

## ***The Hanes Wine Review, June 2015 Edition***

These days *The Hanes Wine Review* generally comes out every other month. From 1999 up until 2009 it more or less came out monthly. Currently, Hanes generally only reviews only 30-40 wines bi-monthly. But there was a Golden Era.

The October 2004 edition reviewed 257 wines. The May 2004 edition reviewed 234 wines. The December 2003 edition reviewed 162 wines. All of these in but a *single* month. How was such possible?

Well, way back then Hanes had *access*. Naturally, he bought like literally a zillion wines a month and drank them all. That helped. But he also worked in a retail wine store and was able to sample and write up all kinds of wines – from in-store tastings to samples wholesale reps brought to the store to bottles employees would purchase together so as to taste. Further, he was able to go to wine trade tastings and if he wanted, he could eschew quickly sampling 100+ wines and instead spend a few hours focusing intently on 15-20 wines, enough so to write them up for the review. Add to this Hanes attending wine geek dinners where everyone brought bottles and one could easily write up notes on 20 wines in a single evening. Taking all this together and it can add up to literally hundreds of wines in one month.

But no more. Even though Hanes still works in the wine business, his back office operational work really has little to do with wine per se. Besides fondling expensive bottles with the corks still in their necks. There's no direct "perks" to this side of the business. So, right now it's basically only bottles Hanes himself directly purchases or every blue moon a smaller hangout with just a few winos where maybe Hanes can get 5-6 notes done in one sitting. As a result, even if there was time to birth a new edition, there would not be enough wine consumed in one month to make it worth the while. Plus since 2008 beer has also nudged in to take up an evening here or there in terms of alcohol consumption. Plus plus as Hanes's wine collection has matured some nights are taken with older bottles which get placed on the "older wines consumed" website page and not in the monthly [sic] review proper.

For those of you who have suffered Hanes from the start you may remember reviews of hundreds of wines. Ideally, Hanes could currently sample 30-50 wines per month and that would be a good thing. Invite Hanes over for a few drinks or fund a shopping spree. It will all be worth it in the end, a true win-win for all involved.

In other musings, it is now summer which means rosé season. Writing about/reviewing rosé wines is vexing. By the time they hit the market and one can purchase and get around to sampling them half the summer is gone. Which makes recommendations less worthwhile. It would be great to be able to get all this done in April, publish it in May and kick back and relax. So, all apologies in advance for the untimeliness of rosé reviews which will appear herein or next time. Management is doing what it can. Short of odious blogging.

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**This month's big winners...** Props where they are due, the 2014 Bedrock Sauvignon Blanc from the Judge Family Vineyard is maybe one of the best wines Hanes has sampled from Bedrock and he has tried quite a few. The \$25 winery direct price is worth it and were it available locally at retail Hanes might even buy more. Good job. While Hanes continues to bemoan the prices, he did plunk down his hard earned \$35 for a bottle of Occhipinti's 2012 Frappato and it was its usual excellent self. Zesty fruit, lots of "terroir" and an overall regal bearing. Once more will hand it to Harrington Wines for doing something nice with a grape rarely grown in the United States. Their 2013 Lagrein from Paso Robles is an authentic rendition of the grape, full and burly and with some potential to age and change over time. \$35 ain't cheap but can't fault the execution, worth the effort to acquire this wine if you like them in the style of hearty Northern Italian reds. Finally did get around to the 2013 Jacques Maillet "Autrement" red blend and it delivered on the promise of the quick taste Hanes had awhile ago. Well worth the \$33 and a producer Hanes will now seek out every vintage. So there. Hard to say why but Sky Vineyards gets like zero play among wine lovers. Every time Hanes has tried one in the past, usually at trade tastings, he liked it but never bought it. This comes to an end now. Their 2011 Zinfandel (they seem to intentionally release late) is another rugged "mountain fruit" experience that displays the best ways Zinfandel can be structured yet viscerally enjoyable as well. \$28 seems par for the course these days for what is in the bottle. Hanes got turned onto the Chilean producer Louis-Antoine Luyt and the wines are gosh darn good, of the two sampled this time the

preference goes to the 2013 Carménère called “La Grande Vie Dure.” Lots going on, a revelation for this grape. \$22 is perfectly acceptable for the experience.

**The best \$20 and under picks....** Since it is rosé season, three cheers for the 2014 Domaine Poli bottling from Corsica’s Ile de Beauté, made from the native Nielluciu grape. Lovely character, fresh fruit, good bite. Easily worth the \$10 tariff. Of equal note, Foraster’s 2014 “rosat” from the Trepas grape is a zippy Spanish rosé that deserves your \$13 purchase. Just call it Viña Zorzal but by any name the 100% Graciano from Navarra, Spain is a great value for about \$11, accessible but by no means simple. Domaine Barou nails it consistently with their cheapie Syrah from the Rhône called “Cuvée des Vernes.” For \$13 this is the real deal, as in lean, fit and acidic. And with fine fruit. It is really rare to find quality Syrah at this price nowadays. Another example of over-delivering at its price is the 2011 Hureau Saumur-Champigny labeled “Tuffe” which is just what one wants in any everyday Cabernet Franc wine. Herbaceous, bright fruit, quaffable, \$16. ‘Nuff said. While not “remarkable” per se one needs to give credit to Ferrandière for consistently cranking out their cheapie Languedoc Malbec under \$10. Not so easy to do and their product is clean and food friendly. And, let’s say it again, under \$10. In the same vein, a producer new to Hanes, the 2013 La Rousse Malbec from the Languedoc is fun and juicy and a good value at \$12, the “good” kind of simple sipping. Lauverjat has established themselves as a credible go-to for inexpensive Sancerre wines and their 2014 is a tasty drop for about \$14, not wimpy and has energy to spare. These days Spain’s Canary Islands are a “hot spot” for wine geeks and an interesting wine from there is the 2012 Frontón de Oro “Tinto” made from the world famous Listán Negro grape. For \$18 it offers intrigue and an offbeat swill, no doubt it will find its friends and detractors.

**And the disappointments...** The 2012 Fredericks Vineyard Zinfandel from Turley is another data point for why this winery needs to return to its roots of bombastic, fruit driven wines. No weight, not so much flavor, minimal flow and smoothness. Given general “trends” in popular winemaking as well as stated beliefs of the winemaker it is doubtful Turley will return to “ooze monster” status but one can hope (and there are wines from them like the Pesenti Zinfandel which still deliver these goods). Ouchy for the \$42 this bottle cost. It was not a “strong” disappointment but the 2013 Serge Dagueneau “La Centenaire” from old vine Chasselas grapes was well anticipated as a rare treat. Instead, it was just okay, lost points for its sluggishness. \$19 is pushing it for what this bottle brought to the table. A new winery for Hanes, the 2013 Sandler Pinot Noir basic bottling from the Santa Lucia Highlands came off all wrong, hot and disjointed. Really weird. There’s some other “higher end” bottlings in the queue so hopefully this is an outlier. Normally Hanes grooves on Cantalupo’s rosé from the Nebbiolo grape called “Il Mimo,” however, the 2014 version is squarish and too heavy to really be fun. Price remains fair around \$11, though. The 2013 Sandlands Chenin Blanc did zilch for Hanes, same as the 2012. Needs both more acidity and fruit plus overall freshness. Having liked their Mourvèdre wine, Hanes tried the 2013 Dirty and Rowdy Sémillon to middling results. Not much life to it nor the characteristics which might attract one to, say, examples of this grape from Bordeaux.

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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/oldervintages2015.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)

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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 June!

**CALIFORNIA RED**

Turley

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Pesenti

Vineyard

Zinfandel

2012, \$35.00, 16.2%

As much scarlet red as purple in the core, fresh brick red rims, clear yet the brooding vivacity of the color makes it seem more richly translucent. The nose is boisterous and no holds barred, buttered popcorn, caramel, milk chocolate, syrupy raspberry to blackberry scents interlaced with plum/prune notes, racy orange citrus, tempting blend of eucalyptus and pine, sure there’s some alcohol fumes but the ampleness of the fruit and oak smother this, overall enjoyably massive. Full-bodied, more of the same here with some leavening acidity, albeit astringent at times. The orange, grapefruit citrus in the foreground, pine, tea leaf, coriander spice next. Here the oak pushes back the arrival of the fruit, butterscotch, caramel and vanilla lounge about before room is made for the blueberry, blackberry, raspberry fruit, which is thick and gluey but not yet dried fruit in concentration. Prolonged finish, refuses to be washed out of your mouth. 90

Harrington Wines

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Berardo

Vineyard

Lagrein

2013, \$35.00, 14.1%

Despite the black opacity of the core it hums warmly, the purple barely shows before vivid magenta rims shine brightly. Dense plum, cherry scents come close to plum, mocha and a few baking spice to popcorn accents before animal hide, fallen forest matter and black tea notes, has this iron fleck to iodine aspect as well. Full-bodied, thick and heavy and not ashamed of it, willingly plays the steamroller. The tannin buried underneath but comes out by the end. The more you sip it the more you think the acidity does the heavy lifting, certainly helps to accentuate the white grapefruit citrus and bitter tea leaf. Chocolatey, lesser caramel, on the top end some toastiness, however, oak is fully proportionate. The roundness to the plum, cherry, currant fruit highlights the sweetness and

general “wet” feel it creates in the mouth. Comes across like it is really on its best manners but could be less couth under different circumstances. 90

Sky Vineyards

Napa Valley, Mount Veeder

Zinfandel

2011, \$27.99, 13.8%

The purple core is hardly a match for the encroaching rust red color, serious crimson rims, spotlessly transparent, no saturation. The nose is all mountain scrub, back road dirt trails, pulped white grapefruit and menthol, there’s a cool cellar aged quality to the plum, cherry, apple fruit scents which verges on air dried fruit, light twist of molasses and caramel at the end, handsomely rugged. Medium-bodied, very nice framing acidity with tannic support underneath, bursting with pine notes. After that it’s that grapefruit to orange citrus, licorice, tea leaf and camphor. Interesting for how much apple, apricot there is alongside the cherry, Italian plum, blackberry fruit. The high degree of savoriness over sweetness is striking. This with perfectly fine fruit concentration. Muscular finish, sinewy. 90

Turley

Napa Valley, Howell Mountain, Cedarman

Zinfandel

2012, \$29.00, 15.8%

Rich purple core yet not fully opaque, the wide rims feature more crimson to sunset red than brighter ruby. Heavy dose of butterscotch, caramel and molasses in the nose, somewhat alcoholic, mentholated, chocolate covering to the blueberry, blackberry, black cherry fruit scents, little orange peel essence, works up a lot of momentum through the nostrils. Medium to full-bodied, very creamy texture, soft and filling. Here you get apple and strawberry next to the base of cherry, blueberry, raspberry fruit. Caramel, butterscotch is here too but less dominant than in the nose, more chocolatey. Takes a twist via incense and tea leaf. Almost too much of a tweener, not “big big” and not elegant either. 89

Bedrock Wine Co.  
Regional Blend, Ode to Lucien  
Blend

2013, \$37.00, 14.1%

The purple core is bright and darkly transparent, ruby touches, however, the rims are a mix of that ruby to fresh blood red, sleek looking. There's a little wooliness and matted barn straw under the ripe blueberry, blackberry, currant fruit, a nuance of molasses and honey tugs at your nostrils, vanilla fudge, marked by the lack of complexity but pleasant enough, ends with a jab of green apple. Full-bodied, tart and possessed of a drying pucker, this squeezes the fruit into a blend of cherry, cranberry, blueberry and strawberry. Offers more of a mesquite grill smokiness here, softened by caramel and molasses notes. Tries real hard to get leathery and just comes up short. Nice framing via orange to white grapefruit citrus. Tree bark and drier meadow grassiness lend added shape to the finish. Leaves you hoping it's a puppy yet in need of a few years to show its bones. 63% Mourvèdre (Evangelho Vineyard, Contra Costa County, 27% Grenache and 10% Syrah (both Gibson Ranch, McDowell Valley). 89

Eddy, Tom  
Napa Valley, Elodian  
Cabernet Sauvignon  
2011, \$29.99, 14.6%

Unblemished is semi-flat purple core, the rims are red of the dried blood to rust variety, doesn't appear maturing per se but no youthful saturation. The herbaceous component to the nose is deftly smoothed over by creamy vanillin oak which itself sidesteps undue sweetness, ripe cherry, blackberry fruit scents, incipient cedar and sweet cigar leaf, light piney to medicinal element lends it a breeziness. Medium-bodied, as polished in the mouth as in the nose, very fluid and smooth with caramel, vanilla oak accents and an added toastiness. The blackberry, blueberry, cherry fruit juicy before dropping off just before the ultimate finish line. Pine, cedar, tea leaf and savory herbs yet lacking in the "terroir" department, perhaps due to the relatively diverse vineyard sources. In any event, not clearly a patrician blue blood by birth but well coached and mannered, cashing out the same. (Composite Cork) Grapes sourced from Bella Vista Vineyard (Diamond Mountain District); Stagecoach Vineyard (Atlas Peak); Kerry's Vineyard (Calistoga); Elkington (Atlas Peak); Kate's Vineyard (Oak Knoll District). 89

Turley  
Sonoma Valley, Fredericks Vineyard  
Zinfandel  
2012, \$42.00, 15.9%

Basic ruby-purple color of moderate transparency, pinkish magenta rims, nothing impressive nor brooding about it. There's both milky and floral notes to the nose, stony as well, the red cherry, raspberry, blueberry fruit comes off as an afterthought, no overt flaws, however, has an overall flat affect. Medium-bodied, hard mouth feel while not tannic nor acidic per se. Higher level here of florality, soft waft of orange zest. Has shades of chocolate and vanilla but nowhere near oaky. The cranberry, strawberry, cherry fruit tastes more like hard candy than freely running juice. Loses weight and thus length at the end. More serviceable than remarkable. 87

Briceland Vineyards  
Humboldt County, Ishi Pishi Ranch, Noir d'Orleans  
Blend

2012, \$30.00, 13.1%

Very clear liquid, the purple core achieves soft opacity, features broad crimson to red rust rims. There's an odd rubber/plastic note to the nose, muddy earth, a misting of both cedar and flowers, the cherry to mixed berry fruit has brightness but never releases into fully expressive youthful energy. Light-bodied, as a result it tastes more woody here, lots of spice, cedar and hard butterscotch candy, no creamy, super-sweet oakiness though. Sour orange is a presence through the attack. Leather, merde, earth, close to animal fur at times but not particularly offputting. Sweet, hard candy character to the cherry, strawberry, blueberry fruit, good+ length. The acidity gives it a tingly, slightly hyperactive feeling on the tongue, pointedly through the finish. This helps fill in for the general lack of mouth weight. Unspecified percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec. 87

Sandler Wine Co.  
Monterey County, Santa Lucia Highlands  
Pinot Noir

2013, \$30.00, 14.2%

More or less red ruby throughout, mild filminess, sliver of an orange tint at the rims. Caramel, butterscotch driven nose, sweet smokiness, tangerine zest, there's a semi-roasted quality to the cherry, blackberry scents, at times heavy and clumsy, the floral perfume is stunted, has yet to harness and harmonize its power. Medium to full-bodied, sluggish and slogs across the palate. The raspberry, blueberry, blackberry fruit is round in contour yet not so wet and juicy. The cola and cocoa are sharper and stronger here than the caramel, toastiness overcomes most else. For its relatively low alcohol level it runs on the hot side. Hard to get to and enjoy the natural expressivity of the base material. (Composite Cork) 86

## CALIFORNIA WHITE

Bedrock Wine Co.  
Bennett Valley, Judge Family Vineyard  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2014, \$25.00, 14.2%

Pale to close to colorless, slight greenish tint, almost too clear to shine, for its lack of hue it sits attractively in the glass. Very pretty nose of lilacs, lime essence, cantaloupe melon, apricot, pear fruit, quite pure but there's something like saline or mineral dust. Medium to full-bodied, the acidity is flat and tingly more than sharp. Deeper citrus palette of lime, lemon, tangerine, on the sweet side. The peach, apricot, pear, pineapple fruit us juicy and sweetened further by whipped cream notes as the wine warms. Here the minerality also elevates but has to battle that creaminess. Extremely user friendly and gregarious. Unless you want extreme stoniness hard not to be pleased with it. 90

Sandlands  
Amador County  
Chenin Blanc  
2013, \$24.00, 12.6%

Light glow to the greenish white straw color, flat surface, not all that shiny, fills out the rims decently. Nutty nose, vanilla bean, orange rind, hint of cinnamon, basic array of apricot, peach, pear scents, overall fairly quiet and demure, vague mintiness as it opens, affectless. In the mouth it is medium-bodied with very good grip, the acidity is adequate but not in any way piercing, here the sourness in the orange, tangerine citrus is prominent. Bitter nuttiness, there's okay flavor but less juiciness found in the apricot, nectarine, peach fruit, stanching by hay, stone and stream water notes, however, distinct terroir based elements do not shine forth. All of this shortens it at the end even as its general sturdiness has it catch its breath and get back to coming at you. Not sure aging would create a much different experience. 88

Dirty and Rowdy Family Wines  
Napa Valley, Yountville  
Sémillon  
2013, \$36.99, 11.6%

Full on cloudiness, almost catches and holds light like amber, remains mostly worn yellow gold with an aura of orange, looks almost glazed. The nose offers substantial tangerine and blood orange scents, tea leaf and dried rose petals, more like clay than earth or dirt, the apricot to peach scents are mute, suggestion of clove, allowing it to warm to room temperature does not create deeper expressivity. Full-bodied, has a sneaky sort of acidity due to its blunt feel, not a zippy mouth feel. More peach, nectarine, apricot and even pineapple fruit here, matches up decently against that

stronger citrus component. Slight minerality adds contour, raw nuts, potpourri, just has this inert feel which inhibits flavor flow. Dusty texture through the finish. Leaves you thinking it was intended to show best a few years down the road but still needs to do more to entice you into making the investment. 87

## CALIFORNIA ROSE

Cowan Cellars  
Regional Blend, North Coast, Jack's Rose  
Pinot Noir  
2013, \$15.00, 13.9%

Strong day-glo aspect to it, at times it is mainly watermelon pink but there is also a strong orange cast to it as well, normal clarity, the glow gives it added depth into the glass. There is juiciness to the nose but at the same time a serious tone to the fruitiness as if it wants to make sure you get it isn't all about the fruit, that being thick red cherry, raspberry and lesser rhubarb scents, a sauna stone smokiness weaves in and out, matchstick notes, some lemon pulp, of few words. Full-bodied, sits squarely on the tongue as if in there for the long haul. Brings more stone and streamwater to the table, yet not necessarily freshening. The acidity seems weighted down by the fleshiness of the whole, especially the cherry, raspberry, apricot fruit. There is a savoriness to it but cannot attribute it to herbs nor any grassy element. A glimmer of cocoa at the end. The finish is full and flavorful, if not a moment of punctuation or complexity. Has the stuffing for salmon steaks or fatty summer grilling. 87

## FRANCE RED

Maillet, Domaine Jacques  
Savoie, Autrement  
Blend  
2013, \$32.99, 12.0%

There's violet in the core but you are more struck by the cranberry red to pinkish magenta hues, very full and even saturated given the high degree of transparency, sleek surface shine. Ripe nose of blackberry, blueberry, boysenberry fruit, some apricot to apple too, orange blossom, finely interwoven white pepper, dusty back road dirt and stones, dried lawn grass, there's an alluring focus and purity to it. Medium-bodied with a sappy grip, has nice supporting acidity, shines a spotlight on the white grapefruit and white pepper elements. Bouncy, energetic feel to the blueberry, raspberry, cherry fruit, good mix of black and red fruits. Something akin to volcanic ash, chalky residue at the finish. Tar and grill smoke too. The herbaceousness adds welcome zip to the end. Pure

fun. 45% Gamay Noir, 30% Pinot Noir, 25%  
Mondeuse. 92

Barou, Domaine Emmanuel  
Rhône, Indication Géographique Protégée des  
Collines Rhodaniennes, Cuvée des Vernes  
Syrah

2013, \$12.99, 13.0%

The liquid has very good clarity even granting the darkness of the purple core, the rims seem to want to be magenta but settle for a more washed rust red, falls quite short of saturation. The nose manages to be pretty and sauvage at once, floral and peppery, strong herbaceous presence, muddy earth, the cherry to blackberry fruit scents are a demure accompaniment. Medium-bodied, closer to light than full, the acidity jabs more than slashes but definitely runs the show. Adds in leather and rawhide here to go with the black pepper, the earthiness takes on a stonier complexion as well. Curiously the fruit is more “red,” as in strawberry, raspberry, red cherry. Delicate floral dew on top freshens things further. Percolates on the palate, hard to find better peers for the price. 90

Hureau, Château du  
Loire, Saumur-Champigny, Tuffe  
Cabernet Franc

2011, \$15.99, 13.0%

The core maintains a purple base but swiftly yields to burnt crimson to brick red rims, has more clarity than saturation. Crisp, zippy bell pepper infuses the nose, minerals, damp earth and fallen leaves, rich plummy dark fruit scents, then spicy and peppery, has an aggressive level of energy. Medium-bodied, finely grained tannin with decent acidity to boot, layered in bell pepper, grass and earth. The pungent greenness still able to make some space for cherry, blackberry fruit, this latter has good length while not being especially juicy. The finish displays sour orange, grapefruit tones. There’s a sandy sort of texture at the end too. Walks a tightrope of sorts, risking excess greenness, but does keep its balance. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

Ferrandière, Domaine de La  
Languedoc/Roussillon, Pays d’Oc Indication  
Géographique Protégée  
Malbec

2013, \$7.99, 13.5%

Well-saturated purple core surrounded by glowing magenta to scarlet red rims. The nose is blunt and close to immobile yet it does not lack for plum, currant fruit, furnishes undercurrents of orange peel, toasted coca, tree bark and leaves, has a gentle floral lift at the end, pure for all of its density. Medium to full-bodied, enhanced sweetness here in the cherry, plum, red

currant fruit. The tannin shortens this at the end where some mild greenness pervades. The flowers and citrus are heightened curiously by an effervescent feel. Squared shoulders, few words but honest. Nothing in it which would seek to dominate in a food pairing. (Screwcap: Stelvin+) 88

Raffault, Olga  
Loire, Chinon, Les Barnabés  
Cabernet Franc

2012, \$19.99, 12.5%

Basic purple to scarlet red in color, takes on a brighter magenta hue at the rims, clean and transparent throughout. The nose is sort of horsey, wet hide and merde, the bell pepper comes through clearly, stone shards, the cherry, red currant fruit is angular and more fresh than resonant, the whole thing lifts and drifts off at the end. Medium-bodied, here it is grippy with plusher, velvety contours. The tannin is mildly soft which allows the cherry, red currant, blackberry fruit to flow, however, the juiciness ends tactfully enough. Makes room for both bell pepper and black pepper, savory as it is tart, gets you salivating. Slightly smoky, more in a woody way. No real oak presence, if employed. No fireworks but grows on you over time, likely not a longer term ager. 88

David, Sébastien  
Loire, Saint-Nicolas de Bourgueil, l’Hurluberlu  
Cabernet Franc

2013, \$19.99, 11.0%

Red ruby to violet core, just the merest hint of pink furthest out, clear but don’t really want to call it transparent. Odd burst of bubblegum alongside the bell pepper in the nose, playful floral perfume, solid core of cherry, blackberry fruit of as much firmness as juiciness, some graphite or sand, on the primary side. Medium-bodied, sappy attack glues it to the palate and then the acidity lifts it off. More grassy and minerally than driven by bell pepper here. The stoniness grows with time. Tart cherry, blackberry fruit dances with strong steps. Orange spice and a moment of ginger enliven it further. Feels like it wants to be thought of in a specific way rather than just let it flow, come what may. (Synthetic Cork) 88

Rousse, La  
Languedoc/Roussillon, Vin de Pays Indication  
Géographique Protégée  
Malbec

2013, \$11.99, 13.0%

Bright and lustrous violet color, broad red magenta rims, not opaque enough for deep luminescence. Has a sour cherry, blackberry frilled nose, underlying violets and mandarin orange, wet leather with an animally edge, pretty enough yet with a rugged side. In

the mouth it's medium-bodied with a soft, plush feel, soaks into the pores. Mild acidic nibble at the end. The florality matches the robustness of the blueberry, blackberry fruit, topped off with a mild dusting of powdered chocolate. Tries to muster a peppery sparkle but generally comes up short. Depends on tartness to create an impression of freshness. Very easy drinking style. (Screwcap: Stelvin) 88

Oupia, Château d'  
Languedoc/Roussillon, Minervois  
Blend

2012, \$9.99, 13.5%

Although the core is a blackish purple, it is fully transparent, the rims are more of a rusty red to brick red color, looks older than it is. The nose quickly fills with leather, tar, asphalt scents, matted grass and earth, the ripe cherry and plum fruit does not seem sugary, also displays a mentholated touch. Medium to full-bodied, has some tannin but more velvety in feel. Violets, licorice, and orange to grapefruit citrus, the latter imbues it with a bitter pucker. Tar, cement, like a hot summertime roof. The cherry, blackberry, plum fruit is thick yet here too not especially sweet. Smoky finish, like a doused campfire. Has the fruit to appeal to many, the rusticity to appeal to those less interested in the former. 50% Carignan, 30% Syrah, 20% Grenache. 88

Troisgros et Stéphane Sérol, Michel  
Loire, Côte Roannaise, Les Blondins  
Gamay Noir

2013, \$17.99, 12.0%

Purple core segues to magenta and then more pinker tones furthest out, warm glow to it but not saturated. Stone powder, bright shock of green grass in the nose, zippy orange and grapefruit zest, bright raspberry, red cherry fruit, the herbaceousness might upset some but the fruit is ripe and the terroir comes through well. Medium-bodied, has nice round contours yet the acidity pierces well and underscores the white grapefruit to lemon citrus. Tannin tends to dull the mid-palate. Herbal and close to jalapeno pepper in flavor at times. Mix of stone shards and more metallic minerality along with tree bark and leaves. Aggressive and close to savage at times, almost unstable. 88

Zélige-Caravent  
Languedoc/Roussillon, Pic Saint-Loup, Ikebana  
Blend

2012, \$19.99, 13.0%

Semi-saturated ruby-purple hue, switches to a rust red color around the wide rims. The nose features strawberry, raspberry fruit but also a bodacious dose of merde, mud, burnt rubber, after all that a smattering of orange peel and garrigues. Medium-bodied, smooth

mouth feel, glides well but somehow finishes short. More like dirt than richer earth, whisper of stone. The red cherry, raspberry, strawberry, watermelon fruit of average depth, supplemented by orange to grapefruit citrus. "Primary" in terms of fruit dependence but not fruity per se. Disturbing lack of life and energy. 30% Cinsault, 30% Carignan, 20% Grenache, 20% Syrah. 86

## FRANCE WHITE

Chantemerle (A&F Boudin), Domaine de  
Burgundy, Chablis, l'Homme Mort  
Chardonnay

2013, \$32.99, 12.5%

Fairly pure golden hue of average shine and strength into the rims, distorts your vision below the surface, at a few moments it presents glints of green. Floral nose, this in some ways makes the minerality feel like a paste in your nostrils, the lime and orange citrus more juicy than brisk, as it warms you do get a certain flinty smokiness, the fruit is semi-muted, mainly pineapple, apricot, nectarine and apple, good muscularity. In the mouth it is full-bodied, dry and clinging, smooth enough but not all that fluid. Sappy grapefruit, lime, tangerine citrus, close to confectionary drink. More stone and saline than minerals, less smoky here. Takes on a more tropical dimension in the fruit, papaya, guava and pineapple as well as apricot. Pleasurable wine, teases you into thinking it may get more focused and linear, drink it up sooner rather than later. 89

Pépière, La  
Loire, Muscadet Sèvre-et-Maine, Clos des Morines,  
Château-Thébaud  
Melon de Bourgogne

2010

\$20.99, 12.0%

Limpid worn yellow gold color, loses all hue at the rims, neither especially shiny nor dull. The nose is quite complex and intriguing, a mélange of honey, pine, raw pie dough, witch hazel, licorice, tangerine peels, liquid minerals and close to poached apricot, pear fruit with a switch to green apple at unpredictable moments, seems more inclined to make declarative pronouncements than engage in dialogue. In the mouth it's full-bodied if not outright fat and heavy. Really piles on the lees, dough and honey and the licorice to anise becomes close to explosive. The minerality is there yet it lacks the vicious cut to make its case amidst all that's going on. The acidity seems "good plus" and just that. Apple and pear gains an upper hand here on the white pit fruit. Not sure if the finish is clipped or if it just wanted intentionally to end on a dime. 89

Lauverjat, Karine  
Loire, Sancerre  
Sauvignon Blanc  
2014, \$13.99, 12.5%

Has a watery greenish gold complexion, transparent. Pungently smoky nose, mineral dust opens into peach, apricot, green melon and pear fruit, displays more pink grapefruit and tangerine than white grapefruit, as it opens gets more tropical via notes of guava, pineapple plus a splash of jalapeno. In the mouth it is medium-bodied, the acidity is powdery rather than a keenly sharpened blade. Sour and puckering feel, leans more towards white grapefruit here. Papaya, pineapple, pear, green apple fruit, if it has sweetness it is reluctant to share it and thus lengthen the finish. Iron flecks, minerals predominate over stone-like elements. Ends up with a sour pink lemonade pucker. Gets extra points for its energy level. (Composite Cork) 89

Dagueneau et Filles, Serge  
Loire, Pouilly-sur-Loire, La Centenaire  
Chasselas  
2013, \$18.99, 12.0%

Despite its flatness and lack of luster, there is depth to the golden hay color, transparent and hueless rims. The mint starts off fresh and pretty via mint, lemon water, apricot to peach skin, sparkles with some mineral dust, then slowly segues to pie dough and baking spices, starts to take on a dusty feel in the nostrils, at times almost makes you want to sneeze. Medium-bodied, here the dry and tacky extract is evident from the attack, clings to the palate and makes it hard to believe it is a liquid. That said, there is a swirl of vanilla and cocoa which leads into riper peach, apricot, pear and apple fruit flavors. The citrus remains a sour lemon, creates some pucker at the end. Sorta floral but more in a musky than breezy fashion. It achieves that "old vine" heaviness which in this instance pretty much mandates food to keep it lively. 88

Labet, Domaine  
Jura, Côtes du Jura, Les Varrons, Jura Sud  
Revermont Les Parcelles Rares  
Chardonnay  
2012, \$44.99, 12.6%

Softly glowing yellow gold color, peters out towards the rims, average surface luster. Apple, pear skin prominent in the nose, warms into juicier peach, touch of nail polish, some lemon peel, more freshly baked bread than raw dough, broadens very well but not especially deep, nip of jalapeno too. Medium-bodied, firm and close to unyielding if in a good way. Yeast, dough is rawer here, the bite comes from the lemon/lime citrus. Wet stone crests in the mid-palate. Pinch of clove, cumin spice and coconut skin.

Penetrating pear, green apple, peach fruit. Tends to run away from you at the end, not empty but not full either. Probably needs a couple years of softening to show best. 88

## FRANCE ROSE

Poli, Domaine  
Corsica, Ile de Beauté  
Rosé  
Niellucciu  
2014, \$9.99, 12.0%

About the palest coral pink color you can imagine, however, manages to glow and thus gauzily fill the glass all the way to the outer rims. The nose shrugs off a light saline to mineral touch to get in the groove with watermelon, strawberry, apricot fruit scents, has a vanillin element which fattens it up, rose petals and lemon pulp, its heavier weight makes up for simplicity in aromas. Medium-bodied, here the acidity keeps it firm and somewhat slimmed down. Cocoa and a little vanilla balanced against an herbaceous, snap pea bite. Lemony in a diffuse way. Offers greater stone and mineral water to crowd out a good bit of the strawberry, cherry fruit, or at least lends a sour sheen. Its blunt power is impressive for its category and price. 88

## ITALY RED

Occhipinti, Azienda Agricola Arianna  
Sicilia, Il Frappato  
Frappato  
2012, \$34.99, 12.5%

As much dark crimson in the core as purple, consistent switch into fresh brick red rims, transparent and trim in spite of the overall saturation. The nose is a study in contrast, strawberry, red cherry and watermelon fruit pair with lemon sorbet on one side, on the other ashen earth, stone, merde and peanut shells bring the funk, keeps shifting on you and no two sniffs smell the same. Full-bodied, round and pushes outwards nicely, however, has biting acidity so you can't ever say it has a soft texture. Full on blend of cranberry, strawberry, cherry, pomegranate, boysenberry flavors, lively and muscular, sweetest during the initial mouth entry. Mashup of lemon, orange and touch of white grapefruit citrus. Stony, ashen, at times like French kissing coral. Drains the juiciness away at the end rather than soak it up. The consistency of the fruit saves it and makes it complete. 90

Antano, Milziade  
Umbria, Montefalco, Rosso  
Blend

2012, \$15.99, 13.5%

Not much purple in the core, comprised mainly of brick red with a touch of ruby further out, pleasing surface shine, good sleekness. The nose focuses on rawhide, barnyard floor and tar components, the fruit drying out plums and cherries but not “dried fruit” though, after a while you get caramel, toffee notes, this cloaks some pine and grapefruit accents. Medium-bodied, heavy on the palate though, flat and drying tannin. Twigs, bark, dried brown earth. Here there’s more white grapefruit but no real zing. The cherry, mixed dark berry fruit mostly upfront then gets overrun by that tannin. Very typical, maybe even softer than “old school” versions, not for casual sipping. Plus probably will be better served by a couple more years of bottle time to soften further, certainly has the fruit to get to that point. 70% Sangiovese, 15% Sagrantino, 15% Merlot. 88

Ceci, Cantine  
Emilia-Romagna, Otello Nero di Lambrusco Vino  
Frizzante

Lambrusco

NV, \$16.99, 11.0%

Very dark and opaque purple color, deep magenta rims, foams nicely upon the pour but quickly dissipates, effulgent glow. Bitter blackberry to sour cherry nose, almost possessed of a pit fruit nature, latent creamy texture, a muted stony quality breaks the surface now and then. Medium-bodied, not much pétillance but certainly dry. Fruit skin aspect to the cherry, dark berry to plum flavors. With time there’s a light florality as well as orange peel to adorn the fruit. Pulverized stone dust. Its overall dryness lessens the bitterness of the finish. Blunt ending, turns close to chewy. A perfectly acceptable version of dry Lambrusco. 88

## ITALY ROSE

Cantalupo, Antichi Vigneti di  
Piedmont, Colline Novaresi, Il Mimo Rosé  
Nebbiolo

2014, \$10.99, 12.0%

Vivid deep watermelon pink color, fills in the rims quite well, bright surface as well. The nose is muscular to the point of restraining the strawberry, red cherry fruit, solid foundation of stone, dusty sort of nostril presence even with a dose of lemon juice. Full-bodied, here too it’s too heavy to be fresh. Lots of initial sweetness in the strawberry, raspberry, cherry fruit before ending in a pronounced sour pucker. Lemony, it is less stony here but not absent. Moments of something like cocoa powder. Not sure how many consumers will wait but

may benefit from 1-2 years of aging to lose its foursquare nature. (Synthetic Cork: Micro Cell) 87

## SPAIN RED

Corellana, Vinicola  
Navarra, Viña Zorzal  
Graciano

2012, \$10.99, 13.5%

Very, very dark purple but not black core, fully opaque with just as much saturation, the rims an ominous red magenta hue. Ripe plum, mulberry fruit packed nose, clove to cinnamon spice, musky potpourri, eventually it turns to mesquite smoke and leather, overall more muscularly pungent than delicately nuanced, longlasting. Full-bodied, however, sheds a good deal of weight towards the end. More sour character here to the plum, cherry, dark berry fruit. Spicy, leads with cloves and switches to black pepper. The high level of activity tends to diminish the presence of the florality. Mild sour orange twist at the finish. Smokier too. Has personality with more than enough fruit to please a broader customer base. 89

Frontón de Oro

Canary Islands, Gran Canaria San Mateo, Tinto  
Listán Negro

2012, \$17.99, 13.0%

Crystal clear liquid, high level of transparency, blood red to ruby in color, consistent core to rims. Tar, ash and stone dominate the nose, sweet maraschino cherry to berry liqueur notes, medicinal element as well, witch hazel, bristles in the nostrils. Light-bodied, has good tannin for its weight and average plus acidity. Here there’s a blast of white grapefruit and savory herbs alongside the asphalt, tar, and volcanic ash type accents. The fruit displays higher sourness, mainly raspberry, cherry and strawberry. Solid punch of white pepper to sea salt. In spite of its dryness it has a syrupy, clingy texture. Intrigues for its off-center nature. 88

## SPAIN ROSE

Mas Foraster (Josep Foraster)  
Conca de Barberà, Rosat  
Trepal

2014, \$12.99, 12.0%

Not sure if the liquid is pale or not because of the day-glo nature of the pink to ruby coloration, pronounced brightness and reflectivity. The nose takes on weight if allowed to warm, ripe cherries and raspberries, floral dew and some vanillin creaminess lurking in the background, on the primary side with minimal expression of soil and such. In the mouth it’s full-bodied, clear focus here too on the watermelon,

cherry, strawberry fruit yet without ever approaching cloying sweetness. Comes up with a galvanizing herbaceous kick, this aided by nuances of lemon peel, towards the end elevates into a laconic smoky sort of minerality. Holds its weight to the very end but not muscle bound. Not sure why someone would not be appreciative of a second glass. 89

## NEW ZEALAND WHITE

Mud House

Marlborough

Sauvignon Blanc

2014, \$10.99, 13.0%

Pale to at times colorless, white straw hue, transparent to the point of losing surface shine, you might think someone poured water in your glass. While the nose has an herbaceous quality to it, the pink grapefruit to tangerine citrus remains the star of the show, good dose of chili pepper, lighter minerally crinkle, could be easy to miss the more subtle apricot, kiwi, papaya fruit scents, pungent but not possessed of overt aggression. Medium-bodied, moderate acidity, tends more to soak in than skip across the palate. Here the grassiness and bell pepper notes leap forward, supported by that chili pepper. Has a soft drink feel to the pink grapefruit, lime, lemon citrus, porch sipping. More cut to the papaya, star fruit, pineapple, apricot fruit but not more length per se. More wet stone than mineral. Good but needs more thrust at the finish line. (Screwcap) 88

## CHILE RED

Luyt, Agrícola Louis-Antoine

Maule Valley, La Grande Vie Dure

Carménère

2013, \$21.99, 14.0%

Opaque and saturated purple core, barely makes room for the dusky brick red rims, very richly hued. High level of white pepper in the nose then garrigues like florality, white grapefruit and sour blueberry, currant fruit scents, there's some chili pepper in there for sure as well. Full-bodied, layered and dense. Acidic and tart, highly citric as well as peppery, closely mimics the nose. Serious ripeness in the cherry, blackberry, elderberry fruit department, splashes of green apple too. Smoky, leathery, mineral smoke and burnt cocoa. Salinity and chili pepper juice round out the finish. The depth of the fruit keeps it on an even keel. Bristles with energy throughout. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 90

Luyt, Agrícola Louis-Antoine

Itata Valley, Pipeño Portezuelo

Pais

2014, \$18.99, 12.0%

Hazy, cloudy purple core, the filminess extends to the ruby rims, very full and warm glow. Sour wild berry, cherry nose, lots of matted herbal, grassy matter but not sharply "green," some tar and asphalt, muddy barn floor, the florality seems pressed and dried. Medium-bodied, prickly texture and on the dry side, pleasing pucker and big sourness. The strawberry, cherry, raspberry, green apple fruit on the short side, blunt. Light tones of orange or grapefruit. Something vaguely wooly or foxy, more tar as well. On the whole its fullness is square and lacking in movement. The tannin is a dry web over it all, more muting than structuring, lifting up. Unusual wine, holds your attention. Consistent over extended air time. (1L bottle) 88