeit more or less flawless per se. Can't say it is really all that disappointing, however, the 2013 Domaine de la Semellerie Chinon was more correct than enjoyable. Hanes seems to be finding that as certain wine regions gain more popularity the names newer to the U.S. market are not always up to the bar set by those who were imported earlier. Which makes sense unless importers are incompetent, the best should be snatched up first. Another clear example of this is the Jura, where Hanes sampled a new-to-him producer Berthet-Bondet and their 2013 red blend "Trio" was pretty pedestrian. Hanes will likely try another wine from this producer but the experience is more fodder for the position of "drink new vintages from producers you already know you like."

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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.

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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 January!

### CALIFORNIA RED

Harrington Wines

Santa Cruz Mountains, Coast Grade Vineyard

Pinot Noir

2013, \$40.00, 14.1%

Crimson and blood red hues dominate any purple, attractive clarity does not distract from the depth of color, the rims show a youthful bricking, could see it turning a reddish-orange with age. When first opened the nose is primarily caramel and vanilla but this fades with time in favor of cranberry, rhubarb and red cherry fruit scents, wet smoke and earth with notes of cinnamon stick and lavender, overall makes a blunt push into the nostrils without much delicacy. Medium-bodied, lighter during the mouth entry but picks up steam by the finish. The acidity and then tannin are nothing to sneeze at, it is sturdily built. Lemon and minor grapefruit, clove and nutmeg, meadowy more than grassy. The cherry, raspberry, watermelon fruit has a velvet thickness more than sugary ripeness. Does not appear to be shutting down as much as in sore need of a few years of softening. The fruit should hold up long enough to trade for smoothness. 89

Turley

Amador County, Cobb Vineyard

Zinfandel

2013, \$26.00, 15.3%

Scarlet red hued core with a tinge of purple, stays reddish out towards the rims with a very light suggestion of pink at the outermost edge, spotless throughout. The nose has a smoky, charred wood aspect to it, wet metal and dried grill meat fat, small amount of orange peel to bolster the nondescript raspberry, red cherry fruit scents. Light to medium-bodied, has more of a sweet hard candy feel to it here

with strawberry and watermelon supplementing the cherry, raspberry base, almost all red fruit except some blueberry. Butterscotch and caramel present, however, not that oaky and less smoky on the palate too. The meatiness persists, with a leathery patina. Smooth, glides well and the tannin stays present without clumping. Likely more versatile than most Zinfandels at the dinner table. 89

Turley

Sonoma Valley, Bedrock Vineyard

Zinfandel

2013, \$36.00, 14.9%

The core is purple to red magenta, dark red rims, not a lot of saturation nor glow although fully colored to the very edge. Tar and black earth plus fallen twigs and leaves appear initially in the nose, while the cherry, cranberry fruit scents also come with a touch of prune they do not fully click in, some orange to grapefruit citrus, marked by a lack of oak presence, mild lift from mint and eucalyptus, however, on the whole not much going on for your olfactory enjoyment. Medium-bodied, tannic and dry enough to grind to a halt in the mid-palate. Accents of bell pepper, earth, graphite, basil make a show. The fruit has a maraschino cherry to raspberry jam sweetness yet it has no staying power. Here you do get some caramel to buttered popcorn oak, not filling in the gaps. Just too hard nosed to cozy up to it. 87

Cohn, B.R.

Russian River Valley

Pinot Noir

2013, \$48.00, 14.3%

Ruby tinged purple core, on the darker side and stays that way into the scarlet red rims. Butterscotch and general sweet toastiness infuses the nose, burnt cocoa, ripe dark cherry and blackberry fruit which gets close to jammy, minor notes of potpourri but it is more

or less fruit and oak and minimal subtlety. Full-bodied, thick and velvety in texture, high degree of creaminess. There is a little sour kick to the raspberry, strawberry, cherry fruit but it still ends up tasting like pancake syrup. Chocolate, vanilla, caramel all play major roles. Notes of witch hazel, orange citrus and mint appear periodically. No real discernible acidity, maybe more tannin. Look, it is very flavorful and fruit-driven but it's monolithic in its sameness. 87

## FRANCE RED

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)

Beaujolais, Fleurie, Cuvée Tardive

Gamay Noir

2014, \$24.99, 13.0%

Garnet red to purple hued core, turns a pure crimson at the rims, no real sign of pinker saturation, although the color sparkles throughout. Thick floral perfume to the nose, pulped oranges and a generous dose of metallic mineral flecks which tickle the nostrils, sour cherry to cranberry, raspberry scents, at turns shows a black pepper edge, for all of its agreeability also possesses a lean, erect profile. In the mouth it's medium-bodied and fluffy in feel, this despite the tannin which has a strong grip and makes an effort to dry out the finish. Succulent cherry, raspberry, watermelon fruit, flavorful without sweetness. The citrus here leans more towards white grapefruit and lemon. Stone dust and minerals accrue through the finish. Drinking fine now but has the stuffing to improve with age. 90

Dumien Serrette, Domaine

Rhône, Cornas, Les Saveaux

Syrah

2013, \$37.99, 13.0%

Its cleanliness and clarity prevents a deepening of the purple core, it's mostly a scarlet red that borders on menacing excepting a light pinkish cast at the outermost rims. In the nose the juiciness of the raspberry, cranberry, cherry fruit is apparent first, red fruit profile, then at once you get toasted cocoa and bell pepper to green olive notes, fresh orange citrus accents help it open up, has a medicinal freshness and no funk. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, tangy with strong but "right sized" tannin and acidity for its overall heft. Fruity and close to sweet, raspberry, cranberry, red grape and perhaps a touch of green apple. Here it brings black pepper alongside the green pepper and a light minerality. Feels unevolved, which contributes to the semi-truncated finish. The oak most present retronasally and as a toasty aftertaste. Good wine, gulpable, not sure where it will head down the road. 89

Chidaine, Domaine François

Loire, Touraine, Rouge

Blend

2014, \$14.99, 12.5%

Warm glow in the deep purple core on to the dark ruby rims, full saturation throughout. The nose features ash, stone and brine, brings a damp forest floor funk that is countered by a sappy, clingy cherry and dark berry fruit array, it hovers more than lifts in the nostrils. Full-bodied and clingy with top notch acidity as well as tannic punch to boot. Starts out with a floral burst that segues to tart white citrus and snappy bell pepper notes. This pushes back the jammy raspberry, strawberry, cherry fruit to the mid-palate. Ash, tobacco, stone and asphalt provide similar contrast here into the finish. Stays on balance given its high energy level and adroitly weave the three grapes together. Appeal for the Loire red wine novice. 50% Cabernet Franc, 35% Côt, 15% Pineau d'Aunis. (Composite Cork) 89

Texier, Eric

Rhône, Côtes du Rhône, Chât Fou

Blend

2012, \$14.99, 12.5%

Displays the color of dried blood to old red bricks, takes on a more burnt look around the rims, doesn't look old per se but does not strike you with youthfulness. Nose has a certain smokiness to it as well as old leather mustiness, this is not offputting though, just feels sauvage overall, the cherry, strawberry, apple scents aided by minor floral dashes. Medium-bodied, pleasingly soft so that it soaks into the mouth and you get the most out of the hard candy sweet strawberry, raspberry, red cherry, apricot fruit. Orange juice, garrigues, tar and leather. The richness of the fruit ensures it remains agreeable and not too funky. Solid for a fair price. 80% Grenache, 20% Grenache Blanc, Clairette, Roussanne, Marsanne, Chasselas (conflicting data on white variety composition). (Composite Cork) 88

Roches Neuves, Domaine des

Loire, Saumur-Champigny, Domaine

Cabernet Franc

2013, \$21.99, 12.5%

Clear crimson-purple hue, more of a pure brick red nearing the rims, good effulgence throughout. There is close to a syrupy, candied nature in the cherry, raspberry scents, even the bell pepper seems sweet, touch of caramel, has a pretty floral perfume as well, minor black pepper tickle. Medium-bodied, not soft but gives, the acidity doing more than the tannin at this point in its life. Power white grapefruit component, sour and bracing. Stone and chalk smooth out the mid-palate along with more savory ash and cement notes. Super-tart cherry, raspberry fruit activates the palate

heading towards the finish, even if in the end it feels like hard candy. Indecisively lurches back and forth between fruit forward approachability and rustic structure. In the end, more modern than not. (Composite Cork) 88

Semellerie, Domaine de la  
Loire, Chinon, Cuvée Domaine  
Cabernet Franc  
2013, \$19.99, 13.0%

The purple core not deep enough to fend off switching gears into bright scarlet red, very clear but not quite dilute, pushes well into the rims. The nose has a soapy, wet cowhide component with strong telltale bell pepper notes, there is a dusty archness to it that at times can make it difficult to register the cherry, red currant scents. Medium-bodied with a heavy bottom which tends to make it immobile on the tongue. The tannin is managed well and massaged out sufficiently to create flow in the semi-sour cherry, raspberry, cranberry fruit flavors. The bell pepper and general herbaceous qualities proportionate, moderate white citrus notes, anchors itself with damp earth and cigar ash accents. Scripted right out of central casting, fruit lasts through the finish, not a benchmark by any means by quite true to type. (Composite Cork) 88

Lardy, Domaine Yohan  
Beaujolais, Moulin-à-Vent, Les Michelons  
Gamay Noir  
2013, \$21.99, 12.5%

Violet to scarlet red in color, darkly hued, full brick red rims, plenty of color. Thick, dewy nose of raspberry, strawberry fruit, orange marmalade before segueing to beef blood and leather, iodine, sous bois woodsiness without the funk, strong and billowy nostril presence. Full-bodied, hard candy sweetness to the cherry, watermelon, strawberry flavors, sweet as if doused with powdered sugar. The lemon to orange citrus mostly sweet with some tart moments. More meadowy fresh here than forest-like. The tannin has decent grip but clearly is not impeding the flow of the fruit. For all its sweetness does tend to finish a bit abruptly. Agreeable and an easy call to serve to the cru Beaujolais novice. 88

Chevrot, Domaine  
Burgundy, Bourgogne  
Pinot Noir  
2014, \$17.99, 12.5%

Dark ruby to violet core, more of a pure ruby rims, fine clarity given its relative darkness. Stony, minerally nose with a dusty texture, restrains the sweetness of the raspberry, cherry, rhubarb scents, lots of mixed sour white citrus in there, touch of leathery qualities paired with a light meadowy grassiness, overall

unguarded and direct. Light-bodied, strong tannic frame creates a push into the mouth and delays releasing the strawberry, raspberry fruit until the mid-palate, touch of green apple too. Inconsistent presence to the lemon to grapefruit nuances. Likewise there's moments of nutmeg, clove spice. Has stones and pebbles but not especially minerally. Fattens through the finish, the fruit lasts well. No real greenness which is a plus. Just a pleasant inexpensive sipper. 88

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)  
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Griffes du Marquis  
Gamay Noir  
2013, \$33.99, 13.0%

Mostly garnet red core that inclines more towards brick red than any lighter magenta or violet hue, dark enough that the transparency is not immediately noticeable. Very spicy nose with clove and ginger upfront and prominent, lemony with twigs and tree bark mixed in with a damper forest floor funk, the cherry, watermelon to black raspberry fruit is dense and has a hard candy nature, seems more sugary than juicy and fluid. Medium-bodied, equally sweet here and that strawberry, cherry, watermelon fruit leads and finishes. White grapefruit itself more sweet than sour and there is a lingering oak spice to it, albeit it's not a creamy sort of enveloping oakiness. Tannin seems more wood based than not, acidity on the slight side. Loses what body it has at the end, a perfume cloud slowly dissolving. Unsure of what improvement with age might look like here. 88

Berthet-Bondet, Domaine  
Jura, Côtes du Jura, Trio  
Blend  
2013, \$26.99, 12.5%

The violet hues overtaken by an infusion of old brick red and at the rims a hint of incipient orange, clear but not quite as shiny. Matchstick and decomposing grass sort of funk to the nose, never fully blows off, good amount of candied cherry and red berry fruit underneath, almost honeyed at times, just not all that complex. Medium-bodied, sour if not really all that acidic, no lack of puckering sensation. More pronounced orange and white grapefruit citrus here, same can be said for a black pepperiness. The funkiness drops off some but never fully recedes. If you can calibrate to this you will find some pleasant cherry, raspberry to Italian plum fruit, juicy and longlasting. In the end there's just something "rough" about it that detracts from a simple enjoyment of it. 40% Trousseau, 40% Poulsard, 20% Pinot Noir. (Composite Cork) 87

Clos du Tue-Bœuf, Le  
Loire, Touraine, La Butte  
Gamay Noir  
2013, \$21.99, 11.0%

Plum red to violet hued core, above average saturation deepens it plus there is a light gauziness, the rims a fresh brick red. The nose displays substantial funk, wet animal fur, leather, damp fallen foliage, feels volatile, all but totally masks the ripe unto jammy red cherry, strawberry fruit scents. Medium-bodied, jagged and uneven feel across the palate, as in prickly and rough. The acidity seems high but not enough to have created this. White grapefruit, metal shavings and more of that wet animal fur. Sour to the point of distraction, still as in the nose you clearly discern a deep raspberry, cranberry, strawberry fruit presence. With some air time does sort of find itself, however, hard not to hope this is not a representative bottle. (Composite Cork) 84

## FRANCE WHITE

Pépière, La  
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie, Clos des Briords, Cuvée Vieilles Vignes  
Melon de Bourgogne  
2014, \$19.99, 12.0%

While the worn golden band hue is pale it does layer well into the glass, solid appearance and goes deep into the rims. Very lemony nose with a hint of lime, licorice, floral to the point of obscuring some of the mineral and chalk dust notes, the peach, pear, apple fruit scents are direct and terse, overall forceful in its linear determination to blow through your nostrils. Full-bodied, very broad and tangy with acidity which cloaks the palate in a web of dryness. The citrus is super sour and biting and at times comes close to evoking accents of chili pepper. Wet stone and a light metallic touch, right now adds more to the dryness than broadening the array of flavors. Does take on a more saline inspired profile at the end. Superb verve and personality, right now deserves a decanting and to be served closer to room temperature. 91

Martin, Domaine Yves  
Loire, Sancerre, Chavignol  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2014, \$16.99, 13.0%

Close to transparent white straw in hue, the core pools enough to conjure up a touch of yellow to green, average surface reflectivity. The nose offers chalk dust, powdered minerals and sour lime citrus, a mild yeastiness helps buttress and fill out the florality, the apricot, green apple and red cherry fruit scents have more focus than depth, however, last long. In the mouth it carries a medium weight body and enough

acidity to get you salivating. The lime, lemon and minor grapefruit citrus starts things off and, along with the dusty stoniness, fashion a dry palate. Green apple, kiwi, apricot and mango fruit thus have more bite than juiciness, flavorful nonetheless. Squares its shoulders and keeps marching forward through the finish. Shows more verve on the colder side. 90

Huet, Domaine  
Loire, Vouvray, Clos du Bourg, Demi-Sec  
Chenin Blanc  
2014, \$44.99, 13.0%

Light brown tinge to the otherwise golden straw color, shows a more amber orange around the rims, likely a sign of coloration to come, flat and not that shiny but does not have the density which usually compensates. The nose has a subdued feel to it, orange marmalade, honey, mint, saline and flower water, more sweet garden herbs than poached peach, apricot scents, texturally it feels broad but kind of more like a fleshless skeleton. In the mouth it's full-bodied, sweet and sugary through the attack with this dropping off through the mid-palate. Molasses, honey, lanolin give it street cred. The peach, apricot, nectarine fruit more consistent than splashy. The acidity seems average, can be capable of more, even in the context of a demi-sec. Does not seem structured for the long haul but at the same time has enough heft to get down the road some. 88

## ITALY RED

Russo, Azienda Agricola Girolamo  
Sicilia, Etna Rosso, 'A Rina  
Blend  
2013, \$23.99, 13.5%

Very light and transparent, the core is old worn brick red hues and the rims mostly a sunset orange with a little brown edging. There is a poor earth quality to the nose, not thin but hard as in struggling to give what it has, balanced out by maraschino cherry and candied strawberry scents, old pulped white grapefruit to orange citrus, dried leaves and tree bark, were it not for the concentrated sweetness of the fruit you'd think it had not seen a glass of water in years. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with more of that stony, sandy structure and fewer twiggy notes. The tannin is like an accrued fine silt on the tongue. Slight roasty nature to the otherwise super-sweet cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit, very similar to the nose. Lingers well with a mild swish of caramel and baking spices at the end. Very drinkable while still expressing personality. 95% Nerello Mascalese, 5% Nerello Cappuccio. 89

Tami'  
Sicilia, Terre Siciliane  
Nero d'Avola  
2014, \$16.99, 13.0%

Unblemished garnet-purple color with a high shine, barest hint of pink at the outermost rims, dances in the glass. The nose is on the quiet side, you get the expected chunk of juicy red berry fruit, even some apple in there, overall it's clean but a pinch of twigs, bark as well as potpourri, light spiciness, it does put on some weight and length as the wine opens. Medium to full-bodied, more layered than heavy, even the tannin seems sweet so it's really density that structures. Cherry, raspberry, boysenberry fruit with only the vaguest citrus embellishment. More of a floral presence, only during the finish do you get a rocky soil nuance. Not showy but likewise not dull, perhaps not as candied as many a peer, an everyday wine for people who usually spend more on wine. (Composite Cork) 88

Maestro del Pomodoro  
Puglia/Apulia  
Sangiovese  
2013, \$6.99, 13.0%

Vague purplish tint to the otherwise brick red to burnt sunset red hues, strong burnt edge to the rims, could see it turning orange over time. Okay amount of leather and white grapefruit in the nose yet the cherry, blackberry scents remain the main attraction, anise and some other sweeter garden herbs, there's a cotton candy to caramel underpinning. Medium-bodied, soft in texture with a certain gluey quality. Here you get stuff like cinnamon to ginger spice, the citrus is more sweet than sour, the leather gets pushed back to near the finish line. Satiny strawberry, raspberry, red cherry persist fully from start to finish. Mild astringency at the end. Hey, for this price these days it is quite chuggable. (Composite Cork) 88

Rodáno, Fattoria di  
Tuscany, Poggialupi  
Blend  
2014, \$10.99, 13.0%

The purple in the core yields easily to a medicinal cough syrup red, which turns a more burnt crimson to orange along the rims, sufficiently dark that it moves past simple transparency. Cherry cobbler, strawberry compote nose, jammy without seeming really sugary, cocoa and something like pine or anise, violets and just a hint of tar or asphalt, more full than heavy in its nostril presence. Full-bodied, tannic during the attack with this dissolving in favor of leather, tar, orange pulp and a lowgrade florality. The cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit starts off round and juicy but loses steam by the end. Thus, somewhat astringent

denouement. Acceptable, especially at the price, but not a "steal" this vintage. 90% Sangiovese, 10% Merlot. (Composite Cork) 87

Kaltern (Caldaro), Kellerei  
Alto Adige/Südtirol, Kalterersee Classico Superiore,  
Pfarrhof, Auslese  
Schiava  
2013, \$14.99, 13.0%

Much more scarlet red to it than purple, washed out and transparent brick red rims, however, the general surface reflectivity is quite nice. The nose has a dusty minerality to it, crushed stones and some tar, tree bark and leaf notes evoke a "greener" side, the cherry to red berry fruit scents have a liqueur like feel but lack staying power, ends with a burst of cocoa powder. Light to medium-bodied, the bodacious tannin increases palate presence and clamp down through the sour finish. The cherry, strawberry, close to cranberry fruit has pucker to spare, supplemented by minor grapefruit bite. Never loses that leafy edge but here the tarry earth and leatheriness ascends to a higher plane. Has appeal, if it lost that greenness it would merit more loving. 95% Schiava, 5% Lagrein 87

## ITALY WHITE

Montezemolo, Società Agricola Monfalletto di Cordero  
di  
Piedmont, Langhe  
Arneis  
2014, \$14.99, 13.0%

Somewhat dull golden color of above average depth, some bubbles linger to the glass sides long after the pour, more solid than shiny. Strong mineral, stony smokiness to the nose, matched by sharply sour lemon to lime citrus notes, at moments displays a gentler floral side which helps to release peach, apple and apricot fruit scents. Full-bodied, here you get an entirely different spicy to toasty profile with a light doughiness. Less overt stone and a broadening of the florality. More resonance in the apricot, peach to pear fruit, verging at times on outright sweetness. Has a pleasing nuttiness to pair with the lemony citrus. The acidity is pretty strong and there's never a moment where you feel the wine is flabby. Savory finish. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

Santa Barbara, Azienda  
Marche, Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi  
Verdicchio  
2014, \$8.99, 12.0%

Fairly deep golden hue with a small trace of fizz along the glass sides, not so much shine but sets itself strongly in the glass. The nose is mainly sparkling mineral water and lemons, good deal of anise to mint

notes, its textural fullness adds volume to the otherwise demure peach, pear fruit scents, has a lingering smokiness at the end. Full-bodied, sappy and clingy, you need to use your tongue to scrape it off the mouth sides. The acidity is average and the peach, apricot, pear fruit has a sweetness close to fruit cobbler or dried fruit. Nutty and even smokier here, reverses presentation order with the grapefruit, lemon citrus the final punctuation. Sufficient stony notes at the end to save it from being overly sweet. A real chubster of a wine. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 88

## GERMANY ROSE

Buhl, Weingut Reichsrat von  
Pfalz, Spätburgunder Rosé Trocken AP #23  
Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir)  
2014, \$16.99, 12.5%

Close to luminescent orange to salmon pink color, bright and shiny, fully transparent with hueless rims. The nose has a high degree of focus to it, minerals and chalk, brine and pressed flowers before loosening up into strawberry, red cherry fruit scents and then finally vanilla cream, even warmer, though, retains its no-nonsense demeanor. Medium-bodied, the acidity has strength to spare and firms it up from the first sip, earns its trocken designation. You get a lot more grapefruit and sour orange citrus here. Dusty stone dust and minerals percolate throughout. The cherry, strawberry to cranberry fruit crests in the mid-palate and vacates by the end. While not an especially "intellectual" wine, not built for casual sipping either. (Screwcap: Stelvin+) 88

## SPAIN RED

Mas Marer  
Montsant  
Blend  
2012, \$13.99, 14.5%

Brick red to cough syrup red as prominent as purple in the core, a brooding scarlet through the rims, the liquid is unblemished but dark enough to move past transparency. Sweet and syrupy quality to the raspberry, strawberry, almost watermelon fruit scents, juicy orange pulp nuance, mild cocoa to mocha toast, more cracked leather and dried game presence, some violets or lilacs to perfume it up. Medium-bodied, just as sweet if not sweeter in the mouth was a hard candy Jolly Rancher appeal to the cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit. However, there's sufficient tannin in the background to dry out the tongue some. The dried beef, leather persists and here the orange to white grapefruit citrus turns sour and expands. Any oak has that burnt mocha character, does not really add to sweetness. The finish is a bit abrupt but that's why you

take another sip. Unspecified percentages of Garnacha, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot. 89

López de Heredia, Bodegas R.  
Rioja, Viña Bosconia, Reserva  
Tempranillo  
2004, \$29.99, 13.5%

The reddish purple core is attenuated, brownish yellow rims, clear but not especially shiny. Semi-dusty nose of sandalwood incense, ginger, pressed flowers, a light roast to the basic red cherry fruit, has density but more so a serene fullness which does not push beyond its reach. Light to medium-bodied, vanilla cream and freshly toasted bread, it is dry and tannic so it takes time for the dried cherry, raspberry, apple fruit to unwind. Lavender, nutmeg, ginger and even mint. Orange to lemon peel provides tart counterpoint to the caramel, butterscotch notes. Slowly builds in stature with air time and then you get additional leather and cedar accents. What you see is what you get, already in its prime. 80% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha, 3% Graciano, 2% Mazuelo. 89

López de Heredia, Bodegas R.  
Rioja, Viña Tondonia, Reserva  
Tempranillo  
2002, \$28.99, 13.0%

The core is as much black and red as purple, takes on a vibrant sunset red to orange at the rims, clear and deeply hued, however, obviously a wine with some age on it. The nose takes some time to find itself, when it fleshes out you get sandalwood, cedar, old cracked leather, pressed flowers and soap, the cherry, currant scents have a quiet, mildly roasted quality to them. Medium-bodied, tangy mouth entry with the acidity running a touch amok, dusty texture. Hollow mid-palate puts a hiccup in the flow of the cherry, plum, raspberry fruit. Orange peel, potpourri, cedar give it a nice aged profile. Any barnyard type flavors are momentary. Its zestiness able to distract you from the lack of flesh on its bones and it definitely intrigues your tongue. That said, greater integration would put it in a higher class. 75% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha, 5% Graciano, 5% Mazuelo. 88

Ponce, Bodegas y Viñedos  
La Mancha, Buena Pinta  
Blend  
2013, \$15.99, 12.0%

While a young wine it looks visually faded, all filmy reds and oranges to the point of translucency, squats clumsily in the glass. The nose brings a sizable funk, wet leaves and bark, mild wet fur, presents a light mentholated note before displaying a modicum of snappy red berry fruit scents. Light-bodied, has a powerful structure for its weight class and a peppery

spice kick to go along with a bodacious amount of white grapefruit. The florality is fluffy as if petals doused with water then slowly drying. The acidity kicks up a fuss as you try to enjoy the raspberry, strawberry fruit, as a result never settles in gracefully, this in spite of a basically sweet candied core. It's not clumsy but something makes it feel awkward. Approximately 90% Moravia Agria, 10% Garnacha. 87