

## ***The Hanes Wine Review, April 2014 Edition***

While Hanes does not miss the hours working wine retail, one thing is for sure. It is easy to miss being a retail buyer and getting to try a much fuller range of wines than one would try simply as a consumer. The sales reps bring you samples and you sample them. You pass on most but some surprise. And with the latter you can then buy a full bottle and geek out. Without this exposure to the veritable “world of wine” it is very easy to just stick to previous favorites, sampling the latest vintage or perhaps a new bottling by a favored producer. Hanes must make an effort to take risks and try new stuff! Please send him wines he has not had, this will make things much easier!

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**This month’s big winners...** Been sick a lot so not much consumed of late. Plus the specter of beer casts a shadow on wine. That said, it seemed like this was “Zinfandel Appreciation Month” a la Chez Hanes. Lots of the stuff slurped down. And got to finally savor the predictable winner, Turley’s Ueberroth Vineyard bottling. The 2012 version did not disappoint, still the Hanes favorite in their lineup, albeit not cheap at \$48. Seems like a good while since the consumption of a Zinfandel from Sonoma’s Monte Rosso Vineyard. The 2012 Bedrock version hit the spot, a worthy entry into the history of this, umm, historical vineyard. Fairly price at \$39 or so. Weiser-Künstler is a German producer newish to Hanes but based on the 2012 Gaispfad “Kabinett Trocken” Hanes will have to lay out more coin on these Riesling wines. There goes the retirement fund. This more basic bottling is about \$23 and worth every penny. Tissot’s Poulsard is a perennial winner, the 2012 no exception. Lively and fresh, and these days a hands down value at around \$25. The wines of Agnès and René Mosse from the Loire don’t get a lot of “buzz” from the wine geek crowd, curious that. Their 2011 red and 2012 white are both superlative, typical of their region and grape(s), and priced favorably. They are hard to find, kind of because of not many retailers getting behind them. A which came first the chicken or the egg scenario. But if *you* buy some you will be happy and maybe retailers emboldened to take these products on more frequently. Don’t drink Vin Jaune that often but when Hanes does, he prefers Ganevat. Especially if someone else is buying! The 2004 “Sous la Roche” is on point, vibrant and at once youthful and matured, the way these sort of wines are supposed to be. A couple of very nice Savennières pushed past the \$20 barrier but are worth note, the 2008 Domaine FL “Chamboureau” and the 2010 Soucherie “Clos des Perrières” – Chenin Blanc that anyone can understand and enjoy now or down the road.

**The best \$20 and under picks...** Yes! Actual good wine under \$20! Barou’s 2012 Syrah from the Rhône called “Cuvée des Vernes” is zippy, acidic with bright fruit and flowers. With the fairly recent French reclassifications, it comes with the mouthful regional description of “Indication Géographique Protégée des Collines Rhodaniennes” so try to just remember the producer and cuvée name. Whew. It’s only \$14, what is this, 2004? Hanes can also get behind the 2011 Corbières red blend from Fontsaïnte, mostly Carignan, neither truly rustic nor modern, just a nice wine for about \$13. No sense really talking about Pépière’s 2012 “Clos des Briords” bottling of Muscadet since it is 99.9% sold out but be on the lookout for the 2013, it is consistent enough and you’ll want to try it before this vintage is gone too. Two Italian whites delivered as values, once more making Hanes wonder why he does not drink more Italian white wine. Oh, well. Anyway, the 2012 “Torre del Falasco” from Veneto’s Valpantena is its usual gregarious self and still under \$10 even. The more “obscure” “Majé” bottling from Bruna in Liguria and made from the Pigato grape is friendly and dry enough to pass the geek test criteria, this a hair under \$20. The 2012 Gysler Scheurebe from Germany’s Rheinhessen region is another of those one liter bottle cheapies meant to appeal to the value consumer and actually deliver great wine at the same time. For a Halbtrocken it could have a little more residual sugar for the fun factor but no real complaints, quite nice for the \$17 paid. A German producer who should get more respect is Jakob Schneider from the Nahe. Really good stuff. The 2012 “Klamm Kabinett” Riesling for \$20 delivers good fruit, florality and is simply a very pretty wine and one suspects priced way below their current competition from this region.

**And the disappointments...** Not entirely sure what happened but the 2012 Grignolino from Cascina ’Tavijn was not up to the usual standards of this wine. Good enough, but most times this is a screaming value. Usually a personal favorite, for some reason the 2011 Lerner Vineyard Syrah from McPrice Myers just didn’t rock the Hanes world as usual. Nice enough, just didn’t have that Syrah verve and gamey complexity this bottling can have, even on release. Not sure what the vintage was like in the Santa Ynez area. Oh well, maybe next year. Mildly disappointed in the 2012 Buchegger Grüner Veltliner “Gebling” from Austria’s Kremstal region, more so because Hanes views this producer as over-delivering for fair prices. Not bad, just disappointing. There’s a difference. The 2013 shall soon be here so redemption is around the corner. Maybe the 2010 Beaucastel Châteauneuf-du-Pape

rouge was disappointing, hard to say authoritatively, but it is awful young and historically a wine which needs time. So, reserving judgment even if while young it should offer a glimpse into the matured wine. Otherwise, no real losers drunk this time around, lucky.

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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/oldervintages2014.html>

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

Here's the order in which Hanes humbly provides the wine review information:

Winery/Producer Name  
Region of Origin, Appellation, Brand Name/Wine Style, Single Vineyard (if any applicable)  
Grape Type  
Vintage Year, Price Hanes Paid (if available), Alcohol Percentage (if available)  
Tasting Notes, Hanes's Numeric Score (on the traditional, yet inane, 100 point scale (which for Hanes truly begins at around 80 points and more or less ends around 94 points)

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

## CALIFORNIA RED

Turley  
San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Ueberroth  
Vineyard  
Zinfandel  
2011, \$48.00, 16.3%  
Fine depth to the purple core, broad and lively blood red rims, freshly spilled, while clear possesses a warming glow. The nose is compressed and not easy to coax into unwinding, that noted, there's an abundance of plum, black cherry, blackberry fruit with a paste like character that is not quite dried fruit, a breeze through pine needles, bodacious white grapefruit, supplemented by pressed flowers, a subdued caramel and vanilla swirl, and a bracing brine, wet stone element, lifts without giving up any volume. In the mouth it's full-bodied and streamlined yet, good acidity to frame the attack. Sure there's coconut custard, vanilla, toffee and chocolate going on but you are mostly gripped by the sheer density of the blueberry, blackberry, cherry, plum fruit. Wicked sting to the white grapefruit citrus, the limestone soil comes through well and it has a firm shape throughout. Its

vibrancy totally wins you over, it never stops scrubbing your palate. 92

Bedrock Wine Co.  
Russian River Valley, Sodini Vineyard  
Zinfandel  
2012, \$32.00, 14.8%  
Clean overall, dark enough to give the purple core an air of mystery if not push into opacity, the violet extends into the rims where it's mostly scarlet red, doesn't have that over-the-top saturated glow. The nose is heavy to the point of losing some expressivity, that noted, no lack of eucalyptus, mint and juicy blackberry, blueberry fruit scents, the coconut custard and butterscotch notes are right-sized, touch of dried beef and blood, nothing diffuse nor flabby about it. Full-bodied, the thing is that it's not heavy but it seems to want to push down on the tongue. Starts off by focusing on the coconut, butterscotch, caramel, chocolate, sweet baking spices, but the oak is "tough minded" and not adding sweetness for its own sake. The fruit is sweet but mostly upfront, blueberry, boysenberry, Italian plum, dark in complexion. Pretty good supporting tannin. Mild metallic, earthy nip at the end, the eucalyptus taut but pretties it up. To its credit, each sip varies some. Maybe not plush enough,

maybe not terroir driven enough. But it disappears at a rapid pace. 90

Turley

Contra Costa County, Salvador Vineyard

Zinfandel

2010, \$38.00, 15.5%

Garnet to crimson red inflected purple core, only somewhat opaque, the rims stay on the red side, nothing really unusual about it. The nose is floral, light chocolate but no overt oak presence, a vague sweet smokiness, plum, blackberry, black cherry fruit scents, touch of green apple, also cinnamon, pie crust flakes, nothing here is over the top, gives you a big initial push and then reins it in. Medium-bodied, sweet and sugary attack emphasizing blueberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit and juicy orange, pink grapefruit zest. No noticeable structure but doesn't feel flabby at all. Highly floral, unwinds the more predictable butterscotch, hard toffee, vanilla fudge through the mid-palate, grill smoke accelerates. Tightens through the finish, this appreciated for the added focus. 90

Bedrock Wine Co.

Sonoma Valley, Monte Rosso Vineyard

Zinfandel

2012, \$39.00, 15.0%

Pure blend of red magenta and violet, pretty much throughout, maybe a touch more garnet at the rims, clean and unblemished, almost more transparent than expected. Nose of freshly pressed red cherry, cranberry, raspberry fruit, more ripe than sweet, floral with emphasis on orange blossom, dollop of honey, mild eucalyptus lift, not a lot of obvious oaking going on, just smells "young" unto naively ebullient. Medium-bodied, remarkably fluid in the mouth, glides through frictionlessly, maybe to the point of shortening the finish. Mixes in blueberry and boysenberry with that raspberry, cranberry base, good alternation between sweet and sour. Kiss of caramel, chocolate and molasses as counterweight to the pine and eucalyptus. No noticeable tannin nor acidity, planed to a smooth surface. Could actually use a little more "backward" chewiness. 90

Lagier Meredith

Napa Valley, Mount Veeder

Syrah

2011, \$48.00, 13.7%

Vaguely gauzy purple core, opaque on the whole, very broad red magenta rims, lively saturation throughout, immaculately clean surface. The nose is floral and packed with juicy plum, currant, blackberry fruit yet at the same time there's a strong undercurrent of parched earth, dusty stone along with dried tea leaf, lemon peel and tree bark accents, some vanilla and

caramel to fill in the spaces, not spartan but at the same time no extra adornment, wiry lift, wants to break the skin. Medium-bodied, for all its evident ripeness it's savory and emphasizes basil, oregano herbs, tea leaf, forest floor sous bois and a few moments of pepperiness. The cherry, blackberry, red currant fruit pushes forward happily without demanding attention. Marked by the absence of meat or game notes. Fresh, classic style, has the acidity to likely prove a medium term ager where its cheekbones will become more pronounced. 89

Turley

Sonoma Valley, Fredericks Vineyard

Zinfandel

2011, \$42.00, 15.9%

The ruby-violet core is trim, semi-opaque, the wide garnet rims come across as a touch light, doesn't have the visual richness one expects. Fresh nose of strawberry, raspberry, rhubarb, red cherry fruit, thick floral musk, some caramel and toffee but not overpoweringly oaky, so-so staying power in the nostrils, curious in this regard too. Medium-bodied and on the dry side, first to bat are notes of white grapefruit, pebbles and pressed flowers. However, here, the butterscotch, caramel, fried butter tones are close to dominant. The cherry, blueberry, raspberry, strawberry, cranberry fruit steady at a moderate level. Some mint, tea leaf, orange peel, maybe a little leather or dried beef to boot. Streamlined finish, finishes succinctly. Versatile, yet takes awhile to warm to it. 89

McPrice Myers Wine Company

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Beautiful Earth Blend

2011, \$42.00, 15.2%

Not quite fully opaque, the purple core looks like a lit up day-glo poster, garnet red tends to dominate the rims but there's no lack of bright ruby and in certain light a momentary glance of pink. While the nose is broad and powerful it doesn't look to steamroll you, that said it is loaded for effect, sweet butterscotch and caramel coated popcorn, heavy floral dew, blood orange pulp, chocolate covered blueberry, blackberry, black cherry scents, fully ripened if not jammy, in awhile a certain smokiness develops bringing with it grill fat and leather accents. It's full-bodied and cannonballs into the mouth, full emphasis on all that plum, blueberry, blackberry fruit as well as the sweet oak flavors of mesquite smoke, caramel, fried butter and vanilla/chocolate swirl. Heavy enough that you almost forget you are not registering much tannin nor acidity. Floral, sweet pink grapefruit, tangerine citrus. How many times can "sweet" be used in a tasting note? Chances of it evolving and developing unique tertiary qualities is low but it is a fine guilty pleasure

today. 72% Syrah, 18% Grenache, 10% Mourvèdre.  
89

#### Anthill Farms

Sonoma County, Sonoma Coast, Peters Vineyard  
Pinot Noir

2011, \$49.99, 13.7%

Dark on the whole, strong violet core with fat red-ruby to scarlet rims, kind of unfiltered look, appealing surface shine yet does not visually strike one as a wine of elegance and poise. The nose presents more textural heft than actual array of scents, dense cherry, blackberry fruit, orange reduction, cinnamon and ginger spice, a little wooly and possessed of a damp forest bramble aspect, pine needle, while it is undeniably primary something in there suggests added complexity once this initial fat is shed. Full-bodied, its richness gives it a certain immobility in the mouth and does not have the acidic or tannic structure to create forward momentum. Touch of pickle brine in support of the metallic stoniness, creates a quiet smokiness. Any oak is well-hidden and woven into the whole. The blackberry, cherry, currant fruit clearly leans to “dark fruits” and is fully ripe and sugary. Same for the orange to lemon citrus, all juice. Its forward nature is attractive, and it manages to avoid sloppiness, not sure what aging a bottle would gain here. 89

#### Turley

Regional Blend, Old Vines  
Zinfandel

2011, \$25.00, 15.5%

Clear and transparent, the core is as much red-ruby as violet, the rims scarlet red to new brick in hue, not overly saturated. The nose has good punching power, more quick jabs than one haymaker, semi-sour blueberry, boysenberry, red cherry, cranberry fruit scents trump the buttered popcorn, vanilla fudge, soft toffee candy notes, citrus grounded in orange peel with accents of white grapefruit, then pressed flowers and a glimmer of dried beef, linear and streamlined. Medium-bodied, in the mouth it shows a zesty acidity and plenty of twists and turns even as it moves forward briskly. At the same time, it feels compressed like it was distilled into what it is today. Candied cherry, raspberry, strawberry to blueberry, blackberry fruit, liqueur like and sappy. The citrus is mixed but fuels the tartness, especially at the end. Mint, wildflowers, trace of pine breeze. That meatiness comes at the finish here too, kind of retronasally. Odd, for it doesn't provide a mindlessly voluptuous experience but also does not really shed all its makeup to let it stand for its unvarnished natural expression. 88

McPrice Myers Wine Company  
Santa Ynez Valley, Lerner Vineyard  
Syrah

2011, \$42.00, 14.2%

Fat glow to the opaque purple core, the scarlet to red magenta rims are broad and prevent the core from fading to black, aggressively saturated, you wonder if the glass has been permanently stained. The nose produces a brief burst of flowers and mint and very subtle white grapefruit pith before getting flattened by chocolate, coca crisp and syrupy plum, blackberry fruit scents, while it leaves you feeling it comes from “some place” you are not sure what that place is. Full-bodied, monolithic and stone-like in the mouth, has some tannin but marked mostly by an impassive immobility. While there's more tart grapefruit, orange citrus, there's a greater increase in coffee, chocolate roast and paste-like plum, blueberry, blackberry fruit, all fruit roll-up like. It's mostly like dessert without going too far on the sweetness. Pleasant floral lift at the end. Not much subtle about it and provides no clues as to what kind of tertiary elements may come into being later. 88

#### Bedrock Wine Co.

Russian River Valley, Dolinsek Ranch, Dolinsek Ranch  
Heritage

Blend

2012, \$36.00, 14.8%

Deep violet, just in opaque, core, surrounded by wide ruby-violet rims, more natural in appearance than possessed by a luminescent glow. Big amount of vanilla, caramel, butterscotch in the nose, touch of cinnamon, fruity not sugary blackberry, blueberry, black cherry scents, floral at times, on the blockish side and thus short, primary with some promise of upside. In the mouth it is medium-bodied, decent pacing, same emphasis on caramel, butterscotch and whipped cream flavors. With white grapefruit coming, turns semi-sour during the mid-palate. The oak takes up a lot of territory, needs the prune/raisin notes to create space for the blueberry, black cherry, blackberry fruit. Develops some stone to dry earth near the end, the tannin so-so but does help it extend. Predominantly Zinfandel, remainder Alicante Bouschet, Tempranillo, Petite Sirah, Teroldego, and other. 88

## CALIFORNIA WHITE

McPrice Myers Wine Company  
Santa Ynez Valley, Lerner Vineyard  
Viognier

2011, \$28.00, 14.9%

High sheen, bright golden color, mild flecks of green, only tiny loss at the rims. The nose bursts with honeysuckle, orange blossom, lightly honeyed grilled

nuts, has a heavy textural presence adding depth to the already borderline dried fruit apricot, peach, yellow pear scents, hint of persimmon, ends with a suggestion of clove. Full-bodied, dry in terms of extract and mouth feel, along with the supporting acidity brings out a strong nuttiness, at times close to lychee. Has zest in the orange, lemon citrus without losing the perfume. Its honeyed nature teases out more richness than sweetness in the apricot, peach fruit, a few notes of cherry. Then vanilla, whipped cream. Balanced for its size, steady contours. 90

## FRANCE RED

Tissot, Domaine André et Mireille (Bénédicté & Stéphane)

Jura, Arbois, Vieilles Vignes

Poulsard

2012, \$24.99, 12.0%

Very light purple at the inner core, mostly a bright crimson hue, transparent, slight fading at the rims, distinctive glow to it. Lively strawberry, raspberry, red cherry burst through the nose, strong white pepper and white grapefruit zest components, powdered stone, not over aggressive but pushes through your nostrils authoritatively, pleasing burst of meadow grass at the end. Medium-bodied, zesty, has great framing acidity which complements that sour grapefruit, white pepper and minerals to stone. More like dried herbs than grass here. Has sneaky tannin, no unnecessary dryness. Scrappy and fast-paced strawberry, watermelon, red cherry fruit, punches through to the finish. Crackles with life, perpetually scrubbing the palate. 90

Mosse, Domaine Agnès et René

Loire, Anjou

Blend

2011, \$22.99, 12.5%

Softly opaque purple core surrounded by glowing red magenta rims, plenty of saturation, fills the glass with vibrancy. The nose slaps you hard with fart, merde and rubber before finally voluptuous plum, cherry, currant fruit spreads widely, supplemented by violets and lilacs, chocolate, tar, leather, black tea, stone dust, and elevating bell pepper, just grows in stature as it opens. Medium-bodied with a velvety richness to it, the tannin has sneaky power, frames the black currant, cherry, blackberry fruit and creates a measured forward momentum. Moist leather, flowers, burnt cocoa, its fruitiness temporarily disguises the strong flinty soil, stone nature. Finishes with flourishes of white grapefruit and bell pepper as well as a grill smokiness. Lurches some but in a happy manner. Unspecified percentages of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc. 90

Barou, Domaine Emmanuel

Rhône, Indication Géographique Protégée des Collines Rhodaniennes, Cuvée des Vernes Syrah

2012, \$13.99, 13.0%

There's a garnet red influence in the purple core, fairly clear overall, not really near opaque, the rims veer more towards magenta, mostly red but with a faint glimmer of pink. The nose is light and easygoing with a floral breeze, white grapefruit zest and herbal matter base, the blackberry, currant fruit unadorned and more pretty than beautiful, lingers well and keeps things fresh. Light to medium-bodied, the acidity is very good without being overpowering, same overall impression in the mouth, one of youthful freshness and fluidity. Blackberry, even strawberry and blueberry, with lesser cherry and currant fruit presence. Again, huge floral component yet here the clove, Indian spices outscore the mixed white citrus. The herbal element sticks around and helps it maintain erectness and forward momentum, not "green" per se. A nice little package, very food friendly and tastes like northern Rhône Syrah, which is usually a good thing. 89

Fontsainte, Domaine de

Languedoc/Roussillon, Corbières

Blend

2011, \$12.99, 13.5%

While spotlessly clean, the core verges on opaque, deep violet with a touch of ruby, the rims are in turn a forebodingly dark red magenta, deeply saturated. The nose first offers up crisp notes of coffee and cocoa, then some muddy earth and fallen leaves and herbal matter, not really all that funky, the blackberry, black currant, cherry fruit is thick enough to take up some acreage, the florality tries to get active but sputters at the end. Medium-bodied, fills bigger as it tends to push downwards into the palate rather than walk briskly. Moderate tannin helps temper the overt juiciness of the blueberry, blackberry fruit, the absence of a citrus component is felt. Chocolate accents abound, the flowers do better here, Earthy and stony in its own way, retains a roundness to the mouth feel. Nice for the fact that it could be thrown back on its own or served with a variety of richer dishes. 60% Carignan, 30% Grenache, 10% Syrah. 88

Beaucastel, Château de

Rhône, Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Blend

2010, \$104.99, 14.5%

Glowing violet core, clean as well as rich, broad red ruby rims hum with warmth, great surface shine to boot. Super-ripe nose of honey, caramel, glazed meats, the floral perfume not quite able to lift the cherry, cassis, raspberry fruit scents, mixes in orange

citrus, chocolate, stays plump and primary, not a lot of complexity, just flesh. Medium-bodied, lacks flow, too chunky and gums up now and then, no tannin, no acidity of note. Wet wool, light rubber, uncooked meat fat, the florality is sticky and dewy here and does not spread far. Green apple notes blended into the strawberry, cherry, pomegranate, the array of fruit flavors perhaps its most interesting attribute. The chocolate, toffee, butterscotch is present but better knit in here. Remarkably approachable but not especially intriguing nor challenging. 30% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre, 10% Syrah, remainder Muscardin, Vaccarese, Cinsault. 88

## FRANCE WHITE

Ganevat, Domaine Jean-François  
Jura, Côtes du Jura, Vin Jaune Sous la Roche  
Savagnin

2004, \$119.99, 13.5%

Kind of dull bronzed orange to worn gold color, still it offers decent clarity, stays solid to the rims and does brighten further out. Penetrating nose of yeast, freshly kneaded, uncooked bread dough, honey, lemon peel, wet stone, the fruit scents mainly green apple and peach pit but at times there's notes of pineapple too, waxy but curiously not that nutty. Medium-bodied, good acidity, here the nuttiness comes fully alive, dry and biting, even the yeast seems to have cut. Good vibrancy in the green apple, pear, apricot to peach fruit, lasts completely to the end. Round and giving mouth feel in spite of the smoky qualities. Lemony finish. Perhaps unusual in that it yet comes across as youthful and unevolved. Squares its shoulders and steadily bears down on you. 620 ml bottle. 91

Pépière (Marc Ollivier et Rémi Branger), La  
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie, Clos des  
Briords, Cuvée Vieilles Vignes

Melon de Bourgogne

2012, \$17.99, 12.0%

Plan golden straw color, nothing remarkable visually, has that patina of fizz coating the glass sides, what's there extends fully into the rims, sits solidly. The nose is comprised mainly of crushed seashells, chalk, salt and lemon zest, has a winsome undercurrent of wildflowers, the pineapple, green apple, peach fruit scents betray little weakness while at the same time it is clear they are not the featured star, splash of honey before it all fades away. In the mouth it's initially all about the licorice and mint. Then room is made for the flowers and orange to lemon citrus. The mid-palate is all chalk, dusty stone and seashells. The acidity has more firm grip than bite, not inclined to spoil the fun. The nectarine, peach, pineapple, apple fruit holds off to the end and then as reverb. Not as honeyed here,

instead there's a sour brine aspect. Has flesh, not fat, has plenty of vibrancy and bounce. 91

Mosse, Domaine Agnès et René

Loire, Anjou

Chenin Blanc

2012, \$22.99, 13.0%

Quite deep and layered dark golden color, looks older than its current youth, almost with a yellow brown straw complexion, strong through the rims, clear and unblemished yet not especially shiny. The nose is soft and relaxed with a gentle heavy fullness, scents of apple juice, mint leaf, cinnamon, dried apricots as well as metallic and jalapeño pepper edge, stiffens and develops more punch nearer room temperature. Full-bodied, heavy here too but not sluggish, starts with notes of banana and bubblegum golden apple, apricot, peach, strawberry fruit. Smokier here, sauna stones, metal flecks and a quieter floral side yet you get the sweet baking spices and vanilla to whipped cream. Recognizably Chenin Blanc, the acidity is blunt but pulses to the last. Just a happy wine which isn't out to make any grand pronouncements. (Composite Cork) 90

FL (Fournier-Longchamps Family), Domaine

Loire, Savennières, Chamboureau

Chenin Blanc

2008, \$20.99, 13.8%

Its deep golden color comes with a hint of amber, fully hued rims, retains a shiny surface even as it takes on a blockish look below. The nose comes across as maturing, lactose and lanolin blended in with honey, flowers, ginger and orange marmalade, the wet stone component becomes more evident as it warms, flirts with tropicality via pineapple and papaya but mainly stays in the area of peach, nectarine, pear, the milkiness flattens the length of the fruit scents. Full-bodied in a muscular fashion, nimble enough for its weight. The acidity more a puncher than a jabber. More floral and arguably more honeyed but does not seem sweet. Woolly, stony, smoky with something akin to clay. The orange citrus stiffened by white grapefruit, lemon bits. The apple, pear, peach, apricot fruit is more broad than deep, more than ripe enough for its needs. Here the whole is clearly greater than the sum of the parts. 90

Soucherie (Pierre-Yves Tijou), Château

Loire, Savennières, Clos des Perrières

Chenin Blanc

2010, \$31.99, 13.5%

Semi-bright golden hay hue, fills out through most of the rims while also layering decently into the glass. You get mint, licorice, lemon peel in the nose, burst of white smoke too, more pure than complex, airy and

bright, freshly honeyed green apple, pear, apricot scents, youthful blush to it, dissolves with a mix of vanilla, powdered sugar and wet wool. Medium-bodied, the acidity helps to set it firmly in the mouth, this without hurting flow and overall "give." Sweet and sour tangerine, lime, pink grapefruit activate the palate and dominate for the most part. Basic array of green apple, pear, apricot fruit with some pineapple. Sugary and honeyed here too, still very bright to the very end. Could easily age but so easy to drink now. 90

Saint Pierre, Domaine de  
Jura, Arbois, Château Renard  
Blend

2011, \$22.99, 12.5%

Deep yet dull golden color, fades some through the rims, nothing visually jumps out at you about it. Vanilla, yeast driven nose, a bit taciturn, freshly scrubbed peach, apricot fruit scents, cinnamon and anise spice, trace of wildflowers, not really all that over the top but has consistent power. Medium-bodied, the acidity pushes it forward insistently, neither cutting nor expansive. Here it's more fresh than yeasty, albeit there's plenty of the latter. Yellow and green apple, peach, apricot, pear, well fruited and supported by pressed flowers, mint and more pastry dough. Presses on the palate more than scrubs. Displays okay stoniness at the end, keeps it clean. Friendly with character but not zany personality. 75% Chardonnay, 25% Savagnin. 88

## ITALY RED

Tavijn, Cascina  
Piedmont, Grignolino d'Asti  
Grignolino

2012, \$21.99, 13.5%

Fully clear and transparent, light red-ruby to garnet in hue with orange tinged rims, fresh and youthful sparkle. The nose brings along a good deal of muddy earth, matted grasses and verges on merde, conversely there is a floral lift and the raspberry, strawberry scents while not powerful possess an authentic smile, touch of orange peel but the earthiness takes first place here. In the mouth it's sweeter and fruitier with strawberry, watermelon, raspberry, red cherry flavors and that supplementary orange citrus even though a sour white grapefruit displays more lasting power. The tannin is formidable and the acidity has claws too. Not quite dirty but it's clear it enjoys a romp through the mud and rolling around the forest floor. Leafy, tree bark and merde notes come through. Its structure binds it past the mid-palate, hard to coax length at the end. Honest, likely not the best vintage of this bottling. 88

## ITALY WHITE

Valpantena, Cantina  
Veneto, Bianco di Custoza, Torre del Falasco  
Blend

2012, \$7.99, 12.5%

Average plus depth to the golden hue color, glassy surface, full rims, the core has a mildly bronzed look at some angles. The nose is incredibly airy and bright with mint, orange blossom, licorice accents, orange and lime citrus, the peach, yellow apple, apricot scents do what they must but aren't reaching for the stars, there's a nice subtle undercurrent of smokiness. Medium-bodied, the acidity jabs at you, not sharp but has power. Same basic array of licorice, mint, gingerbread, orange to pink grapefruit citrus, sweet herbs, sweet while maintaining a scrubbing sensation. The spiciness masks some of the apricot, peach, pear, melon fruit. By the same token, there is no paucity of stone or soil aspects, however, they remain out of the spotlight. Fun, brightly energetic, what you want in a simple quaffer. Unspecified percentages of Garganega, Cortese, Trebbiano Toscano. (Synthetic Cork) 89

Bruna, Azienda Agricola  
Liguria, Riviera Ligure di Ponente, Majé  
Pigato

2012, \$17.99, 13.5%

At first the golden hay hue seems pale but as it pools into the glass it gains solidity, bends light sufficiently to fill out the rims, add in some surface sparkle and it's pretty in its own right. Gently honeyed nose with sweet lemon spritz too, thicker floral dew, tends to cloak any underlying stone or pebble notes, in the same vein the peach, apricot, pear fruit scents concentrated enough to now and then take on a poached character, voluptuous all the way around. Full-bodied, has firmness but it is indeed wide around the middle. The honey remains there but is pulled back so the spotlight is on the lemon, blood orange citrus, flowers and mint to basil notes. There's verve and snap in the pear, apple, peach, kumquat fruit, not so much juicy as flavorful. Glimmer of whipped cream. Takes a turn towards dryness at the end which imbues it with broader food friendliness. Hard not to be won over by it. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

## GERMANY WHITE

Weiser-Künstler, Weingut  
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Trabener, Gaispfad, Kabinett  
Troocken AP #8  
Riesling  
2012, \$22.99, 11.5%

Bright golden hay color, feints towards bronze at certain angles, holds steady into the rims, solid from surface to glass bottom. Imperiously regal nose, laced with wet stone, oil, diesel and then mint, lilacs, white grapefruit rinds, delineated contours to the nectarine, peach, pineapple, papaya fruit, blurred only by a dollop of whipped cream, settles in like becoming accustomed to wearing a wetsuit. Medium-bodied, wiry and ripped, dry but not because it lacks moisture. The acidity ripples through the palate, you aren't fully relaxing with this in your mouth. That said, there's a nice floral undercurrent and the lemon, white grapefruit citrus has snap and give at the same time. White stone powder, minerals, salt, it's as savory as a wine can be. Nectarine, pineapple, peach and guava fruit, stings your tongue. Almost briny by the finish. Electric is what it is. 91

Gysler, Weingut  
Rheinhessen, QbA Halbtrocken AP #1  
Scheurebe  
2012, \$16.99, 12.0%

There's a sneaky darkness to the golden hue, sits like a solid block in the glass, some initial fizz clings to the glass after the pour, no weak spot visually. The nose is at once deeply honeyed and smoky, taut with good penetration while also expressing the ripeness of the peach, apricot, apple, pineapple fruit, there's also a tension between notes of whipped cream and mineral water, in the end that mineral smokiness takes over authoritatively. Medium-bodied, it is certainly tropical, however, thusly in the driest manner possible. Pineapple, papaya, nectarine, peach and green apple fruit with sour pink grapefruit and tangerine citrus. More chalky and stony here than minerally, contributes to dryness, acidity is perhaps dull while mopping up a lot of any sweetness. The interplay between its potential sweetness and the dry final product intrigues. A burst of honey and brown sugar softens the finish. Friendly without sacrificing intelligence. 1 liter bottle. (Screwcap) 89

Prum, Weingut Joh. Jos.  
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Kabinett AP #12  
Riesling  
2012, \$20.99, 10.0%

Extremely basic golden color, solid block in the glass with pretty shininess, bends light fairly easily but does not quite distort vision. Very engaging and borderline

surprisingly soft nose of whipped cream, tangerine citrus, honey and mint, the mineral water, oily stone and quiet diesel notes kept under wraps, the green apple, pear and peach scents more fresh snap than juice, has density should it choose to throw it around, however, more apt to give you a hearty handshake and a slap on the back. Full-bodied, this mostly due to the strong skeleton of acidity and general imperturbability, starts sinking into the palate immediately. Minimal presence of sulfur, the tactile fizz low as well, the slate and oil a subtle cornerstone. Bubblegum, whipped cream, orange blossom, rose water, than something savory like sage. The peach, apricot, apple fruit is respectable as in mannered, no showiness, no lack either. Definitely tastes like Prum with the upside of being approachable right out of the gate. 89

Schneider, Weingut Jakob  
Nahe, Niederhäuser, Klamm, Kabinett AP #13  
Riesling  
2012, \$19.99, 9.0%

Soft green tint to the otherwise pale golden straw hue, flat surface, pushes through well enough to fill out the rims. In the nose even the oil seems sweet, all pretty rose petals, licorice, lime to lemon spritz, cellar ripened apple, pear, apricot fruit, touch of vanilla or whipped cream, has very good thickness, particularly as it warms, sacrificing no freshness. Full-bodied, gets the smoky, oily stuff done and out of the way through the attack to leave the playing field open for powdered sugar, honey, flowers and pink grapefruit to lime citrus. The acidity is acceptable, allows the fun to continue while mopping up any spilled drinks. More sap here in the peach, apricot, yellow apple, pear fruit, some cherry to cranberry in there too. Manages an increase in tingle factor at the end, lifting and tightening at once. Very credible juice. (Screwcap) 89

## AUSTRIA WHITE

Berger, Weingut E&M  
Kremstal, Qualitätswein Dry  
Grüner Veltliner  
2012, \$12.99, 12.5%

Moderate pooling into the glass, helps concentrate the basic golden straw color, okay shine, one of those "solid block" looking wines. The nose is almost pure lemon and white grapefruit citrus, then a dose of stone, sauna smoke and green apple and pear skin notes, not lean but certainly nothing superfluous to be found here. Medium-bodied, the acidity is very strong and slightly diminishes the underlying sweetness. That noted, has some floral and mint accents, more general flesh to the peach, green apple, pear fruit, light pineapple rind. The grapefruit, lemon citrus here too



strives for the starring role, tangy, especially at the end. Clean but a bit too taut and wound up to really be fresh. Overall, a good value pickup. One liter bottle. (Bottle cap) 88

Buchegger, Weingut Walter  
Kremstal, Gebling, Qualitätswein  
Grüner Veltliner  
2012, \$17.99, 13.0%

The yellow straw color is on the pale side, however, it layers so well into the glass you'd think a few shades darker, nice glassy surface as well. Snap pea, mesclun greens and rose water get the nose started off, light touch of whipped cream, then wet stone, clay and a subtle minerally smokiness, overall it's got heft but seems reluctant to throw it around. Medium-bodied, the acidity is adequate but it yet has a flattened out feel as it covers the palate cheek to cheek. The floral side marginally bigger here, serves to remind you there's flavors of apricot, peach, apple fruit. But basically it's going for transparency, clay, dirt silt side by side with green peas and a mild white pepper bite. Orange sherbet and whipped cream help it retain sweetness to the finish. Maybe lacking in verve and real snap, yet it is a serviceable and versatile version of the grape at what passes for a fair price these days. (Screwcap: Stelvin) 88