

The Hanes Wine Review, April 2015 Edition

Let it be said on the record. *The Hanes Wine Review* should be rebranded as *The Hanes Wine Review of Californian, French and Italian Wines* since that seems to be all Hanes drinks these days. Must make a concerted effort to drink more diversely. Concentrate Hanes.

That settled, one thing which is at once awesome for wineries but frustrating for wine sluts is how it has become so difficult in recent years to keep a wine a “secret.” As in so many areas of life, social media, traditional media, general informational structures shed light on every dark corner so that one’s “special little friend” gets known by everyone in a nanosecond and then it sells out, the price doubles, and you can’t get any. Sniff. That’s life, sure, but we can still lament, that’s part of being human. Not that Hanes is human or such.

Heck, furthering this trend is the growth in the number of distributors too. More marketing, more dissemination of name recognition and ability to taste. Lots of wine geeks say it’s okay, don’t stress, you just go find a new wine. Same situation as when your favorite wine gets too pricey and you have to stop buying it, or buy fewer bottles. Still, it is vexing. A person, why, like Hanes, can spend literally years finding hidden treasures to buy year after year and then, bam, they get all well known and he can’t find them or they sell out in a month. It’s not like that with music or novels, you find a great band or author and whether ten people like them or 10,000 it’s still available in the same manner. Grumble, grumble. Anyway, one silver lining may be short attention spans, in a world driven by buzz there’s always the newer “new thing” to chase which may leave some old favorites available once more. Unless the growing number of wine drinkers overall creates greater demand for all wines, established and new. Hanes is rooting for craft beer and artisanal spirits to steal drinkers away from wine, c’mon you hipster breweries create a correlate for sommelier coolness and Hanes is set, he’ll have all the wine to himself again. It’s a good thing Hanes is not a hypocrite, writing a wine review to tell people about wines he really wants all for himself.

This month’s big winners... At a dinner Hanes had the good fortune to sample a red blend from a producer from the Savoie in France, this being Jacques Maillat, and labeled as “Autrement.” Hanes subsequently seeks it out and believes he has found it online, makes the order. Little does Hanes know that Maillat makes a whole *line* of wines called “Autrement.” And Hanes has purchased a bottle of white wine from the Altesse grape, not a red blend. Luckily, this was just as nice as the red blend so no harm done. Having his eyes opened to this labeling practice, he even bought a third bottle of “Autrement,” this of Jacquère which wasn’t bad either. The red blend to be formally reviewed next time. A Trousseau first for Hanes, initial sampling of this grape as a domestic effort, this from Harrington in California, their 2013 from San Benito County. Tastes just like it should, full of white pepper and red fruits and fairly priced at \$30. A Turley first for Hanes, initial sampling of a Zinfandel from the Judge Bell Vineyard and it was quite good, fresh and lively, will definitely seek it out in the future and, as these things go, on the lower end of the price spectrum for Turley at \$32. What can one say of Jean-Paul Brun of Terres Dorées fame which has not been said? Great wines, fair prices. The 2013 Côte de Brouilly is Cru Beaujolais at its best, fun but not sloppy, accessible yet age worthy. And all for \$20. Hanes had heard the positive buzz around newish winery Dirty and Rowdy so finally got around to buying a bottle, this being their 2013 Mourvèdre. Not cheap at \$35 but a very good, gulpable wine even with their mistake of blending in Petite Sirah (was supposed to be 100% Mourvèdre). Not a lot made but if you see it, splurge. There seems to be some experimentation going on with Muscadet wines these days, hey, why not. In this vein the La Pépière “4” bottling (aged four years on its lees) was totally awesome and worth every penny of the \$25 it cost. More please.

The best \$20 and under picks... It has been some years but like a bolt of lightning there it was to remind Hanes of an excellent value. It’s the 2013 Famille Laurent Gamay/Pinot blend from the Saint-Pourçain area of the Loire. Fresh, energetic, food friendly and a veritable steal at \$13. For the first time ever and likely never to be repeated, Hanes in one review tasted *two* different wines from the Lacrima (di Morro d’Alba) grape. The better of the two was the 2013 Romagnoli called “Barbarosso” but both were nice in the own way and under \$20. From Marcillac in Southwest France Domaine du Cros is about as consistent as you can get. Their 2013 “Lo Sang del País” bottling is another winner, 100% Fer Servadou grape (aka Mansois) and a wonderfully rustic and zesty drop for a tidy \$17. As for La Pépière, their 2014 basic “Muscadet” is *not* “sur lie” because America needed product and could not wait for lees aging, but it is zippy and bounces around in the glass and is still only \$14.

And the disappointments... Counts as a disappointment solely because the Monte Rosso Vineyard is like in the Hanes all time top ten vineyards for Zinfandel but the 2013 from Bedrock was just too roasty and toasty for this palate and lacked the natural bristling power this vineyard is capable of producing. Will buy it again but need more for the \$40 spent. Likewise, not a bad wine but with a lot of noise being made about the producer, Hanes's first tango with a wine from Noëlla Morantin in the Loire was so-so. The 2013 "La Boudinerie" made from Gamay was fine enough and one has to guess a decent deal at \$20 but it wasn't the "find" one might have anticipated. Hanes knows the importer/distributor and has issues with many of their wines (more of these wines for other wine geeks then) but the allure for old times sake make him reach for a bottle from Costières de Nîmes, an area where Hanes has quaffed many a cheapie. Alas, the Domaine de la Patience 2013 "Nemausa" was simply unsatisfying and all but devoid of easy pleasure, even if only \$12. Trust your instincts, Hanes. Had not slurped a wine made from the Schiava grape in some time so pulled the trigger on the 2011 Valle Isarco version for \$13 but it didn't do it for Hanes, average wine if "correct" enough. For around \$30 Hanes wants some serious Refosco but the 2012 from Perusini labeled as "Ronchi di Gramogliano" was just ungiving and rough but still underneath you see good material so maybe take a shot on a different vintage down the road.

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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 April!

CALIFORNIA RED

Turley
Amador County, Judge Bell Vineyard
Zinfandel
2012, \$32.00, 15.9%
Basic ruby-purple color, sleek and turns a bright cranberry red towards the rims. The nose is a bowl of crushed berries – blueberry, boysenberry, blackberry, cherry, ever so fresh, honey and molasses, some grill meat fat, definitely has a smokier side, ends with a burst of freshly mown grass, a welcome twist that ratchets up the freshness. Medium-bodied, has

pleasing tannic spine, this needed given the relentlessly friendly nature of the sweet cherry, blackberry, blueberry fruit. Sour mixed white citrus, hay, meadow grasses, field stones. Any oak is an embellishment not a main focus, vanilla bean and toffee. Great focus, moves authoritatively through the finish. 92

Harrington Wines
San Benito County, La Cienega Valley, Siletto Vineyard
Trousseau
2013, \$30.00, 14.1%
Bright cranberry red color, fully transparent and more shiny than deeply hued, holds well into the rims,

consistent throughout. Lots of peppery, minerally and herbaceous snap to the nose, zips right in there and tickles the nostril hairs, makes the strawberry, raspberry fruit an afterthought even given their prettiness, after that it's fairly pure and without any funk or outdoorsy stuff. Medium-bodied, sappy mouth feel, here the syrupiness of the raspberry, strawberry, watermelon fruit comes through, evoking maple syrup to honey as well. Still, has enough white pepper to stiffen the mid-palate through to the finish plus there's the grassiness which gets more assertive at the end. Pulped sour lemon adds kick too. Has some tannin but it is the acidity which frames its final statement. Very true to the grape, not overly ripe. 90

Dirty and Rowdy Family Wines
Regional Blend, California, Familiar
Mourvèdre
2013, \$34.99, 13.2%

While not near opacity there is a gauzy quality to the liquid, cranberry red hued core, more basic ruby at the rims. There is a burst of funky leather, animal fur, burnt matchstick to the nose but this quickly succumbs to the ripeness of the raspberry, strawberry, rhubarb fruit scents, distant echoes of white citrus and chocolate, has enough of a rugged quality to it that even its emphasis on primary elements seems complex. Full-bodied yet airy enough in its lift to relieve the pressure before it becomes leaden. Steady cherry, raspberry, cranberry fruit far from syrupy sweet but does stick to your gums. Potpourri, stout white grapefruit pith and tea leaf and tree bark add dimension. Tannin seems to lurk under the surface. A real plugger, could develop into a more nuanced wine with a few years of age. 94% Mourvèdre, 6% Petite Sirah. Grapes sourced from Santa Barbara County, Amador County, Mendocino County. 90

Turley
Napa Valley, Atlas Peak, Mead Ranch
Zinfandel
2012, \$35.00, 15.9%
Fairly clear, good amount of red magenta to lighten the violet core, more pure red around the rims, not much saturation. Sweet nose of crushed blueberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit, very slight influence of chocolate and caramel but in no way oaky, you get more by way of orange peel, pine, sweet herbs, overall it is pure and unadorned and not pushy at all. Medium-bodied, a bit spicier here and with a sort of gritty texture. Easily slides in grapefruit, mandarin orange citrus, eucalyptus, and black pepper. The black cherry, blackberry, boysenberry fruit here is a little dry and while not short, not especially wet and juicy. Has a mentholated lift at the finish. Tactfully done, as if

intentionally restrained but still capable of being "fun." 89

Lagier Meredith
Napa Valley, Mount Veeder
Mondeuse
2012, \$42.00, 14.4%
Even though the purple core verges on black it glows still, the rims are a fat, saturated crimson red. Without seeming fruity, the nose is all blackberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit, ripe enough that the leatheriness does not really shine through, you get more tar and tea leaf than black pepper bite, stays plump and round due to the fruit scents. In the mouth it's full-bodied with enough tannic and acidic verve to keep a jogging pace. Blackberry, blueberry, Italian plum fruit sweet upfront and sour through the finish. Orange peel, black tea leaf, brush of lavender. Here too it seems sufficiently ripe to blur its contours and diminish what could be its racier elements. This noted, pleasurable to drink and from the first sip clearly not a "simple" wine. 89

Sandlands
Placer County
Grenache
2012, \$40.00, 14.2%
The color is almost blush in its lightness, while the cranberry red color is shiny it is also noticeably transparent and loses even more hue near the rims, could see it taking on an orange coloration with age. There's an unusual tautness to the nose, has expected strawberry, raspberry, rhubarb, apricot fruit as well as mild orange citrus tones but not at all juicy, more so sandy, leathery and even twiggy albeit in no way green nor stemmy, blunt denouement. Light-bodied, however, it is fairly tannic which adds weight and mouth presence plus grip. Here you get the sappy ripeness you expect, jammy raspberry, blueberry, strawberry to watermelon fruit. The citrus is mixed and more sweet than sour. Touch loamy and leafy, no sign of phenolic underripeness. Helps that it clamps down during the finish, adds punctuation. Otherwise, at this moment it is primary and fruity without much overt complexity. 88

Bedrock Wine Co.
Sonoma Valley, Monte Rosso Vineyard
Zinfandel
2013, \$40.00, 14.5%
Glowing purple core, broad crimson to sunset red rims, clean throughout. Sour, smoky nose, mesquite, grilled meats, the plum, currant, cherry fruit tart overall, mild eucalyptus lift, its strong overall pungency tends to make it difficult to appreciate the respective elements. Full-bodied, if anything it's more acidic than tannic, sour reverb throughout the rhubarb, cherry, cranberry,

blackberry, blueberry fruit. Grapefruit zest, menthol and that mesquite grill stuff. At first there's not too much discernible oak influence but with air time out comes the chocolate, molasses and the toasty smokiness lasts longer and minimizes the purity of the fruit. A little too roasty. 88

Bedrock Wine Co.

Alexander Valley, Nervo Ranch, Nervo Ranch Heritage Blend

2013, \$38.00, 14.5%

Magenta-purple core with pinker rims, nice glow to it, not really opaque. Ripe blackberry, boysenberry, black cherry scents fill the nose, orange zest, touch of sweet garden herbs and maybe a light dusting of cocoa and under all that comes vague minerality. Medium-bodied, good density and has tannic punch from the very first sip. This creates a drying mouth feel although the juiciness of the plum, blackberry, blueberry fruit fights well for space. Baking spices, orange peel, cedar, moments of leather and underbrush. Offers more hints towards complexity than delivers, leaves reasonable expectation of future development. Could pair well now with thicker steaks and stuff than could balance out the tannin. Unspecified percentages of Zinfandel, Negrette, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir, Grenache, Carignane, Trousseau Noir, Cardinal, Burger, Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc. 88

Harrington Wines

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Berardo Vineyard and Luna Matta Vineyard
Nebbiolo

2012, \$30.00, 14.2%

Any purple in the coloration overrun by crimson red, very consistent to the rims, crystal clear and immaculately clean. Smoky nose, minerally with a slight roasted quality to the cherry, raspberry fruit, tree bark, tea leaf and a smidgeon of violets, can't quite make out if the citrus is more lemon or white grapefruit, while it has good pungency there is a certain roughness to it, not a wine you just uncritically sniff. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with strong tannin which sets it immediately in the mouth, drying and kind of prickly in texture. Green apple notes intertwine with the cherry, red currant fruit, any sweetness it has is of the hard candy sort. Potpourri, more twigs and bark than straight up earthiness or even leather. Smoky, minerally bite to it. The structure tends to shorten the finish. Lack of guile and makeup a plus. Suspect it needs a few years to soften before making a truly fair assessment. 88

FRANCE RED

Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun), Domaine des Beaujolais, Côte de Brouilly
Gamay Noir

2013, \$19.99, 12.5%

Sparkling cranberry red to violet in hue, seems to bounce about inside the glass, completely full to the outer rims, fully transparent in spite of depth of hue. Crinkly mineral dust, white grapefruit pith, tar and clean earthiness display themselves first in the nose, there is a certain tartness to the ripe cherry, raspberry, blueberry scents, yet few might call it lacking in fruit, just seems unevolved and more geared for fun right now. Honey and molasses in equal portion to more sour white grapefruit, the acidity is up to the task but seems to give a pass to the former elements. Stone, lesser minerals, tarry earth, gamey as in the animals were lathered up and washed off first. The raspberry, cherry, blackberry fruit kind of flits across the surface. High grade for approachability plus there might be interesting upside in a few years as well. 91

Puffeney, Jacques

Jura, Arbois

Pinot Noir

2012, \$38.00, 13.0%

Plum purple colored core, holds well into the rims where it eventually yields to a dark ruby cast, halfway to opaque, seems deep hued in an unforced manner. Very ripe and heavy nose, plenty of musk from potpourri, orange citrus pulp and black cherry, blackberry fruit, the parts seem glued together, meager earthiness like a stony path through the woods, overall clean and clearly primary. Full-bodied, initially a jab of tannin throws you off but as a whole it is more the acidity which does the structuring. Which favors the lemon, orange citrus and light leafy qualities. Tea leaf, sandalwood, clove and a few tarry accents, the last leading into an active smokiness through the finish. The cherry, raspberry, blackberry fruit juicy throughout. Nothing not to like now, however, best days ahead. 90

Laurent, Famille

Loire, Saint-Pourçain

Blend

2013, \$12.99, 12.0%

Crystal clear ruby-red color, closer to scarlet than violet, consistent through to the outer rims, excellent sheen. Sour cranberry, cherry, apple infused nose with white grapefruit pith and tar, tree bark notes, wears its herbal aspect well and has a gentle fullness to it in the nostrils. Medium-bodied, while the acidity is fully acceptable it is the tannin which arguably punches the hardest and gives the wine structure. The grapefruit,

lemon citrus lively and unafraid to take a leading role. Leather, sous bois earthiness and that tarry stuff yet in no way unclean. Hard candy nature to the cherry, strawberry, raspberry fruit, nice balance between sweet and sour. Even a moment of something like fresh honey. Clean, honest pleasure found here. Approximately 80% Gamay Noir, 20% Pinot Noir. 90

Cros, Domaine du
Southwest France, Marcillac, Lo Sang del País
Fer Servadou
2013, \$16.99, 12.5%
Ruby-violet in color, bright and lively, full right through to the outermost edge, engagingly hued. White pepper, green pepper, cut grass and grapefruit pith makes it sparkle in the nose, lots of bounce too in the red cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit, leather and horsehide fill out the lower register, stays after you for as long as it likes. Light-bodied, the tannin and acidity may convince you it is bigger than its sheer weight. Sour cranberry, cherry, raspberry, green apple fruit, more tang than juiciness. With leather, animal fur, merde, black pepper and earth, all of the funkiness is delivered with laser like precision. Zesty grapefruit energizes the finish and reverb afterwards. (Synthetic Cork: Nomaticorc) 89

Morantin, Noëlla
Loire, Vin de France, La Boudinerie
Gamay Noir
2013, \$19.99, 11.5%
The core is more ruby or more violet depending on visual angle, clear enough, much redder at the rims, good brilliance across the surface. The nose produces a good deal of animal fur, wet leather, strong punch of grapefruit, touch of floral water, there's something earthy and sort of unclean about it, in a halting manner it hits you with red cherry, raspberry scents, no guile to it. Medium-bodied, spreads broadly with a solid web of tanning cheek-to-cheek. Active lemon, white grapefruit kick. Stone, earth, chalk, no doubt it has all that terroir stuff down pat. Cranberry, rhubarb, raspberry fruit, has nice palate penetration. Leaves a chalky residue on the tongue. Does not always yield and soften when arguably it should. 88

Hérétiques (Famille Iché), Les
Languedoc/Roussillon, Pays de l'Hérault
Carignan
2013, \$11.99, 13.0%
Reddish purple core, certainly more red towards rims yet without the pinkish cast the wine sometimes has, fully saturated nonetheless. Blackberry, black cherry driven nose without it seeming fruity, light floral aspect, notes of banana waft in and out, odd in that it does not seem primary yet there are few complementary scents

to parse. Medium-bodied, good density from attack to finish, fruity mixed berry and cherry appeal while in no way seeming dependent on fruit. In the same vein, the floral or citric components are prominent and yet not so. Which all makes for an interesting experience, giving and taking back throughout. Very nice acidity, even moments of tannic punch. There is a rubber to metallic something at the end which takes the overall excellence off. Otherwise, it is its usual standard of affordable wine geeky goodness. 88

Patience, Domaine de la
Rhône, Costières de Nîmes, Nemausa
Blend
2013, \$11.99, 13.0%
Bright ruby to magenta hues stronger than the violet, trim appearance, fair degree of saturation. There's an angularity to the nose, white grapefruit, tart cranberry and red cherry scents, evinces a shy earthen clay aspect and then becomes twiggy, minimal soaking into the nostrils. Light-bodied, lean and herbaceous, comes off as phenologically underripe if not perhaps lightly unclean. Green apple, cherry, cranberry, the fruit flavors are mostly snap and pop without juiciness. Clay, stone, leather, echo of lavender or garrigues, at times it seems like it was crafted to taste old upon release. Puckering texture through and post finish. Unspecified percentages of Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre. 86

FRANCE WHITE

Pépière, La
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine, 4
Melon de Bourgogne
2010, \$24.99, 12.5%
Deepening golden hue to the core, extends well into the rims, quite dense looking which detracts some from noticing the surface shine. The nose is broad yet angular, crushed seashells, sand, minerals and at times even appears to have an herbal touch, there's a taut florality which matches well with the green apple bite, its density in the nostrils takes away some freshness. In the mouth it's full-bodied with a sinewy acidity which coils around the tongue. Its innate dryness still allows for an expression of black licorice, violets and lemon peel. For fruit all you get is puckering green apple and pear. The doughiness mainly present as retronasal perfume. Pretty damn complete wine. (Aged four years on the lees before release. Grapes sourced from Clisson and Château Thebaud.) 92

Maillet, Domaine Jacques
Savoie, Autrement
Altesse

2012, \$29.00, 12.0%

Has a semi-luminescent glow which brings out some green in the yellow base, somewhat dull and loses most coloration at the rims. Generously full nose without losing clear contours, sauna stone smoke intermingled with mint, orange blossom and lemon peel, subdued if steady apricot, cherry, pear, golden apple fruit scents, that smokiness remains by far the dominant force. Full-bodied, dry to dusty texture during first sips, the acidity mostly blunt, power to spare. More pure stone, pebble than smoke here, a burst of honey teases out additional pear, apricot, peach fruit. The orange citrus is strongest, minor grapefruit, lemon accents. Softens at the finish as a whipped cream nuance appears. Great fullness and complete array of components. 91

Mosse, Domaine Agnès et René
Loire, Anjou
Chenin Blanc

2013, \$21.99, 13.5%

Deep orange-golden color, akin to apple juice, solid enough to have a flatness to its appearance, curiously turns all but hueless around the rims. Cidery nose, pressed apple, pear, peach fruit juice, cinnamon spice, spiced orange peel, chamomile, underneath all the prettiness you get a finely ground mineral dust, has a very "old vine" sort of vibe to it. Full-bodied, relaxed and almost heavy on the tongue, however, the acidity lends it pep when most needed and helps it fashion a clean finish. The pink grapefruit, tangerine, lemon citrus more sweet than tangy. Spicy with some moments of something like jalapeño, The succulent, round apricot, pear, peach, apple, pineapple fruit flirts with dried fruit concentration. Here it's more basic broken stone, pebble and gravel than sharper minerality. Ends with a retronasal flourish of black licorice and violets. Not certain it is one to age, sure it is one to chug now. (Composite Cork) 90

Pépière, Domaine de la
Loire, Muscadet
Melon de Bourgogne

2014, \$13.99, 11.5%

Fairly bright yet for the most part hueless, just a pale straw, there's a good amount of bubbles clinging to the glass sides long after the pour. The nose is crisp on the main, this despite the presence of bubblegum notes, mineral water, lemon peel, at times evokes chili peppers, moderate peach and yellow apple scents but not what you'd consider fruity. In the mouth it is medium-bodied, compact and firm with pronounced acidic bite. More minerally and chalky here with that

same peppery spiciness. Here you get elevated lemon and lime sourness. Apple, pear, peach, apricot flavors make for a standard, demure profile. Very "transparent" wine which makes it quaffable and food friendly, just about what you want from a good Muscadet. (Composite Cork) 89

Puffeney, Jacques
Jura, Arbois, Cuvée Sacha
Blend

2012, \$32.00, 13.0%

It comes close to a tie but in the end orange beats out gold for visual dominance, flat surface and just short of cloudy, very solid looking. Lemon curd, yogurt, walnuts, pine cones and cinnamon sticks make for a nose going in many directions at once, can be easy to miss the credible peach, apricot, green apple fruit scents, not looking to show off but has power to spare. Full-bodied, presses firmly down onto the palate, the acidity is moderate at best, nuttier here and with a stronger flor and dough sort of thing going down. That said, fresh orange, lemon citrus and pear, apricot, apple fruit keep it tasting "normal" enough too. Lanolin, baking spices and forest underbrush bring it on home, in the end a very good but not necessarily great bottle. Roughly 2/3 Chardonnay, 1/3 Savagnin. 89

Mann, Domaine Albert
Alsace
Gewürztraminer

2013, \$21.99, 13.5%

Pale golden hay color, nice clarity, holds the light in it well, pretty in a basic fashion. There's a compactness about the nose, the peach and apricot fruit is there, lychee nut too, honey and indistinct citrus, flowery denouement, satisfying without the opulence the grape sometimes possesses, for better or worse. Medium-bodied, same basic story in the mouth as it strives for neutrality and food friendliness over grander impressions. More keen edge to the tangerine, lemon citrus, even the nuttiness firms up. Star fruit, kiwi, close to pineapple alongside the base of apricot, pear, peach fruit, flavorful but not so much juicy. Ginger root and cardamom. Looking to be taken seriously. (Screwcap: Stelvin+) 89

Roulot, Domaine
Burgundy, Bourgogne Aligoté
Aligoté

2012, \$25.99, 12.0%

Very shiny white gold in color, while clear the brightness gives it good glass presence. Fresh nose of licorice, mint, tangerine citrus, quieter on the green melon, pear, green apple front, takes some warming for the smokiness to really develop, shows a light patina of honey too. Medium-bodied, the acidity has

bite and accentuates an overall sourness. Lemon with a touch of lime, chalk and mineral water present. Prettiest via violets, mint, anise, creates minor lift, however, the general textural dryness tends to keep it stuck to the mouth walls. Green apple, pear, maybe even a swipe of persimmon fruit. Clean and its focus ensures a refreshing nature but a bitter aftertaste not the most desirable trait. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

Maillet, Domaine Jacques
Savoie, Autrement
Jacquère
2012, \$31.99, 11.0%

Semi-dull, light yellow hay coloration, empty rims add to general sense of transparency, could see it darkening into a more orange hue over years. Light saline touch to the nose, pebble dust, then slowly it unwinds peach, apple and pear fruit scents which hint at a dried fruit nature, adds in cinnamon stick and lemon peel accents, glimmer of raw pie dough, really needs to get close to room temperature to hit its stride. Full-bodied, feels like it has very good extract and it clings to the palate with gusto. The acidity feels blunt and drying rather than sharp and penetrating. Here the mint, cinnamon and clove beat the fruit to the punch, yet no means lacking for apple, peach, apricot, pear and even pineapple flavors. Each sip finds the battle enacted anew between pie dough and stone, as it ends with an elevation in smokiness, if not steeliness, the latter wins the war. Has a few holes which the right food can fill, otherwise have to like its quiet power. 89

FRANCE SPARKLING

Vouette & Sorbée
Champagne, Blanc d'Argile Extra Brut
Chardonnay
NV, \$94.99, 12.0%

Bright golden straw color, good brightness, touch of a green glint, just a few visible beads but they are thick enough. Green apple, apricot, peach skin nose, pure, just a hint of honey, mint, quiet stoniness, likely to broaden and fatten if allowed to warm. Full-bodied with a firm mousse, no fine pétillance here. More chalky than nose suggests, this despite the advertised clay soils. Green apple, pear, peach, apricot, fruit stays on a level plane throughout. At times the lemon to lime citrus bites enough to evoke a sense of chili pepper, not unlike some Kiwi whites. Very persistent and long without it feeling like it tried to impress. That said, there is a feeling of restraint here as if it would prefer to explode all over the place than remain mannered. (Disgorged 6-11-13/R11) 89

ITALY RED

Romagnoli & C., Azienda Agricola Renato
Marche, Lacrima di Morro d'Alba, Barbarosso
Lacrima
2013, \$13.99, 13.0%

Big glow to the saturated purple core, reddish magenta rims, clear if not too dark. Pungent nose of lavender, violets, tangerine zest and fresh meadow grasses, so strong that these elements overshadow the cherry, mixed berry scents, has a long presence in your nostrils. Light-bodied, yet tannic enough to feel sturdy. Better balance here between the florality versus the cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit but no doubt that the flowers win in the end. Never gets as sweet as the aromas think it will. The citrus more tart, lemon alongside orange. At the same time there is a twig, bark component but no real herbaceousness. Delivers moderate pucker at the end. Most enjoyable to simply sniff. (Composite Cork) 89

Quintarelli, Giuseppe
Veneto, Valpolicella Classico Superiore
Blend
2005, \$89.99, 15.5%

Some scarlet lightens the purple core, rusty orange to red hued rims, trim and shiny. Date raisin and lighter prune alongside plum, chocolate, caramel and nuts in the nose, herbs and pine as well, good clarity among the elements, feels as if they were intentionally separated for inspection. Medium-bodied, sweet and generally soft in feel. Pine, basil, cedar, orange zest, any chocolate remains in the background. While the raspberry, cherry, boysenberry fruit is sweet, the mouth feel is toasty overall. Big perfume builds the more you hold it in the mouth, develops added orange citric bite. Has enough structure so it's not slutty, however, not sure it offers the kind of complexity the price demands. Unspecified percentages of Corvina, Molinara and Rondinella. 89

Anima Libera
Sicilia, Etna Rosso, Vigna Favazza
Nerello Mascalese
2010, \$17.99, 14.0%

Very clear liquid, not quite that shiny, blackish purple core that fades to a rust red or orange hue at the rims. In the nose ash, earth and tar underneath the candied cherry, heather and wildflowers, good purity, the ripeness comes through without overpowering. Medium-bodied, the tannin is suavely powerful while allowing the sugary cherry, raspberry, strawberry fruit to flow with ease. Ash, pulverized stone, leather and fallen tree matter but zero greenness or stemminess. Easy to drink, clean and fluid, semi-creamy in texture

too. If anything, its gulpability makes it harder to note individual elements. 89

Trecciano, Societa Agricola

Tuscany, Chianti Colli Senesi, Tenuta di Trecciano Sangiovese

2013, \$14.99, 13.0%

Shiny violet core, wide pinker ruby rims, very clean and fresh looking. Open and direct nose built on raspberry, red cherry fruit, lemon peel, leather, tree bark, hint of mushroom, subtly sticks around for some time. Light-bodied, big tannin and acidity which glues it to the palate and creates added presence. Sweetly candied core of strawberry, raspberry, cherry fruit but this does not last very long. Then ascendant is tree bark, dried rose petals, twigs, and citrus edging from lemon to grapefruit. In the end, there's no guile, no makeup, just a direct "Chianti" experience. (Composite Cork) 88

Badiali, Azienda Agricola Fratelli

Marche, Lacrima di Morro d'Alba Lacrima

2013, \$16.99, 13.0%

Ruby-violet core, more brighter red towards the rims, dark and of above average clarity. The lilacs-driven nose has pungency but lacks some length, very ripe raspberry, strawberry fruit makes an initial splash, stony, crushed leaves and meadow matter, sour orange peel, good overall stiffness in the nostrils. Medium-bodied, dry and tannic mouth entry with a good acidity behind it too. White grapefruit to orange citrus a big presence, dominates the more subtle violets. bright tartness in the cranberry, cherry, raspberry fruit. Almost imperceptible chocolate at the end. Stays this side of astringent, lets the fruit last. 88

Valle Isarco (Eisacktaler Kellerai), Cantina Produttori Alto Adige/Südtirol, Valle Isarco (Südtiroler Eisacktaler), Schiava dell'Alto Adige (Südtiroler Vernatsch)

Schiava

2011, \$12.99, 12.0%

Cranberry red to scarlet in hue, barely any violet in the core, turns dilute towards rim but color does not change, transparent and easy to see through. Mud, merde, matchsticks, bags of raked wet leaves and beef jerky comprise the lion's share of the nose, this actually not to diminish the highly credible strawberry, red cherry fruit scents as well as jolt of grapefruit. Light-bodied, the tannin is strong for its general weight and both glues it to the palate as well as creating a drying sensation to balance out the concentrated, hard candy sweetness of the raspberry, cherry, strawberry fruit. Loses most of the funk here but there's still twig, bark and dried leaf accents. Floral here as the citrus softens and strays from the spotlight. Still, has a bitter,

tarry finish. Cut from a certain cloth, not flawed, you just will have to like this style of wine going in, this won't convert you. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 87

Perrini, Azienda Agricola

Puglia/Apulia, Salento

Negro Amaro

2013, \$14.99, 13.0%

Any purple in the core easily occluded by a crimson red color, brighter blood red rims, very good clarity. Good fruity nose, cherry, raspberry, blackberry with ginger snap and clove notes, underlying florality, orange peel, not that complex yet it adroitly flits among its base elements. Medium-bodied, its round, soft and pliable texture makes it feel bigger as it fills most available crevices. Displays that same clove, ginger, nutmeg spice stuff along with orange, grapefruit citrus. Conversely, there is a twiggy and leafy quality, especially at the finish, which stunts some of the plum, cherry, blueberry fruit. Noting this, its juiciness is above average and it impresses you with the ability to be consumed on its own and stand up to many foods. Good inner mouth perfume. 87

Perusini, Azienda Agricola

Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Colli Orientali del Friuli Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso

Ronchi di Gramogliano

Refosco

2012, \$29.99, 13.0%

Blackish purple core, opaque, the rims are a saturated blood red, deeply hued to the outer edges. The nose comes off as somewhat inert, matted grasses, fallen leaves, tar and cow patties, the plum, cherry fruit has some prunish aspects to it but it never achieves sweetness. In the mouth it's full-bodied, has both sufficient layering and tannin to make it slow to change direction. Glance of grapefruit, gets subsumed in tar, stone, hard earth and hay/straw elements, really not that many flavors happening plus the whole thing just grinds to a halt before what you'd say is a fluid finish. The cherry, plum, dark berry fruit lacks character and juiciness while you would never call the wine unfruited. Even for this grape, it is on the hard side. 86