

The Hanes Wine Review, July 2016 Edition

Hanes routinely performs meta-analysis on his tasting notes. As a result, a trend seems to be appearing. He consumes fewer “light-bodied” wines. Now, this may be self-selective. However, he drinks across a broad spectrum of wine types, and in many instances imbibes wines not of his direct choosing. So, it got Hanes thinking... Are there simply fewer lighter bodied wines being made or being sold on the market these days?

This question may be more pertinent to red wines but it certainly applies to white wines as well. In many quarters there has been a dialing back of aspects such as alcohol percentage, oak usage, or fruit concentration. But it strikes Hanes that the sheer weight feel on the palate remains tilted towards fuller and with more volume. Even a 12.0% Beaujolais or a 12.5% dry Sancerre can have plenty of heft to it. There is nothing essentially “wrong” here but it is curious. Especially as such a big push has been made to achieve “food friendly” wines and one could argue that lighter wines make them more versatile and food friendly.

Not sure what sundry retail or on-premise wine buyers are experiencing or what winemakers are aiming at. It just seems that back in the late 90’s to early 00’s Hanes came across a much wider spectrum of lighter bodied wines. He can’t recall recently penning a note which ran along the lines of “floats weightlessly in the mouth.” And it’s not like Hanes drinks Zinfandel 24/7. It’s almost shocking when one does encounter a truly light-bodied wine.

This month’s big winners... Cazin’s winery Le Petit Chambord is the world champion of Romorantin. the 2014 Cour-Cheverny “Cuvée Renaissance Moelleux” is the bomb and remains a stunning bargain at \$22. Drink it now, drink it later, awesome juice. Jean-Claude Lapalu is becoming a consistent Hanes favorite and their 2014 “Cuvée des Fous” from Brouilly is as nice of a Beaujolais as he has consumed this vintage. Alas, only bought one bottle so no more soup for you. \$30 is more than fair. Enjoyed the 2013 Turley Zinfandel from the Judge Bell Vineyard for its unabashed fruitiness, while not becoming simple either. These days a good value at \$32. Had the good fortune (and it costs a fortune) to have the 2006 Valentini Montepulciano d’Abruzzo. The usual monument to what this grape can be, nowhere near ready to drink. If you can find it and afford it, do not drink now. Not a rosé but a blend of red and white grapes, the 2009 Château d’Arlay “Corail” bottling from the Jura is simply ever so easy to drink, lively and flavorful and only \$24, this is still the current vintage. Harrington makes a compelling Pinot Noir from the Coast Grade Vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Seems to need aging. The 2014 was good but not ready for prime time, \$45 entry fee. I think Big Basin makes a Pinot from this vineyard too, would like to sample other winemakers’ takes on this fruit. Edmunds St. John consistently delivers with their Californian Gamay Noir called “Bone-Jolly.” For \$23 this is a very good casual sipper. 2014 Chenin Blanc wines from the Loire are delivering and Pinon’s Vouvray “Les Déronnières” is a great example for around \$26. The inaugural vintage of this bottling.

The best \$20 and under picks.... Barou has a couple of cheapie Rhône Syrah bottlings which make it into the States, some through “proper” channels and some “gray market.” This time around was sampled the 2014 “Petit Colorado” bottling and it’s a screaming steal for \$15. Need to go back and buy more. Terre Nere has indeed done a great job with their 2014 introductory level Etna Rosso and for about \$17 you would be hard pressed to find a similar Sicilian wine that delivers at this level. Combel-La-Serre is a newly imported producer from Cahors, France which is a region respected by Hanes. Tried their 2013 entry level \$15 bottling “Le Pur Fruit du Causse de Combel-La-Serre” and it is nice, the nicest part is that it is \$15. You take what you can get these days. Again, when factoring for price, can’t argue with the 2015 Sulauze “Cochon” bottling from Provence. Chuggable, no overt flaws, \$16. If you like your wines more on the austere side of things then the 2014 Trollinger from Beurer in Württemberg, Germany may be for you. Very well made and only \$20 but this is a deeply structured wine and not out to give you a sloppy bear hug when it sees you.

And the disappointments... Bedrock’s 2013 Syrah from the Alder Springs Vineyard did not do it for Hanes, who always seem to have bad luck with this vineyard, should just accept it and not buy wines from there. \$38 is probably a fair price given the vineyard’s history and reputation. Was slightly disappointed by the 2012 Olga Raffault Chinon “Les Peuilles” because this producer sets the bar so high. \$16 is a great price but only if you want to drink the wine. Sigh. Usually crazy about the wine from Domaine Mosse in the Loire but the 2013 Anjou Rouge was a bit off and uneven. Thankfully caught it on sale for \$15. Had the Maculan white blend “Pino & Toi” a few

years ago in passing and made a note to buy a bottle one day but never got around to it. Finally did so with the 2015 vintage and even for just \$10 it was blah. The bottle Hanes had in passing must have been much better, that has to be it. This one is boring as all get out. Can't call it an out-and-out disappointment but given how superlative the 2014 was, the 2015 Gobelsburg rosé "Cistercien" just does not match up. Still, a good price at \$16 and you can certainly buy crappier rosé wines without having to try too hard.

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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)

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

CALIFORNIA RED

Turley

Amador County, Judge Bell Vineyard

Zinfandel

2013, \$32.00, 16.2%

Fair amount of purple in the core but it easily blends in a more crimson red hue, fresh red brick rims, no trace of any filminess. Pungent floral dew to the nose along with orange pulp and juice, syrupy blueberry, raspberry scents and a solid shock of eucalyptus, the cocoa toast and vanilla bean have more snap than liquidy sugariness, hangs pregnantly in the nostrils. Full-bodied, framed by a more savory mouth entry with clove, ginger spice, menthol to eucalyptus and pine. Starts to suggest a stony undergirding then the more creamy caramel, vanilla pudding, butterscotch oak makes a splashy entrance. Firmer blueberry, boysenberry, blackberry to black cherry fruit here but no less length and intensity. The orange to white grapefruit element zestier. It's no simpleton and not dependent on sheer heft for forward momentum. But is

does strike one as a "throwback" to more heady days of Zinfandel. 91

Turley

Contra Costa County, Salvador Vineyard

Zinfandel

2013, \$38.00, 16.1%

Purple to plum red in hue, dark yet you easily sense the clarity of the liquid, the rims the hue of fresh blood, no signs of over-saturation. Massive nose layered with caramel, milk chocolate, coconut custard along with plum to prune, cherry, boysenberry fruit scents, menthol and a subtle touch of orange zest, too bottom heavy for a lifting perfume. In the mouth it's sweetly concentrated and full-bodied, structured by density alone, no noticeable tannin nor acidity. The orange citrus matched by mesquite grill smoke, eucalyptus and pine, could have been a "pretty" wine were it not for the relentless thickness of the plum, cherry, blueberry fruit, here it loses the dried fruit notes in favor of unprocessed sugar. There is a plastic like note at the end which is offputting, otherwise pure fun for the "full speed ahead" crowd. 90

Turley
Sonoma County, Zampatti Vineyard
Zinfandel
2013, \$38.00, 15.9%

There's a strong red rust influence in the somewhat washed out purple core, transparent on the whole, light crimson rims, no trace of hue saturation. Subdued nose with emphasis on flowers, pine breeze, orange citrus and savory garden herbs, as it opens you get more buttered popcorn notes, ripe yet peppery strawberry, watermelon, persimmon fruit scents. Medium-bodied, above average fluidity with a liqueur like textural consistency as well as flavor in the raspberry, strawberry, cherry fruit. As in the nose, once given time to open it does show more buttery notes and caramel to butterscotch, however, this is not dominant. Mintier here with anise and pine in support. Blood orange to more muted grapefruit bubble up at the end. Evenhanded and unassuming but in no way taciturn. 90

Harrington Wines
San Benito County, La Cienega Valley, Siletto
Vineyard, Symetrie
Blend
2014, \$30.00, 14.1%

Quite clear and transparent which inclines the color more towards ruby red than violet, the sleek surface does not detract from the soft glow below. There's a crinkly stone dust to the nose with hints of minerals, more so dried white citrus pith and snappy verve to the raspberry, rhubarb, strawberry to cranberry fruit scents, curiously the longer it sits in the glass the more barnyard floor notes you get when you might expect the opposite with this blowing off with time. Medium-bodied, the acidity comes to the rescue just as the sappiness starts to glue it to the mouth. More caramel to toffee notes here which heighten the sweetness of the cherry, raspberry, blueberry fruit. Also tilts the white grapefruit, orange citrus towards juicy rather than peel zest. A floral musk permeates the finish and keeps the total feel in the lower register. Could stand to lose some baby fat and gain more burst in its linear progression through the mouth. 50% Trousseau, 50% Pinot Noir. 89

Harrington Wines
Santa Cruz Mountains, Coast Grade Vineyard
Pinot Noir
2014, \$45.00, 14.1%

While squeaky clean and possessed of a brilliant sparkle, the color is closer to cough syrup red to orange rust water, consistent from core to rims. There's a wooly to meadowy quality to the nose which does not blunt things but more so diffuses them, damp earth underpinnings, vanilla and ginger spice, the

cherry, raspberry, strawberry have a lollipop level of concentrated sweetness and density. Medium-bodied, the caramel, vanilla and cedar oak tones evident from the first sip, lots of ginger and cinnamon spice too. This adds to the youthful plumpness of the cherry, rhubarb, watermelon and strawberry flavors, at times the fruit comes off as a super-dense rosé. Wildflowers, lemon to orange citrus and some supporting stoniness. The acidity is somewhat vague about what it wants to do. Needs to shed baby fat to really give a sense of its potential but basic material is very good. 89

Stolpman Vineyards
Santa Barbara County, Para Maria de Los Tecolotes
Syrah
2014, \$25.99, 14.1%

Warmly glowing and dark purple core, however, not entirely opaque, noticeably broad scarlet red rims, for all of its vivid coloration does not have unearthly saturation. Eucalyptus and mint make a quick attempt to lighten up the relative density of the plum, cherry, blackberry scents but this has more fruit layers than a six foot sub, light grill fat, sage or marjoram, orange zest, makes no effort to hide the fact that its emphasis is squarely on the fruit. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with a soft, velvety smoothness that reclines across the tongue. Bit more verve in the mixed citrus as well as the savory herbs. Tannin pens in most of the excess juice but there's no lack of excess in the cherry, blackberry, black raspberry fruit. Guileless, fun to drink wine. (Composite Cork) 89

Edmunds St. John
El Dorado County, Bone-Jolly
Gamay Noir
2014, \$22.99, 12.6%

Crystal clear and completely transparent, pale garnet hue, starts off so light in the core you hardly notice any loss around the rims, high gloss across the surface. The nose has a wiry muscularity to it, the strawberry, watermelon, red cherry scents bright and lively, more perfumed than wet and juicy, lemon citrus, lilacs, stones, free of adornment and good-naturedly direct. Light-bodied, has a nice swelling crest in the mid-palate, the acidity level is very good without removing any of the innate joyfulness from the raspberry, strawberry, blueberry, cherry fruit. Lemony with hints of sweet tea leaf and licorice, the florality drops a notch here. On the whole it might actually benefit from more overt structure. Gives little hint of what tertiary development would look like. But right now it's more than pleasing enough. (Screwcap) 89

Dashe Cellars
Dry Creek Valley
Zinfandel
2013, \$21.99, 14.1%

Crimson to violet hued core, clear although sediment had settled in the neck, the rims a dusky sunset red. There's a note of soft, warm rubber to the nose then moves into chocolate and erect red cherry, strawberry, green apple fruit scents, the florality fades in and out as does the spiced orange peel, glimmer of menthol or pine, basically it's focused on cleanliness and purity over lengthy expressivity. Medium-bodied, compact if not terse presentation, not out to tell any meandering stories. More stone and poor dirt here as well as sour orange to grapefruit zest, leads into a gingery kick. The cherry, cranberry, strawberry, blueberry fruit as tart as sweet, smacks you once then turns on its heels and exits the room. Its general neutrality makes it food friendly, however, it sacrifices extension through the finish. 92% Zinfandel, 8% Petite Sirah. 88

Harrington Wines
San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Luna Matta
Vineyard and Berardo Vineyard, Terrane
Nebbiolo
2013, \$30.00, 14.1%

There's a meager amount of purple in the core, much more garnet to brick red with incipient signs of orange at the furthest rims, clean and on the whole transparent. Leather, muddy earth and tire rubber dominate the nose until it stabilizes into cherry, strawberry fruit scents, licorice and pressed flowers, more pungently pregnant and dense than airily lifting. Medium-bodied, displays more fullness than fluidity, the tannin slows down mouth progression. More orange and lemon citrus here, witch hazel, menthol above the licorice. The cherry, raspberry to blackberry fruit firm, not underripe but not juicy enough to match the tannin. The finish is somewhat turbulent, this wine definitely needs food to mask its shortcomings. That said, bottle aging likely to help too. 88

Betwixt
Santa Cruz Mountains, Lester Family Vineyard
Pinot Noir
2014, \$35.00, 13.8%

Light and transparent coloration, mainly a ruby red that shades towards orange near the rims where there is also a general drop in hue intensity. The nose shows a mild pickled to grassy character but nothing to really throw the raspberry, red cherry scents off their game, accents of white grapefruit, stone and something medicinal like witch hazel, at first there's a bigger burst of caramel but this dissipates after the bottle has been open for some time. Light to medium-bodied, the acidity is above average and tends to play up that

pickled, briny edge. The oak toast here is more sour than sweet and distracts some from the otherwise juicy and pretty strawberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit. Has some "rugged mountain" character which may very well be its saving grace with a few years to settle into itself. 87

Bedrock Wine Co.
Mendocino County, Alder Springs Vineyard
Syrah
2013, \$38.00, 14.4%

There is a crimson to burnt red edge which lightens the purple core into a sort of saturated transparency, fresh brick rims with a sleek surface. The nose is slightly exaggerated and scattered, buttered popcorn, floral perfume, rocks, leather, high-toned currant to blackberry scents, the elements on their own aren't bad, lacking a conductor to synthesize them. Medium-bodied, tannic with strong dryness on the palate. Chocolate powder, popcorn and coffee hard candy can't soften the blow. Gets real toasty, roasty after awhile. Twigs, underbrush, stone and charred grill meats provide most of the breadth. The cherry, blackberry, raspberry fruit sour yet with a liqueur like consistency and concentration. Its weight helps push it through to the end but disjointed here too. 94% Syrah, 6% Viognier. 86

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Harrington Wines
Arroyo Seco, Griva Vineyard
Riesling
2014, \$25.00, 14.1%

Fairly deep golden hue, flat overall, substantial amount of bubbles clinging to the glass sides, very solid to frozen looking. The nose has a spiciness to it which verges on smoky to toasty, otherwise lots of both green and yellow apples, pears and lighter apricot, has a thick floral musk to it as well, fresh ginger and a spoonful of honey. Full-bodied, the acidity has lower register oomph but lacks cut so it stays fleshy throughout. More ginger and cinnamon along with orange pulp and stream pebbles, not getting any metallic minerally accents. Apple, pear, melon, apricot and a hint of cherry rounds out the fruit flavors. Manages to end on a more savory note with sweet herbs and a mild grassiness. Quiet whisper of whipped cream takes it in another direction. Basic and dependent on the fruit to carry the day but nice enough. 88

Bedrock Wine Co.
Sonoma Valley
Sauvignon Blanc
2015, \$22.00, 14.1%
Flat green-white straw in color, fades to full transparency along the rims. Very sweet nose, powdered sugar, big floral perfume, superripe melon, peach, apricot scents, minimal sense of herbaceousness as well as minimal stoniness, accents of lemonade, marked primarily by the ripeness. Medium-bodied, slight tingly sensation in the mouth yet the acidity seems slight. Sweet confectionary lime to lemon citrus. Cherry to strawberry mixed in with the green melon, apricot, peach fruit, soft with no tropical bite. The floral dimension is broad and breezy. Nuanced touch of vanilla. Engageable, friendly, starts to get heavier the more you sip it rather than be refreshing. 88

Betwixt
Santa Cruz Mountains
Chardonnay
2014, \$28.00, 13.5%
Dark golden hue with a blockish appearance, dull surface, a bit bronzed around the rims, sits fatly in the glass. Heavy toast to the nose, burnt butter, butterscotch, charred fire kindling, sour lime to lemon citrus kick, at times veers towards jalapeño pepper, the peppery pineapple, papaya, peach fruit has a solid core yet remains an afterthought to the oak. Full-bodied, the toast is no less aggressive in the mouth with a buttery, milky touch but minimal creamily sweet nuances. The lime here buttressed by tangerine. The core of pineapple, mango fruit lacks the ripe juiciness to make it full-on tropical, fills out with more standard apricot and peach. Violets led florality relieves some weight at the end. Well crafted enough in its idiom, just not an especially compelling idiom. 87

FRANCE RED

Lapalu, Jean-Claude
Beaujolais, Brouilly, Cuvée des Fous
Gamay Noir
2014, \$29.99, 12.5%
While the liquid is clear, the core is a dark purple to magenta red, the rims hint at a more glowing pink but really do not deliver, more “brooding” than one might expect. There is a high-toned leather and horse sweat element to the nose, close to pickled and briny, forestalls the inevitable arrival of thick plum, cherry, blackberry fruit scents, mint and matted flowers struggle admirably to give it lift. Full-bodied, the tannin is sinewy and does not too overtly restrain the exuberance of the boysenberry, blueberry, cherry fruit, which here really steals the show. Just the same, the

leather, cow patty, witch hazel notes show similar relentlessness. Green apple and grapefruit bring tartness to the finish. Drives right into you, little restraint, youthful with positive signs for future development. 92

Barou, Domaine Emmanuel
Rhône, Indication Géographique Protégée des Collines Rhodaniennes, Petit Colorado
Syrah
2014, \$14.99, 12.5%
Immaculately clean with more sleekness than shine, the core as much scarlet as violet, trim ruby rims. The nose is compactly powerful, stone, dried beef jerky, olive pits, white grapefruit pith and zippy raspberry, cherry scents with a general “red fruit” nature, pure with a mutter of volatility. Light-bodied, the acidity puts an immediate charge into things, sour touch to the raspberry, strawberry, blueberry fruit. Limestone, poor brown dirt and meadow grasses frame the attack and the residue comprised of mesquite grill smoke and olive pits. Has a fine citric sparkle, perfume of white grapefruit and mandarin orange. This is a very happy wine, its focused clarity and fast pace through the palate makes you want to refill the glass quickly. 90

Arlay, Château d’
Jura, Côtes du Jura, Corail
Blend
2009
\$23.99, 12.5%
Clean, washed out garnet red with expanding orange rims, excellent clarity. Green apple, strawberry, watermelon fruit give the nose a friendly bounce, more musk than breeze to the florality, sweet orange pulp, there’s no complexity but it lingers for so long and pleasantly, hard to get worked up over it. Medium-bodied, the tannin steadily funnels things forward so that things never get too relaxed. Lemon peel, pebbles, poor dirt rush to the forefront, needed as they pale before the succulent raspberry, strawberry, green apple, red cherry fruit, at times possessed of a candied nature. Trace baking spices, lavender. This wine seems aimed at the bulls eye of pleasure and its aim is true. Unspecified percentages of Pinot Noir, Trousseau, Poulsard, Chardonnay, Savagnin. 90

Foillard, Jean
Beaujolais, Morgon, Cuvée Corcelette
Gamay Noir
2014, \$39.99, 13.0%
Bright ruby colored liquid which at times takes on a mild orange cast, the filminess deepens the richness of hue, flat surface but the coloration is consistent throughout, has a fireside warmth about it. There’s an unimpeded flow to the carefree blueberry, strawberry,

red cherry fruit, hits the just right note of juiciness and restraint. Matted straw and muddy earth anchor it some, lemon notes, hint of baking spices, the stone almost acts as an apologetic afterthought. Still, there is a hard to pin down savory quality in there. The acidity and supporting tannin have nothing to be ashamed of, push forward with authority. Does tend to hit the breaks prematurely which makes the finish uneven. Yet, hard to not be impressed by the depth of the primary material. Give it 4-5 years and check back. 90

Grand'Cour (Jean-Louis Dutraive), Domaine de La Beaujolais, Fleurie, Clos de la Grand'Cour
Gamay Noir
2014, \$27.99, 12.5%

Light filminess adds glow to the ruby red coloration, minimal purple found in the core, as it fades towards the rims the red turns a more cranberry to watermelon shade. Strawberry, red cherry, green apple and a smack of cranberry give the nose snap, moderate white grapefruit notes pair with more obvious stone and ash to ensure it never has to overly rely on fruit for impact, ends with a flourish of twigs, fallen leaves and a smidgeon of tar. Medium-bodied, right now tannic to the point where it does subdue the exuberance of that crunchy red berry, cherry fruit. Which leaves room for more punch in the grapefruit to orange citrus. There's a spicy character under the more inert earthy, stony base. Does not come across as if it is giving its best, perhaps needs additional air time or may be beginning to shut down. 89

Foillard, Jean
Beaujolais, Morgon, Côte du Py
Gamay Noir
2014, \$33.99, 12.5%

Filmy ruby red to purple hued core, has a dusky sort of appeal, the rims are a sturdy and youthful brick red. No denying the fart and barnyard aspect to the nose, this does moderate with time to open, sour cranberry, rhubarb, cherry scents make the experience somewhat angular, this makes the citrus appear skewed to lemon or white grapefruit, lots of stoniness and poor dirt, there's an honest ruggedness to its overall appeal. Full-bodied, tannic but more so acidic, hits you hard right out of the gate. Has a briny, pickled character to the attack, then that regal stoniness with some tarry earth and tea leaf notes. Almost meaty at times, eventually it releases the dense, if taciturn, cherry, blackberry, plum fruit which does not lack for depth and does lack for expressivity. Built for the long haul. 89

Descombes, Georges
Beaujolais, Brouilly
Gamay Noir
2014, \$27.99, 12.5%

Garnet red to light purple hued core, clear and clean, the rims are an ominous dried blood red with the beginning vestige of orange. There's both ferrous earthiness and wet animal fur qualities to the nose, layered wet straw, pulped white citrus, black tea leaf, the red cherry, blackberry, plum scents kind of get lost in the shuffle, mostly present retronasally. Light to medium-bodied, derives a great deal of "weight" from the powerful tannic structure. Minerals, black earth, tar, cement add to its sturdiness, the white grapefruit elevates the sourness. Mix of cherry, Italian plum to raspberry fruit, nice split between "red" and "black" fruits. In spite of all the tough guy structure there's a nice floral lift at the end. More approachable now than many vintages of this bottling but time in the cellar should provide rewards. 89

Combel-La-Serre (Famille Ilbert), Château Southwest France, Cahors, Le Pur Fruit du Causse de Combel-La-Serre
Malbec
2013, \$14.99, 12.5%

Rich purple core, its darkness does not obscure its innate transparency, compact scarlet rims have good color while stopping short of obvious saturation. While the nose possesses a solid dose of cherry and mixed dark fruits alongside twigs, tree bark and dried leaves on the whole there's a muteness to it, the most it reveals with extended air time is more stones, dirt and some tar, scores points for purity but you need some scents to hold interest. Medium-bodied, sturdy tannic frame, particularly during the finish, dryness dampens the length of the otherwise perfectly acceptable cherry, currant to plum fruit. Here there's an uptick in white grapefruit to sour orange citrus. The parched brown dirt and dusty stones thing continues apace. It is likable for its "throwback" demeanor and willingness to make no effort to disguise its structure. There's something nice about a \$15 bottle which demands a decanting. 88

Puy, Château Le
Bordeaux, Côtes de Bordeaux, Duc des Nauves
Blend
2012, \$15.99, 13.0%

The opaque purple core somewhat dull, more vibrancy in the sunset to brick red rims, depth of hue is no issue. The nose reveals the higher Cabernet Franc element immediately with bell pepper upfront, the leather clouded over some by merde, there's a sandalwood to dry cedar character, the density it has in the nostrils prevents clear expression of the black

currant, Italian plum fruit scents, a sign this likely deserves a decant. In the mouth it's full-bodied, the tannin shows power without anger, there's a graininess to it which acts like speed bumps in the road. Tangy white citrus bite and stony to minerally thrust push back the advent of the gosh darn ripe currant, cherry, plum fruit to past the mid-palate. Cedar, tar, gun flint, graphite and saddle leather imbue it with early stage complexity. Has more brawn than is usual these days at this price point which, again, means you need to give it ample time to unwind before consumption. 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. 88

Sulauze (Karina et Guillaume Lefèvre), Domaine de Provence, Vin de France, Cochon

Blend

2015, \$15.99, 12.5%

While transparent, there is a mild filminess to the cranberry red to violet coloration, more of a fiery sunset red along the rims. The nose has a fluffy denseness, like a wet cotton ball, focusing on strawberry, raspberry, rhubarb fruit scents, orange pulp, the barnyard funk blows off with good speed, ends with a broadening floral musk, no surprises, plenty of joyfulness. In the mouth it's light to medium-bodied, soft and generally round in the mouth, the acidity gives it some firmness. Flirts with jamminess in the strawberry, cherry, raspberry fruit, all red in complexion hence sweet but in an airy manner. The lemon to orange citrus in turn has a confectionary character. Gulpable and fairly priced for what you get. Unspecified percentages of Grenache, Syrah, Vermentino, Cinsault, Mourvèdre. (Composite Cork) 88

Raffault, Olga

Loire, Chinon, Les Peuilles

Cabernet Franc

2012, \$15.99, 12.5%

Lots of garnet red to lighten the violet core, the rims turn a fiery sunset red with touches of orange, clean and as transparent as the coloration allows. Dusty nose of leather, poor brown dirt and clay, stone and bell pepper, the grapefruit citrus comes across as fully desiccated, not a lot of juiciness to be found in the cherry, red currant fruit scents. In the mouth it is medium-bodied with a good deal of tannic punch, the bell pepper dried out and close to pushing things into herbaceous territory. That said, there is a pleasing savory side to it, not quite peppery, more like garden herbs with support from leather and mineral shards. The overall high pucker factor prevents the cherry, currant to blackberry fruit from sinking in much and chances are it won't outlast the tannin. So, drink up and pair with a hearty meal. 88

Possible, Domaine du

Languedoc/Roussillon, Côtes du Roussillon, Le Fruit du Hasard

Blend

2012, \$15.99, 13.5%

There's a sunset red glow to it which exceeds the purple in the core, darkened by a fine silty sediment throughout, fine reflectivity on the surface. The nose at first hits you with some funk, quick to dissipate in favor of lively blueberry, blackberry, cherry fruit scents although there is some lingering band-aid notes, garrigues like florality and baking spices but overall it's just fruit 24/7. Medium-bodied, uses its weight adroitly to create forward momentum in the palate. Spicier here, minerally to metallic tang as well. The blueberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit deep and lasting, at times adding strawberry or green apple nuances. The spiciness approaches cedar or incense at points. Definitely a "natural" wine and those who expect 100% cleanliness may be challenged. No doubting the fruit though. 75% Carignan, 25% Syrah. 88

Bertrand, Yann

Beaujolais, Morgon, Vieilles Vignes

Gamay Noir

2014, \$29.99, 12.5%

Hazy density to the ruby-red to purple hue, semi-opaque through to the rims. Muscular nose, layered to the point of immobility, pressed flowers, raspberry, red cherry, blackberry scents of neither decisive red or black fruit complexion, orange pulp, witch hazel, there's some prettiness under all the weight, right now it's entirely primary and unevolved. Full-bodied, has the same thickness and sluggishness in the mouth. Has superior tannin and slightly less acidity, not lacking in structure at all. The orange citrus brings white grapefruit onboard. There's a wooly quality, like a wet sweater. Likewise, mild twiggy to sous bois note, the florality seems more muted here. Green apple and strawberry interspersed among the cherry, raspberry base. Foursquare today and leaves you thinking it might be shutting down already. 88

Cruchandeau, Julien

Burgundy, Bourgogne Hautes-Côtes de Nuits, Les Cabottes

Pinot Noir

2014, \$21.99, 12.5%

Light ruby color, transparent with a mild haze, consistent from core to rims, freshly youthful. There's a round softness to the nose, however, it remains difficult to penetrate, offers substantial stoniness, a waft of lemon to grapefruit, again more of a spongy quality than direct freshness, before dissolving it produces olive pits and tree bark. Light-bodied, starts off slowly but builds power through the palate

progression. The strawberry, cherry, raspberry, even watermelon, fruit on the delicate side, the tannin too strong a match. You get a healthy dose of flowers, mint, meadow grasses but not all that complex. Leaves you hoping the structure can subside while leaving the fruit intact. Today, demands patience and food. 87

Pierre Seches (Sylvain Gauthier), Domaine des Rhône, Saint-Joseph, Sans Soufre Syrah

2013, \$26.99, 13.0%

Warm glow to the opaque purple core, displays thin and vibrant scarlet rims, well saturated. Reductive nose at first, releases slowly as room is made for sugary blackberry, plum, cherry scents, the earthiness struggles against the sweet baking spices, so plump and primary that is it hard to discern much else, nothing "sauvage" about it. Medium-bodied, firm without heaviness, cloaks with a tannic blanket yet allows for freedom of movement. The cherry, currant, blackberry fruit has a semi-sour edge. Ginger, clove, some cowhide, stays relentlessly primary, almost grapey at times. No real sense of leather nor game, minimal perfume, the fruit clings to the palate. 87

Mosse, Domaine Agnès et René Loire, Anjou

Blend

2013, \$14.99, 12.5%

Dusky purple core, fair amount of sediment floating about, glowing brick red rims, looks a touch older than its actual age. The nose requires time to let the funk blow off and smooth out so that richly layered plum, currant, cherry scents get to strut, derives a stiffening from both white citrus and bell pepper, never quite shakes that heavy wet animal hide element. Medium-bodied, puckeringly tart with a solid slathering of deadening tannin as well. Brine, white grapefruit pith, sauna stones and iron flecks. But none comes close in power to all that green pepper. The plum, currant fruit remains both sweet and savory and dense as all get out. It is drinking unevenly now, would be interesting to see if time levels it out. Unspecified percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc. 87

FRANCE WHITE

Petit Chambord (François Cazin), Le Loire, Cour-Cheverny, Cuvée Renaissance Moelleux Romorantin

2014, \$21.99, 13.0%

Virtually colorless, has a faint greenish hay glow to it, almost eerie, highly reflective surface like polished glass. The honey and ripe apricot, peach to pear fruit come through clearly in the nose, however, the

mineral smokiness is the long distance winner, the lemon and at times lime citrus doesn't pick sides, achieves remarkable freshness given that evident ripeness. In the mouth it's firm yet yielding, the acidity does a good job of cleaning things up as well as highlighting the chalky and mineral residue. More sour and tropical here with pineapple, guava and green apple intermixed with the apricot and peach. The citrus too inclines more towards lime and pink grapefruit. Allows the honeyed aspect to recede to the side wings. A floral breeze extends the finish. Not as structured as it might be yet delivering quite a bit right now. 92

Pinon, François

Loire, Vouvray, Les Déronnières

Chenin Blanc

2014, \$25.99, 12.5%

The high luster raises the profile of the otherwise faded gold hue, the core washed out enough that the rims seem fuller. Smoky nose of minerals and wet limestone, sour pineapple to green apple, nectarine fruit scents, tart lemon to grapefruit pith, while there is a sternness to it, at the same time it extends long enough to soften before it dissolves. Medium-bodied, has a sinewy acidic spine which keeps it firm yet does not verge on unapproachability. Needs to warm but when it does beeswax, lanolin and slightly sweeter pink grapefruit, tangerine citrus steal the show. Much broader pineapple, peach, guava, pear fruit than the nose suggests. Never gets "soft" but does unclench sufficiently for a moderate floral perfume to gild the finish. Complete wine, nothing blowy about it, aging and patience should be rewarded. 91

Mosse, Domaine Agnès et René

Loire, Vin de France, Le Rouchefer

Chenin Blanc

2014, \$29.99, 13.5%

Dark worn gold color, looks matured, not exactly dull but does not shine with youthful vigor even though it layers well in the glass. Sweet and relaxed nose of apple, pear, melon fruit, cinnamon, lemon sorbet, almost minty at times, displays a quiet stony sparkle which verges on smokiness, muscular enough to persist for some time in the nostrils. Full-bodied, there's no lack of flesh on the bones, however, the acidity is quite capable of firming it up and even creating some pucker at the finish. Woolly, waxy notes in support of the wet stone, a touch too raw to approach honeyed. The pineapple, green apple, peach, melon fruit ripe with a pleasing tanginess, seems to want to do the dishes before the guests leave, shortening the enjoyment a bit. That said, clean given its level of richness and light on its feet with all that heft. Intelligent bruiser. 90

Luneau-Papin, Domaine Pierre
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie, Clos des
Allées, Monopole
Melon de Bourgogne
2014, \$15.99, 12.0%

Strong golden color, more flat and blockish than shiny, fills through to the rims well. The nose has a fresh lemony quality as well as mint, licorice and a smattering of chalk, basic peach, apple scents, not soft yet not super-erect presence either, has a matured confidence, not looking to impress. In the mouth it is fuller bodied and here more softly generous, the acidity appears content to give shape to the ripe pineapple, green apple, apricot to kumquat fruit rather than cut it to bits. More minty here and the orange to lemon citrus retains a sweetly bright demeanor. Not especially leesy, leaves room for a chalk to mineral water influence. There is a certain "battening down the hatches" at the end. Seems textbook the whole way through. 89

Chidaine, Domaine François
Loire, Montlouis sur Loire, Les Bournais
Chenin Blanc
2014, \$33.99, 13.5%

The golden hue comes incredibly close to amber, more glowing than shiny or reflective, persists into the rims, has the concentrated appearance of a wine many years older. Orange marmalade, marshmallows, honey and beeswax make for an approachable nose, muscular melon, peach, pear fruit keep it grinding along, light mintiness, more damp clay than stone notes, finishes not suddenly but without advance warning. In the mouth it is full-bodied and equally firm, especially as the acidity squeezes the tongue and can leave a paper cut or two behind. More tropical with papaya, pineapple matching up with the peach, apricot, cantaloupe flavors. Wet stone able to more closely match the clay and packed mud. Wish there was more "pop" at the end but otherwise it has the bases covered. Too youthfully plump to say it will go far into the future. 89

Tremblay, Domaine du
Loire, Quincy
Sauvignon Blanc
2014, \$17.99, 12.5%

While transparent there is a soft glow to the pale white straw hue, colorless rims, sleek and semi-reflective surface. Herbaceous nose with considerable stone powder to shards, pungent lemon zest, hint of rose petals balanced out by snap peas, has a pleasingly rugged profile. Light to medium-bodied, quite sour with a close to pickled character, noticeably smoky as well. The mineral dust close to ferrous, the acidity immediately begins to dry out the mouth. The jalapeño

pepper is big factor. Takes some time to unclench and provide pineapple, quince, melon, star fruit of lean, wiry proportions. Marked mostly by that enduring smokiness, at times close to acrid. 88

Pépière, Domaine de la
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie
Melon de Bourgogne
2015, \$11.99, 12.0%

Pale green to white straw color, pools into the glass well enough to fashion a more block like appearance. Mineral water, wet stone, apple, pear to peach pit scents make for a somewhat delicate nose, it has a softly creamy texture and needs to start getting close to room temperature before revealing any lasting smokiness. Medium-bodied, there is a minor prickle to the mouth feel but generally it is soft and the acidity is on the blunt side. Foursquare lemon, orange citrus without bite, adequate resonance in the pear, green melon, peach, yellow apple fruit flavors. More stream water cleanliness than meaningful minerality or stone aspects. Comes off as more innocuous than personality driven. (Composite Cork: Diam1) 87

ITALY RED

Valentini, Azienda Agricola
Abruzzi, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo
Montepulciano
2006, \$269.99, 14.0%

The core is opaque purple verging on black, sleek surface, the thin rims are the color of fresh blood. If given time the initial barnyard funk and merde will blow off in favor of earth, asphalt, iron flecks and cedar, the density of the plum, cherry scents trumps the ripeness, wet leather and horse sweat, gives you the full spectrum of what young funkiness can be like. In the mouth it is full-bodied, has excellent volume without heaviness. The tannin has more of a dampening than drying effect, nothing arch about it even allowing for its still youthful power. Ripe and close to candied cherry, cranberry, raspberry fruit which punches hard, more direct than expansive in feel. Again, given time it turns surprisingly clean, some leather, driftwood, cedar, sandalwood, and a hint of cocoa powder. Bristles with untapped power, needs time but likewise not an immortal. 91

Terre Nere, Tenuta delle
Sicilia, Etna Rosso
Blend
2014, \$16.99, 14.0%

Very clear and transparent in the face of its bright ruby red color, consistent core to rims, squeaky clean. There's a sandy, soily underpinning to the strawberry, raspberry fruit, very red complexion overall, quick burst

of white grapefruit, has sufficient focus so the sweetness does not become all you get. Medium-bodied, leads with a puckering acidic grip which favors the tar, leather, asphalt elements just ahead of a gluey caramel note. Here the white grapefruit jumps out in the lead, which sort of forces the strawberry, cherry, raspberry fruit to become caged up by the wine's structure. It's relatively lighter body shortens the palate presence making it one of those wines best consumed via frequent, brief sips. 98% Nerello Mascalese, 2% Nerello Cappuccio. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

ITALY WHITE

Maculan

Veneto, Veneto Bianco, Pino & Toi

Blend

2015, \$9.99, 12.0%

A touch translucent, worn gold hue even as the surface shines well, just about colorless at the rims. There's a residual smokiness in the nose among the more powerful powdered sugar, honey and apple, pear, peach fruit scents, blends in sweet mixed citrus, no surprises nor anything remotely complex going on. Light-bodied, has more acidity than expected albeit it is clumpy and powdery and does not flow naturally. The orange to white grapefruit citrus clearer and more pronounced, tangy even. Nectarine, pineapple added to the peach, pear fruit base. Not necessarily more complex on the palate but certainly shows more life. Foursquare finish rather than clean and refreshing. 60% Tai, 25% Pinot Bianco, 15% Pinot Grigio. (Screwcap: Stelvin Lux+) 86

ITALY ROSE

Cantalupo, Antichi Vigneti di

Piedmont, Colline Novaresi, Il Mimo Rosé

Nebbiolo

2015, \$10.99, 13.5%

Metallic sheen with a salmon pink to orange hue, turns a touch watery around the rims. In the nose the first impression is of stones, stream water and pressed flowers, then tangerine zest and succinct but not enervated cherry, red berry, apple scents, offers more by way of density than a flighty perfume, does not chase after ripeness at the price of shape and contour. Medium-bodied, here the fruit gets pushed to the fore, cold or warmer, oodles of cherry, watermelon, raspberry, strawberry fruit. The orange to tangerine citrus likewise is sweeter and more concentrated. The stone and inert earth equal or greater to the flowers. Manages to avoid greenness or any unpleasant bitterness through the finish. Enough residual sweetness to soak in and massage your pleasure nodes. (Synthetic Cork: Micro Cell) 88

GERMANY RED

Beurer, Weingut Jochen

Württemberg, Trocken

Trollinger

2014, \$19.99, 12.0%

Vividly resplendent yet pale watermelon color, just this side of too dark to be considered rosé, completely transparent, from a distance takes on a more saturated glow. There's a wet stony powder gluey character to the nose as well as brisk herbaceous bite, pressed flowers buttress the linear raspberry, red cherry scents, hint of lemon peel, just about everything here is sprinting as fast as possible. Light-bodied, very strong tannic and acidic backbone makes it much burlier than the basic body weight. The lemon to white grapefruit citrus more pronounced and sour here. The strawberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit borders on savory. The earthy and grassy qualities holds off until the end. At the same time, clamps down with authority at the end. (Screwcap) 88

GERMANY WHITE

Keller, Weingut

Rheinhessen, Limestone QbA AP #9

Riesling

2015, \$26.99, 10.0%

The core is mostly a greenish straw hue but it somehow deepens into a more golden color around the rims, bright and shiny but not quite fully transparent, the pour leaves tiny bubbles on the glass sides for some time. Playfully active nose of sweet lime to lemon citrus, powdered sugar, cherry, apricot, melon fruit, smells freshly pressed and any stoniness holds off until the final moments. Medium-bodied, the acidity is sneaky strong and valiantly battles with the formidable sweetness of the primary material. The result is a finish which tightens in a tingling manner. Before that, though, plenty of freedom for the apple, pear, apricot, melon fruit to romp. The same semi-confectionary feel infuses the tangerine, lime, grapefruit citrus. Slight minerally kick at the end as the acidity spreads out. Can't call it "plump" but at the same time not lean and hyper-focused. May become more regal over time but no idea what kind of tertiary development it is capable of. (Composite Cork: Diam) 89

AUSTRIA ROSE

Schlosskellerei Gobelsburg
Kamptal, Cistercién Rosé
Blend

2015, \$15.99, 12.0%

Sparkly and shiny yet pale salmon pink color, close to transparent although subtle luminescence helps it maintain a steady glass presence. The nose provides a constant barrage of stream water, stone as counterpoint to the notes of whipped cream alongside the strawberry, red cherry fruit scents, has a cotton candy sort of florality, sugary and fine. Medium-bodied, sort of sluggish at times as the acidity is not always keeping it finely tuned. Can't shake those nuances of whipped cream, vanilla and chocolate. Plus has a sort of yeasty quality which flattens out any minerality or stoniness. The strawberry, watermelon, raspberry fruit flavors steady. On the whole it's tasty, ripe without inducing a sugar coma. But the lack of verve prevents it from achieving excellence. Unspecified percentages of Zweigelt, Sankt Laurent, Pinot Noir. (Screwcap) 88

SPAIN RED

Trossos del Priorat
Priorat, Lo Mon
Blend

2011, \$24.99, 14.5%

The opacity of the black purple core belies the overall perfect clarity of the liquid, equally dark plum red rims. Extremely ripe nose of prune, raisin and cherry to plum fruit, broad array of milk chocolate, cinnamon, orange juice but carried almost entirely by the density and persistence of the fruit. Full-bodied, layered and velvety smooth, you feel the sun ripening the grapes on the vine. Spicier, some ginger along with the cinnamon, cedary oak too. The chocolate darker and more bitter here, coffee notes too, the oak is suavely omnipresent. The prune, raisin, fig component dominates with a syrupy texture to the plum, cherry flavors. Touch of grapefruit tarts up the orange citrus, mentholated breeze at the end. Completely possessed with giving pleasure, minimal focus on expressing complexity. Unspecified percentages of Garnacha, Carignane, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon. 89

AUSTRALIA RED

Hidden Sea of The Limestone Coast, The
South Australia, Limestone Coast
Shiraz

2014, \$20.00, 14.5%

More red than magenta in the glowing purple core, opaque core with moderate transparency at the rims, richly colored overall. Menthol and mint adorn the nose

prior to fatter plum, cherry fruit scents, orange citrus, maybe a touch of cocoa but not much oak showing. Medium-bodied, sweeter than the nose suggests with caramel and eucalyptus with some candied ginger to boot. The orange citrus seems sweeter too, albeit the plum, cherry, blueberry fruit remains just normally concentrated for its category. Can't say there's much acidity or tannin in there but it cleans up nicely by the finish and does not leave a cloying residue behind. Not difficult to throw back a couple of glasses. (Screwcap) 88