

The Hanes Wine Review, October 2015 Edition

After congratulating himself for producing back-to-back monthly editions, here it is like three months later. Well, that happens when you get engaged, move into a house needing some TLC, and have to deal with getting five cats to play nice together. So, with about 48 hours left in the month, no time to muck about if this is to indeed be the October edition.

This month's big winners... The time around the "newish" winery Sandlands delivers with both their 2013 Carignane and 2013 Trousseau bottlings, both full of personality while chuggable in their own right. At \$28 + shipping winery direct it's about what you'd expect to pay these days for distinctive Californian wine. First time with a Clos Cibonne red wine (rather than the rosé) and their 2014 "Cuvée Spéciale" was quite nice, expressing everything Hanes is sure you love about the Tibouren grape. Respectable value at around \$30. Not really happy about the \$45 price tag but the 2013 vintage reasserts that Lagier Meredith's Mount Veeder Zinfandel bottled as "Tribidrag" is excellent juice and worth seeking out. In further explorations of the Zinfandel grape, the 2012 Napa Valley offering from The Terraces is relatively cheap at \$26 and a complex and satisfying drop. Another one of those wineries which fly under the radar and are worth getting to know. A throwback wine of sorts, had the 2012 Crozes Hermitage "Papillon" from Gilles Robin, what once was killer \$12 Syrah is now very good \$25 Syrah. Still nice wine, just hard to get past the "grrr" from the price hikes over the years. Had a couple of Californian white wines from Cowan Cellars and the slight nod goes to the 2014 Fiano from the Russian River Valley. High level of drinkability without being simple, good value at around \$22. Le Clos du Tue-Bœuf remains a fairly unsexy winery and that is the way Hanes likes it. Their 2013 white wine blend from Cheverny called "Frileuse" had all the old vine sappiness as well as supporting acidity to make it one heck of a wine and a pleasing purchase for \$28.

The best \$20 and under picks.... Hanes was worried he did not even *try* a sub \$20 bottle of wine in months. Well, we do have the 2013 Château de Lascaux "Carra" from Pic Saint-Loup which for \$19 is great stuff, floral and plump, a good call for friends who are feeling all adventurous and may want to step out of their wine comfort zone. Been some time since sampling Breton's Cabernet Franc from the Loire called "Trinch!" and the 2014 version showed well enough, just needs more time to settle into itself. \$19 or so is totally fair for it. Two from Austria delivered value this time around. The 2014 Nigl Grüner Veltliner "Freiheit" for \$18 plus the 2014 Gobelsburg "Cistercien Rosé" are ready to go with food or just chilling in the crib waiting for your parole officer to return your voicemail.

And the disappointments... Like everyone else, been on a Jura kick but the 2013 Overnoy-Crinquand from the Trousseau grape was just "ehh" and did not come together into a harmonized experience. There goes \$35. Has been some time since sampling a Siduri wine. So in need of a quick bottle purchase, grabbed their 2013 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. Competent but not especially inspiring, the kind of generic Pinot you kinda expect from domestic producers in the \$20's. A safe bet. Bedrock's 2013 Zinfandel from the Limerick Lane Vineyard in the Russian River Valley was not quite the broad and resonant experience one expects from this top notch vineyard. For \$38 have to question whether or not it is worth going to that well again. Going in with high expectations, the 2014 Château Pradeaux rosé from Bandol was maybe set up to fail but this just did not impress. \$30 is not cheap but what you got here was a weaker wine than desired. The 2011 Goosecross Zinfandel from Knights Valley was a kind gift to Hanes but it may be the case that the characteristics of the 2011 vintage have done the wine a disservice. Not horrible but nowhere near the \$42 asking price. Even more retro drinking, tried the Mas de Gourgonnier red blend from Le Baux de Provence. Used to pound a fair amount of this back in the early 00's. The 2013 version was credible but not a spectacular steal at \$14. It has its place though. Hanes is not even sure one can be "disappointed" in a wine from Frank Cornelissen. These wines just are what they are, you are either down with them or not. That noted, the 2013 Sicilian blend called "Contadino" was, umm, not Hanes's cup of tea. But we will periodically continue to try Cornelissen wines so the cool kids will approve.

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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)

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 October!

CALIFORNIA RED

Turley

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Dusi Vineyard
Zinfandel

2013, \$42.00, 15.7%

Clear garnet to light purple in hue, plenty of shine and shimmer, very pretty with bright scarlet rims. The nose offers up pine and eucalyptus but is mostly a berry fest, blueberry, blackberry, raspberry of syrupy concentration, caramel and chocolate notes support ably, candied oranges, has a pleasantly airy lift, strong movement in the nostrils. Full-bodied, sappy and sticky in texture, can tingle the tongue but more apt to just give it a warm hug. The orange to lemon citrus more upfront here, stiffens the eucalyptus and garden herb notes. Hard candy levels sweetness to the raspberry, strawberry, cherry fruit, lasts fully through a prolonged finish. The caramel, toffee, cocoa oak accents feel in place and play well with the fruit. Quite satisfying from start to finish, quintessential Zinfandel. 91

Sandlands

Mendocino County

Carignane

2013, \$28.00, 13.8%

Garnet to purple in general color, unblemished and transparent, full garnet rims, shimmers nicely in the glass. There's a muscular pungency to the nose, tart cranberry, elderberry, blackberry fruit scents, sour orange peel then sauna smoke, chili pepper juice, leather and tar, the flower nuances almost get crushed but do help give it lift. Full-bodied with no heaviness

yet possesses a velvety grip so that you feel every twist and turn it takes in the mouth. Biting blood orange, grapefruit citrus, black tea leaf, tar, has a very savory character which plays up dried herbs and soy. No weakness in the blackberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit, stays high-toned given its thickness. The acidity is not that active, tannin shows more punch, structures mostly via density. Long finish, has energy to spare. 91

Sandlands

Sonoma County, Sonoma Coast

Trousseau

2013, \$28.00, 12.8%

The core shows a vague violet cast but it's more watermelon red than anything, super clear and sleek, the rims veer towards orange rather than pink, fresh presence in the glass. The nose has fine, powdered sugar consistency as well as sugariness, close to cotton candy, strawberry, red cherry, apple fruit scents with firmness coming from grapefruit pith and dried brown dirt notes, flirts with an herbaceous character but relents, has good lift without turning coquettish, stays rooted as well. Medium-bodied, consistent weight start to finish, the acidity accords itself well in creating a smooth palate surface and sufficient dryness to balance out the sweetness of the raspberry, strawberry, watermelon, green apple fruit flavors. Sour zing added via the blood orange, grapefruit citrus. More floral here and with a hint of caramel. That earthy, stony side takes a step back into the shadows. Subtle persistency at the end extends it for some time. Pretty delicious now with nearer term upside for more transparency to the terroir elements. 90

Lagier Meredith
Napa Valley, Mount Veeder, Tribidrag
Zinfandel
2013, \$45.00, 15.3%

More black than violet in the core, brooding scarlet to dried blood red rims, good clarity, the coloration gives it a certain ominous visual feel. Piercing, active nose spotlighting tart white grapefruit, freshly mown grass, peppercorns, equally angular boysenberry, blackberry, cherry fruit, the eucalyptus like notes do not soften per se but lift the fruit some, under the sturm und drang lies a few caramel and butterscotch notes. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, sleek and focused with no time for small talk. Strong acidity boosts the presence of that grapefruit as well as plays up more tart cranberry, red cherry to go with the boysenberry, blueberry flavors. Stone shards, brown earth, pine needles and campfire embers provide appealing contrast to the fruit, the oak is present but its sweetness no match for the sourness of the rest. The final glass the same as the first, throws its shoulder into you intending to stop you in your tracks. 90

Terraces, The
Napa Valley
Zinfandel
2012, \$25.99, 14.8%

Dusky purple core, the rims caught between ruby red and brick red, more rustic in appearance than youthfully saturated. The nose is outright jammy in an old school style, gushes plum, blackberry, black cherry to almost prune and date, not shy about laying on the caramel popcorn, butter and mint aspects, has a meaty to kind of beef jerky streak, fills the nostrils completely, mildly marred by alcoholic fumes. Full-bodied, does a good job here as well of palate coverage via richness of fruit, a touch fresher here with blueberry, blackberry, cherry and then a modicum of plum. Orange peel, eucalyptus, pine and witch hazel come next, curiously nowhere near as oaky on the palate as in the nose, a few buttery and toasty notes, not overdone. Tannin is average, acidity not a factor. Pleasing length without palate fatigue. The way great Zinfandels were made a la 1996. 90

Harrington Wines
Santa Clara Valley, Fratelli Vineyard
Teroldego
2013, \$25.00, 14.1%

Inky black core, waits to display purple out near the rims alongside a thin scarlet red aura, looks like it means business, no messing around. Smells like someone stuck a plum in your nostrils, clove and cinnamon spice, orange zest, dark chocolate, murmur of potpourri, clean and primary, even if thickly musky. In the mouth it's full-bodied, somewhat low in the

tannin and acidity department. Tangy grapefruit to orange citrus helps, as does the sheer density of the plum, blackberry, currant fruit, which is juicy but not especially long. More generally floral here, does not evince much meaningful oak treatment. More muted spiciness, but more dulled leather and cowhide notes. Its "chewiness" grows on you and there's plenty of fruit on the whole. To show best needs something big like a smoked brisket or rack of ribs. 89

Sandler Wine Co.
Monterey County, Chalone, Boer Vineyard
Pinot Noir
2013, \$36.00, 14.4%

It's more garnet red than purple throughout, consistently hued and dark enough to suggest a slight translucency even as it is super clean overall. The nose comes across as somewhat mute, decent red cherry, red berry fruit, a touch of smokiness but not especially oaky, flowers and orange reduction, hint of cola, the parts just don't cohere into a greater choral presentation. Full-bodied and sappy, clings through the attack and then releases near the finish. Very fruity in spite of a tannic underpinning, which at times feels green. So jammy raspberry, red cherry, blackberry fruit shines forth with ease. More cola here, along with sweet garden herbs and the same orange to lemon reduction aforementioned. Any oak does a good job of staying in the shadows. The short finish does distract. Overall, delivers on expectations. (Composite Cork) 88

Bedrock Wine Co.
Russian River Valley, Limerick Lane Vineyard
Zinfandel
2013, \$38.00, 14.0%

Light violet to dark garnet core, wide pure ruby red rims, transparent and marked by its cleanliness and shine more than its saturated depth. There's a good deal of menthol and herbs in the nose, orange spritz too, but it is most marked by red fruit cranberry, cherry and then persimmon, blueberry, a mild cocoa dusting operates in the background, a bit too taut for a relaxed and extended denouement. Medium-bodied, has some sappy grip on the palate but not seeming overly tannic. More of a syrupy, candied nature to the cherry, raspberry, blueberry, apricot, apple fruit, flits over the surface rather than sink in. The eucalyptus to menthol aspect persists, citrus too, minimal presence of oak. Streamlined, muted complexity, more sour than satisfying. 88

Briceland Vineyards
Humboldt County, Ishi Pishi Ranch
Zinfandel
2013, \$25.00, 13.4%

Purely transparent violet to garnet red in color, fully hued rims, no saturation anywhere, depends more on shine for effect. Nice presence in the stony, minerally earth, no dampness, more backwoods dirt path, wiry snap to the raspberry, cranberry, red cherry scents, aided by keen orange and lemon citrus, minor honey or mesquite grill smoke sweetness, not showing much oak treatment. Light-bodied, svelte and focused yet in no way to the detriment of its sweetness and fruit flavors. Here it leads with caramel, butterscotch to rev up the cranberry, rhubarb, cherry, raspberry fruit, almost entirely "red" in nature, no darker fruits. The citrus here leans more towards white grapefruit and lemon. More floral than earthy. Guileless and easy to get. 88

Briceland Vineyards
Monterey County, Dark Horse Vineyard
Syrah
2012, \$27.00, 14.3%

Plainspoken violet core, dark ruby rims, looks unforced and not intentionally saturated. The nose shows chocolate and caramel, lots of sweet baking spices, more limited florality, nothing funky evident but there is a horsehide element, with moderate heft in the nostrils, the level of blackberry, boysenberry fruit is suitable. Medium-bodied, a touch hollow in the middle, dusty and semi-clumpy tannin present throughout. Some clove, cumin sort of spices, as in "spicy," but not clearly peppery. The caramel, butterscotch, chocolate notes lend more sweetness than smoothness. The currant, blackberry fruit has a sour pucker to it, shortens it. Here the violets are more assertive. Attractive for its relative lack of makeup and guile, even allowing for the presence of sweetening oak flavors. 88

Turley
Napa Valley, Howell Mountain, Dragon Vineyard
Zinfandel
2013, \$45.00, 15.3%

Basic purple core, saturated ruby rims, sits confidently in the glass without drawing attention to itself. Violets, lilacs and orange pulp fill the nose, savory herbs, an undercurrent of chocolate and lighter caramel, sour blueberry, boysenberry fruit scents, more linear than explosive, that savoriness wins out in the end. Medium-bodied but it does have above average density which creates an impression of immobility. No lack of ripeness but no real sugariness in the blackberry, blueberry, raspberry fruit. Grapey at times, white grapes. Even with caramel, toffee, dollop of

heavy cream yet does not come across as oaky. More savory garden herbs to be had than baking spices. Compact, few words, makes you wish it had more to say. 88

Goosecross
Knights Valley
Zinfandel
2011, \$42.00, 14.3%

Dark ruby to purple in color, little saturation, at times close to dried blood hues, looks slightly advancing. Somewhat delicate nose of just ripened raspberry, blackberry, cherry fruit, has a distinct herbaceous side, earthy with even a suggestion of bell pepper, pretties up with licorice and eucalyptus notes. Light to medium-bodied, softly sour, offers cranberry and red cherry as much as blackberry or blueberry, sweet but not juicy, too linear to soak in much as it progresses. Mixes in white grapefruit but the most noticeable sidemen remain grass and earth. A few vanillin or toasty moments but oak seems to not have been used to fill in flaws or gaps. Really grinds to a halt short of the finish line so it's another one to take multiple small sips of rather than hearty gulps. 86

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Cowan Cellars
Russian River Valley
Fiano
2014, \$22.00, 13.9%

Fairly rich golden hue, fills out all the way to the rims, good shine, good amount of tartrate at the bottom of the bottle. Fruity nose of green and yellow apple, pear, peach and melon fruit, something akin to nutmeg or cinnamon, doughy but not yeasty as in a leesy way, light touch of stream water, overall just very primary and fresh, minimal complexity as of yet. In the mouth it is full-bodied and firm with a smoky sort of toastiness during the attack. Primary here as well with clear emphasis on the peach, pear, apricot and apple fruit. The acidity is decent but no powerhouse, momentum of weight pushes it to the end. Here the yeastiness is more pronounced as there is that toasty quality. Baking spices persist, orange peel, quinine. It is fun to drink if not downright chug and sometimes that is more than enough. 90

Cowan Cellars
Russian River Valley
Ribolla Gialla
2014, \$28.00, 12.5%

Transparent white, green straw appearance, not that shiny but not dull either, pools well for the minimal hue it has. Mild smokiness leads the way in the nose before vanilla, whipped cream accents broaden, floral

but too muscular to really lift, heavy apricot, green apple, green melon fruit scents, some orange sherbet, round and agreeable with above average length. Medium-bodied, while it gives it remains firm, kind of like the stress ball you squeeze. Lemon to orange citrus, cinnamon stick, the vanillin note persists but not the overt creaminess of the nose, the acidity likely helps provide forward momentum. You get more of a chalky residue than smokiness, a light dusty coating for the tongue. The apricot, pear, melon fruit throws one big punch then slowly fades away. You get more texture as it warms, more able to handle heavier food. 89

Lieu Dit

Santa Ynez Valley

Sauvignon Blanc

2013, \$29.99, 12.8%

Pale, somewhat flat yellow straw color, close to transparent rims, given its lack of hue does have a solid, block-like appearance in the glass. Pungent nose of lime to lemon citrus, floral with a yeasty underpinning, likewise strong cornerstone of crushed seashells and chalk, close at times to a chili pepper edge, the tropical nature of the fruit seems to dry it out, papaya, pineapple to green apple, peach, nectarine, leaves your nose as if it might sneeze. In the mouth it is light to medium-bodied, the acidity keeps it sticking to the palate, comes across spicy and maybe even hot, which is hard to do at its lower alcohol level. Herbaceous, minerally, chalky, all in a good way. There is a clipped nature to the green apple, pear, pineapple, nectarine fruit, may be attributable to its general savoriness. While it shows impressive length this may hamper some food pairings which would need it to chill out. 89

OREGON RED

Siduri

Willamette Valley

Pinot Noir

2013, \$23.99, 13.0%

More sunset red to scarlet than violet, on the dark side but perfectly clear, full rims, no excess saturation. Snappy cherry and raspberry fruit driven nose, cola and vanilla bean, milder notes of orange peel and pressed flowers, however, its density ends up making it smell foursquare and on the homogenous side. Full-bodied, a sappy grip gives it warmth on the palate, the kind of wine you sink into as much as it sinks into the mouth. Vivid blueberry, raspberry, cherry fruit, sweet with sufficient mixed white citrus to give it a twist at the finish. The acidity is there when you need it, never sloppy nor flaccid. Clove, cola, has a light medicinal edge as well. Some savory garden herbs, not leafy nor

green at all. It is well made and pleasing, tastes like you have had it numerous times before. (Screwcap) 87

FRANCE RED

Clos Cibonne

Provence, Côtes de Provence, Cuvée Spéciale

Tibouren

2014, \$29.99, 14.0%

Garnet to candy apple red in color with a violet tint, transparent and squeaky clean, shines brilliantly in the glass. There's a smoky, burnt caramel, crème brûlée quality to the nose, crushed strawberries and blueberries, potpourri and freshly tilled brown dirt, suggests a meadowy outdoorsy quality but no funk and actually remains fruit centered, good staying power given its medium heft. Medium-bodied with unusual grip for its weight, tannins weave into your tongue and won't release. When they do it's a gusher of jammy fruit, all strawberry, cherry, cranberry and persimmon, vivid orange to lemon citrus provides great support. Clean here too with pebbles and dried dirt more than anything like sous bois. The floral aspect too musky to lift. There's a muscularly relaxed quality to it, like a Lion yawning on a plain, chilling because no one is really gonna step. 90% Tibouren, 10% Syrah. 91

Lascaux, Château de

Languedoc/Roussillon, Pic Saint-Loup, Carra

Blend

2013, \$18.99, 14.0%

Dark and strongly glowing purple core, rich magenta rims, hard to imagine deeper saturation. The nose is fruity to the point of grapey, plum, blackberry to cassis, floral with touches of mint, it suggests a leathery dimension but does not deliver, there is orange peel and an intimation of dark chocolate. Full-bodied with good firmness, this without seeming too tannic. Lavender, orange spice, clove, stays clean here with earthiness and pebbles, nothing close to barnyardy. The sour pucker lifts the plum, black cherry, boysenberry fruit off the palate, not too heavy but its thickness is evident from start to finish. The plumpness is attractive not but leaves you suspecting that its best days will be when its cheekbones show through more clearly down the road. 60% Syrah, 40% Grenache. 90

Robin, Domaine Gilles

Rhône, Crozes Hermitage, Papillon

Syrah

2012, \$24.99, 13.0%

Deeply hued ruby-violet, dark enough that you might miss the excellent clarity, more red garnet towards the rims, looks fresh. Openly knit nose of mineral dust, brown earth, horsehide, iodine, violets, herbal matter,

more smoky than gamey, the cherry to currant fruit is there but reticent. Light-bodied, smooth with noticeable underlying tannin. Orange to white grapefruit citrus more evident here. Likewise in turn more sourness in the blackberry, red cherry fruit. Has olive pit, tree bark, fallen wood aspects yet stays clean and devoid of funk, barest trace of wet fur. Linear and fast paced, seems to fly from the attack through to the finish. So polished it is hard to enjoy any sinking in. 89

Zélige-Caravent

Languedoc/Roussillon, Vin de France, Manouches Blend

2011, \$23.99, 12.5%

Lustrously deep purple core, opaque with saturated red magenta rims that take on a pink outermost edge, no haze but not especially shiny. Upon opening the nose is almost all merde and sweaty horsehide, slowly moderates into violets, raspberry preserves, lemon rinds and a kind of hillside crumbly rocks and dirt, good fullness. Full-bodied, round but not soft as there bountiful acidity and tannin. As a result, it never gently settles in, feels like it scrapes against the palate. Has funkiness here as well, merde, tar, asphalt, barnyardy for sure. Under this is that same liqueur like sweet raspberry, strawberry fruit. Has a modest amount of wildflowers and savory herbs in support. More orange than lemon citrus, but both are tart. Stays broad through the finish even with substantial puckering. More handsome than pretty, deserves a long decanting. 70% Alicante Bouschet, 30% Cinsault. 89

Overnoy-Crinquand, Domaine

Jura, Arbois, Pupillin Ploussard

Poulsard

2013, \$31.99, 12.5%

Light ruby-red color, transparent to mildly washed out, you can envision the rims with time taking on an orange cast. The nose brings big time, serious sulfury funk, matchstick, if it stabilizes you get to red cherry and raspberry fruit scents, some fallen leaves and twigs, primary and undeveloped. Medium-bodied, that funk forestalls enjoyment past the attack. However, the ripeness of the cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit is quickly evident, maraschino cherry edge. Brings lemon zest, green leaves, brown dirt, thyme, credible acidity and also more tannin than the wine's weight might suggest. The stoniness and dirt build towards the finish. The savory, leafy finish activates the final moments. Requires patience and maybe even a decant, does win you over if you can work with it. 89

Milan, Domaine Henri

Provence, Vin de France, Sans Soufre Ajouté (Le Papillon Rouge)

Blend

2013, \$26.99, 12.5%

Filmy purple core, dull and opaque, the rims are a washed out scarlet to rusty water hue, not unpleasant to look at but likewise does not draw your gaze to it. Light reductive funk to the nose laid over strawberry and cherry jam, floral with sweet baking spices, mild meadow grasses and straw, comes off as primary and not really hinting at what future changes are ahead. Medium-bodied, does a prickly dance across the palate, anchored by tannin which has good grip for the wine's overall weight. Spicier here with garden herbs and a touch of black pepper plus forest floor wood and herbal matter to act as counterbalance to the candied cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit. Orange citrus, milk chocolate, macadamia nuts, and witch hazel lend dimension. Any funkiness more or less recedes to the background without disappearing. From the first sip you recognize that the wine is not made in the "normal" fashion. Unspecified percentages of Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre. 89

Breton, Catherine et Pierre

Loire, Bourgueil, Trinch!

Cabernet Franc

2014, \$18.99, 12.5%

The deep purple core glows with saturation and yields willingly to scarlet to fresh blood red rims, extremely vivid coloration throughout. Bountiful green pepper fills the nose, wet barn floor notes, leather, the floral lift has to wait until the end to show clearly, no lack of red currant cherry fruit but not the star of this show. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with what is for this day and age uncommonly powerful tannin, dry and firm mouth feel. The cherry, currant fruit is sour and has moments of green apple but it is fully ripened. The bell pepper knits back into the whole alongside ash, tar and asphalt notes. The florality comes and goes. The finish gets a citric kick, seems to be mainly white grapefruit. Good, honest wine that probably needs 2-3 years to soften and find its optimal balance. 89

Pavillon de Chavannes, Domaine du

Beaujolais, Côte de Brouilly, Cuvée des Ambassades Gamay Noir

2013, \$21.99, 12.5%

Pinkish magenta to violet in color, fully transparent and clear yet the saturation comes through fully, quite pretty. Huge floral nose with strawberry, rhubarb, cherry fruit, some stones or pebbles but it is remarkably pure and fresh, as if the fermentation just stopped an hour ago. Medium-bodied, very smooth and fluid even as the tannins sneak up on you and contribute to the erect posture through the finish. Really loaded with blueberry, strawberry, raspberry fruit, this accompanied by orange reduction, honey and white grapefruit. The cocoa and vanilla accents to

an overall creamier texture. At the end you get a hint of tobacco. Really juicy and friendly, almost spills out of the mouth. More zing at the finish, those tannins help. Likely better now than with aging. 89

Puffeney, Jacques
Jura, Arbois, Cuvée Les Bérangères
Trousseau
2013, \$40.00, 13.0%

There's a sort of translucency to it which saps the purple out and makes it look more like muddied red brick, the rims flat and lifeless, clean though and without sediment or such. Very fruity nose, to the point of heaviness, plum, cherry and blackberry to the point of almost candied, has as much funky herbaceous matter as clove or nutmeg spice, small pinch of powdered chocolate, not getting any citrus or sharper aspects. Full-bodied, there seems to be some tannin submerged under all that same plum, cherry fruit, sugary sweet and very plump. Here you do get more pronounced orange to lesser lemon citrus, the baking spices have more sharpness as well. Cleaner in terms of grass or earth. Loses grip through the finish but its sheer weight gets it to the finish line. 88

Overnoy-Crinquand, Domaine
Jura, Arbois, Pupillin
Trousseau
2013, \$34.99, 12.0%

Ruby red to garnet in color, might think it looks a bit older than it is right out of the gate, fills out the rims well, clear enough to give it a sleek appearance. There is a loamy, wet forest matter funk to the nose, wet matchstick, needs to blow off before you get at the semi-candied raspberry, strawberry fruit, has a wet stone aspect as well, right now just very difficult to get past the funk. Medium-bodied, velvety texture allows for firmness and pliancy, more tannic grip than expected. The stone and poor dirt persists, meadow grasses blend in and there's something like old pulped grapefruits as well. Sour pucker to the cherry, raspberry fruit, ripe yet clenches before the finish. All the material is there, however, has not as of yet cohered. 87

Gourgonnier, Mas de
Provence, Les Baux de Provence
Blend
2013, \$13.99, 13.0%

Ruby-violet color, too dark to be transparent but certainly clean, the rims take on more of a fresh red brick hue. The nose has a thick, dewy quality, the fruit runs from plum to raspberry, very floral with orange pulp and clove spice accents, some sandalwood incense and perhaps earthiness but outside of the fruit and flowers it gets fairly mute. Full-bodied, noticeably

heavy on the palate with more of a tannic anchor than any acidic zest. Honest about its girth, throws the cherry, plum, blackberry fruit around and layers the florality on as well. Close to full replication of the nose, maybe the citrus adds grapefruit to the orange. Does not really reward extended analysis, best treated as a credible cheapie which has the heft to match up with heavier food. Unspecified percentages of Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault, Carignan, Mourvèdre. 87

FRANCE WHITE

Clos du Tue-Bœuf, Le
Loire, Cheverny, Frileuse
Blend
2013, \$27.99, 12.5%

Vague luminescence deepens the otherwise pale straw gold hue, the color meanders into the rims, surface luster nothing remarkable. Agreeable nose of dried apricots and peaches, mint, tangerine zest, honey, relaxed and happy-go-lucky. Medium-bodied, spicy with cinnamon and nutmeg added to the mint, cellar aged apple, pear to apricot fruit. The acidity totally sneaks up on you at the end and brings with a metallic mineral kick as well as chili pepper juice. Tangerine and lime citrus fill the middle gap between sweet and sour. After repeated sips you feel a chalky residue build on the tongue. Perhaps gains some complexity and power as it warms, however, best cold where it is fresher and more penetrating. At times almost tastes like an old school Fun Dip and a lick-a-stick. Unspecified percentages of Sauvignon Blanc, Sauvignon Gris, Chardonnay. 90

Pépière, Domaine de la
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie
Melon de Bourgogne
2014, \$11.99, 12.0%

Somewhat flat yellow straw color, more warm than shiny which helps extend the lighter hue through to the rims. Smoky, flinty nose with lemon curd, pressed flowers and green apple, pear and peach pit fruit scents, the fruit helps it stay broad in the nostrils while it's in no way flabby, that said, perhaps not as "racy" as some vintages. In the mouth it's full-bodied and noticeably sweet with bright lemon to almost lime and orange citrus, richer peach and apricot fruit which steps ahead of the more sour green apple notes. The acidity comes across as dusty rather than precise, flattens it on the palate plus the yeasty creaminess lends more gluey consistency. This is a friendly wine that drinks well on its own with the stuff to handle medium heavy dishes. (Composite Cork) 89

Piuzé, Patrick
Burgundy, Chablis, La Grande Vallée
Chardonnay
2014, \$31.99, 12.0%

Not flat but semi-watery golden hue, just has a natural sort of nonchalance, basic color as well as level of luster. The nose is full and has more density than nuance right now, lemon and lime zest, chalk and seashells and oak toast appear most prominently, mild aspect of chili pepper, nothing attenuated about the peach, apple fruit scents but they come off as a clear second fiddle. Full-bodied, strong presence on the palate, grips tightly with muscular acidity drying and squeezing away. This puts the citrus in the lead, some orange in addition to that lemon and lime. The terroir element helps it seem like "Chablis" but does not seem like a distinct single site wine. Ginger spice and tea leaf, not quite as toasty as the nose. Quiet mixed white fruits. Better taken as a whole than seeking to enjoy this or that aspect. 89

Pinon, François
Loire, Vouvray, Les Trois Argiles
Chenin Blanc
2014, \$19.99, 12.0%

Deep gold color that can seem bronzed at some angles, mild translucency to it even as the surface sparkles well. Wet wool and lanolin fill the nose alongside sauna stone smoke, pulped oranges, apricot, pineapple to green apple fruit scents, more dry and bracing than sweet or honeyed, although does relax nearer to room temperature. In the mouth it is full-bodied, squats muscularly on the palate and here you get coconut, cocoa and caramel accents to elevate the overall sweetness. The pineapple, green apple, pear, guava fruit more thrust than juice. The citrus inclines toward white grapefruit pith. The acidity is good plus but not great, semi-blunt mouth feel. Tar, wax, clay and more of that heated wet stones all present. Squeezes more than clenches through the finish. Nice wine that deserves food rather than to be sipped on its own. 89

Puffeney, Jacques
Jura, Arbois
Chardonnay
2013, \$32.00, 12.5%

The deep golden color remains transparent still and not approaching any amber hues, pools into the glass for added visual presence. High level of smokiness in the nose, wet stone and minerals, then there's an odd burst of butterscotch before releasing violets and pear, yellow apple, apricot fruit scents, comes off as disjointed and not quite sure it wants to say, at least gets more expressive nearing room temperature. Medium-bodied, dry with extract and grip to spare,

probably makes the acidity level feel higher than it really is in an analyzable sense. Here too there is a big burst of caramel, butterscotch, molasses which does not fit with the whole. Then comes the sauna stones and warmed minerals. More of a green apple, apricot pit, peach fuzz fruit profile here. Not bad, probably good, just seems too young to judge fairly. 88

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

Pale and close to hueless, more straw brown than green, has a transparency close to water. Stone dust, chalk, lead the way in the nose, lime and lemon zest, spicy with a slight chili pepper touch, the fruit is slight, apple skin, peach, nectarine and pineapple. Light to medium-bodied, the acidity is above average but not withering, the wine is able to soften across the palate. More chalk, limestone, at moments clay but not especially minerally in a metallic sense, retains that spicy kick. The fruit is here too restrained yet steady from start to finish, mainly apple, apricot, peach, nectarine, perhaps less tropical than the nose. Grips the tongue at the end, which extends mouth presence. Good typicity, represents a credible value purchase. 88

FRANCE ROSE

Clos Cibonne
Provence, Côtes de Provence, Cuvée Tradition Rosé
Tibouren
2013, \$29.99, 13.5%

Has the color of faded rose petals, a mix of orange, pink with a light metallic shine, more shimmering than cleanly transparent, full through the rims. The nose is pleasantly rich, heavy on the juicy lemon to orange citrus, ripe cherry, strawberry, peach fruit, notes of cocoa and something like licorice, sweet garden herbs and tea leaf, achieves purity without seeming simple. Medium-bodied, has decent acidity and a dry textural grip, yet not enough to really increase the pucker factor. More floral here, rose and lavender, the citrus remains pulpy and deep, orange, lemon to even lime. Gains some salinity as it warms, moments of dried tree bark and leaves. Generous apple, peach, cherry, red berry fruit. Very strong retronasal action. Subtly muscular. Not as complex as other vintages but hits all the notes you expect. 90% Tibouren, 10% Grenache. (Composite Cork: Diam3) 90

Pradeaux, Château
Provence, Bandol, Rosé
Blend

2014, \$29.99, 12.5%

Pale luminescence to the pinkish orange color, turns mostly hueless at the rims, below average shine. The nose is densely packed but you can't really blame that for its lack of expressivity, it just selects its words carefully, mild strawberries and raspberries, orange peel, flowers and a gentle saline edge, you get more vanillin creaminess once it approaches room temperature. Full-bodied, has more innate weight than grip, pushes down into the tongue, not much alleviation from the so-so acidity. More lemon than orange citrus, brings with it a quinine to mineral water element. The strawberry, cherry, raspberry fruit pleasant but not especially long lived. Not herbaceous but something here smacks of underripeness. Have sampled more impressive vintages of this wine. Mostly Mourvèdre, remainder Cinsault, Grenache. 88

ITALY RED

Sella, Azienda Agricola
Piedmont, Lessona
Nebbiolo

2009, \$28.99, 13.0%

Trace of purple left in the core, has shifted almost entirely to a brick red hue and even a touch of brown, clear and close to medicinal in appearance, about where you'd expect it to be visually. The nose gushes maraschino cherry, raspberry liqueur, has pine needle notes, quite clean and forward, hardly any leathery or earthy qualities. Medium-bodied, on the soft side, soaks into the palate, however, the acidity is credibly active. Smokier here with deeper stoniness and an element of tree bark, leaves. Quite ripened cherry, raspberry to strawberry fruit, sweeter lemon juice and anise accents. Here you get some leather but there is zero funk and it's smooth and fluid throughout. Might improve with more time but seems good to go right now. 90

Benevelli di Massimo Benevelli, Azienda Agricola
Piero
Piedmont, Langhe
Nebbiolo

2013, \$29.99, 14.0%

More dark red ruby in the core than achieving a violet hue, straight up red rims, transparent and crystal clear. Sour red cherry, raspberry to strawberry infused nose, tar and leather, dried lilacs, pulped white grapefruit, more lean and wiry than broadly expressive. Light to medium-bodied, the tannin, and to a lesser extent acidity, is strong from the initial sip. After the first couple of times it smacks you, you start to register the

pressed flowers, savory herbs, tar and graphite. The cherry to mixed red berry fruit delivers the tartness the nose suggests. Towards the end the sour grapefruit and orange citrus becomes dominant. A few trace licorice, anise notes appear at times. Not really rugged per se, but displays a certain patrician reserve. 88

Cornelissen, Azienda Agricola Frank
Sicilia, Contadino
Blend

2013, \$29.99, 13.5%

Unusually huge amount of sediment in the bottle, looks like someone took a bag of leaves and twigs and through it in there, poured with a strong fizziness which may bespeak of secondary fermentation in the bottle. Filmy reddish purple color, nothing unusual about it, the cloudiness extends through the rims. The nose offers up shoe polish, tar, cement, nuts and wet herbal matter, gets foxy as it opens, what plum, black cherry fruit there is appears ripe and juicy. In the mouth it's full-bodied and you fill the fizziness prickle the tongue. Sour and puckering, the medicinal, shoe polish, witch hazel notes rule and the wet animal fur element keeps coming at you. Even more nutty and doughy here. Again, under all this is pretty raspberry, strawberry, red cherry fruit. Just can't get past the volatility. Of course, tempted to call this bottle flawed but with wines of this sort this may actually be what was intended. Struggled to finish a glass. Mostly Nerello Mascalese, remainder Nerello Cappuccio, Alicante Bouschet, Minella Nera, Uva Francesa, Minella Bianco. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 83

AUSTRIA WHITE

Nigl, Weingut
Kremstal, Freiheit
Grüner Veltliner

2014, \$17.99, 11.5%

Nice layering into the glass, despite depth of the golden hue at times it shows a green tint, palpable loss of color at the rims, above average surface shine. While there is a certain creamy texture to the nose as well as momentary scents of whipped cream, it does bring the snap peas, white grapefruit and stone dust, good herbaceous kick, less thrust in the apricot, apple fruit but not unfruited. Medium-bodied, shows much more resonantly in the mouth even as the attack is dominated by that whipped cream, banana stuff. The green pea and general leafiness is lively and activates the palate. Supported by white pepper and tart white grapefruit. And more richness throughout in the peach, apricot, almost persimmon fruit. The acidity is semi-blunt but not afraid of work. Active after you swallow without seeming pushy. (Screwcap) 90

AUSTRIA ROSE

Schlosskellerei Gobelsburg
Kamptal, Cistercien Rosé
Blend

2014, \$15.99, 12.0%

Very pale metallic salmon pink in color, noticeably broad hueless rims. Zesty nose of saline, seashells, mineral dust, all of which makes the strawberry, red cherry scents an afterthought, lemon zest, direct to the detriment of overall complexity yet still pleasing in a buttoned down manner. Medium-bodied, you feel the acidity from the first sip, gives it an electric sensation and lively mouth presence. Good sweetness in the raspberry, strawberry, cherry fruit, especially during the attack. Turns savory past the mid-palate with grassiness, garden herbs and a dusty metallic minerality. Sour, puckering lemon to almost white grapefruit citrus element. Salty sort of residue at the end. Nice stuff, has what it takes to stand up to a wide array of food. Unspecified percentages of Zweigelt, Sankt Laurent, Pinot Noir. (Screwcap) 90

SPAIN RED

López de Heredia, Bodegas R.
Rioja, Viña Cubillo Crianza
Blend

2006, \$28.99, 13.5%

Violet core but primarily brick red throughout, starting to develop a hint of orange around the rims, the high level of shine and clarity is in contrast to the more mature color palette. Sour nose of red cherry fruit, herbaceous with orange rinds, witch hazel, horsehide, pressed flowers, has deceptive heaviness given its general high tone. Medium-bodied, the high degree of acidity spars with the initial syrupy texture, roasty cherry, strawberry fruit. Savory with emphasis on dill, oregano herbs and tart orange to lemon citrus. There is an element of wet sous bois which brings some funkiness to join in the distinct metallic notes. May benefit from losing some baby fat yet nice now for its plushness, with that acidity to keep things in check. 65% Tempranillo, 25% Garnacha, 5% Graciano, 5% Mazuelo. 89

CHILE WHITE

Mayu, Viña
Valle de Elqui, Huanta Vineyard
Pedro Ximénez

2014, \$14.99, 13.5%

Pale with a green tint to the otherwise white hay color base, hint of gauzy filminess, given lighter hue still appears blockish in the glass. Lemony nose with accents of anise, raw nuts and pine needles, there's

also something metallic going on, apricot, peach to pear fruit scents are condensed to the point of muteness. Livelier in the mouth, medium-bodied with very good traction, pressed down into the palate. The acidity pulsates steadily, at times able to cut as much as grind. Floral here with a stronger emphasis on the lemon to white grapefruit citrus in addition to the peach, yellow apple, pineapple, papaya fruit. The overall dryness impedes the length a little. The nuttiness does not come through until the end. Interesting and like the energy level, just wished for more push in the main flavors towards the end. (Screwcap) 87