

## ***The Hanes Wine Review, April 2018 Edition***

We will make this short and sweet since the idea was to release this about 3-4 weeks ago. Thanks again to all readers who helped Hanes validate current email addresses. If it holds any interest, the announce list currently goes to 369 people. As always, no other metrics are gathered for other unique visitors to the website. There are, however, a lot of Chinese bots who sign up.

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**This month's big winners...** Hanes was reading on a wine chat board about what should be a fair price for high end Zinfandel. Winemakers typically blame Napa/Sonoma land prices for Zins that run into the \$40's. This is probably true but it's also clear that Hanes has to cut back on \$30+ Zinfandels in the name of fiscal restraint, especially if the cellar is to get restocked with Northern Rhône Syrah and Barolo wine. One Zinfandel which will continue to make the cut remains the Lagier Meredith Mount Veeder branded as "Tribidrag." The 2015 is delicious but at \$45 a bottle not many going into the cellar (if any). Hanes has fond memories of the now defunct Domaine Maume in Burgundy. The property was purchased and the wine now bottled under the Domaine Tawse brand and Hanes thought to try a bottle of their 2015 basic Bourgogne Rouge "Vigne Blanche." Thankfully, based on this sample the quality level has remained high and there's no qualms about the \$25 price tag. Gosh, it's been a long time since Hanes bought a bottle from Domaine du Closel in the Loire. The 2015 Savennières "La Jalousie" reminded Hanes why he likes their wines so much. Youthfully open now and simply a delicious Chenin Blanc wine, hate to see that the price broke the \$30 mark. Cowan Cellars does an excellent job with the Ribolla Gialla grape and although this producer sells mostly winery direct it's worth seeking out, \$28 is high but as mentioned likely represents underlying costs. From the Alto Piemonte the 2014 Colombera Lessona wine named "Pizzaguerra" was traditional without being underfruited, very nice wine, \$39 or so is about all Hanes would want to pay though. The 2015 Harrington Aglianico from the Gianelli Vineyard is a good step up from the 2014 and probably the first domestic Aglianico Hanes has considered aging. Given pricing for similar Italian wines, the \$30 is fair enough.

**The best \$20 and under picks...** The deft hand of Beaujolais' Jean Foillard is shown in the entry level 2016 Beaujolais-Villages bottling which at about \$19 is a clean and vibrant experience and worthy of stocking up on. A new bottling to Hanes, the 2015 Luneau-Papin Muscadet "Vera Cruz" was gulpable and easygoing, does not make an impression of "classic features" but if you're gonna pound some Melon de Bourgogne tonight this will do and only \$19.

**And the disappointments...** Hanes likes the Cornas wines of the Domaine du Coulet (Matthieu Barret) but the 2016 Syrah Côtes-du-Rhône named "Petit Ours" was not the easiest drink albeit in no way flawed per se. \$22 is probably right for the cost of terroir and winemaking. For whatever reason the 2013 entry level Barolo "Albe" from Vajra was not working for Hanes. No follow through and the fruit is lacking. Okay price at just under \$40, maybe time will redeem this one. Was not at all surprised at the result, but a tasting of the ultra high end Peter Michael Chardonnay called "Mon Plaisir" was like drowning in oak. For over a \$100, it's an incredibly easy pass (although buyers stand in line for the right to purchase it). Waaaaay over the top. On the other side of the Beaujolais ledger Hanes never seems to have good luck with Jean Foillard's Morgon bottling "Cuvée Corcelette" and the 2015 remains no exception, just mute and clunky. \$31 is standard these days for better Beaujolais Cru bottlings, no issue with the price. Hanes will have to see if time redeems the bottles in the cellar. Since Hanes's honeymoon in Barcelona he seeks out value oriented Priorat wines (often a contradiction). Palacios's 2016 entry level "Camins del Priorat" was dull and uninteresting and \$24 is more than one should pay for what you get. Hanes's lips had never graced a wine from the Jura's Domaine de la Touraize and this came to a sudden conclusion recently. Alas, the 2016 Poulard "La Cabane" was not much to write home about, the quintessential "where's the beef." \$26 seems high for the quality but that's just Hanes griping. Having now tried the 2014 and 2016 with equally disastrous results, it is clear that Hanes should steer away from the Frappato of Sicily's Tami' even though it is crafted by a somm approved winemaker. Surly wine.

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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/oldervintages2018.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

Lagier Meredith

Napa Valley, Mount Veeder, Tribidrag

Zinfandel

2015, \$45.00, 15.1%

Spotlessly opaque purple core, dark magenta rims, has the saturation just not the typical preternatural glow. At first the vanilla and caramel seem outsized in the nose but then pull back and weave into the blueberry, boysenberry, cherry fruit, spiced orange peel and eucalyptus, subtly earthy and loamy, primary without seeming fruity. Medium-bodied, quite taut with eye opening acidity and wiry tannin as well. Huge dose of black pepper which is uncommonly found these days. Likewise white grapefruit in spades so the sharp edges in abundance. Sour raspberry, cherry, blueberry fruit, closer to strawberry than plum. Nuanced milk chocolate, toffee notes, no way you'd call the wine oaky. Lip smacking good, no wasted movement. 91

Lagier Meredith

Napa Valley, Mount Veeder

Mondeuse

2015, \$45.00, 14.5%

About as dark as purple can get without turning black, has a day-glo light quality, the rims a dense crimson to rust red, immense saturation. There's some leathery and meaty notes in the nose, florality more focused than dewy, something like but not quite eucalyptus, the

black cherry, blackberry, boysenberry fruit scents ensure things stay feeling roundish without hard edges. Full bodied, here the floral perfume is borderline gargantuan. Mixed white citrus, leather, a few peanut shells, cocoa powder, nothing here seems oaky. The fruit has a gluey texture, mulberry, blueberry, cherry that starts sweetly and ends with elevating pucker. Consistent as it moves across the palate. Tannin submerged in the fruit. Could be better once the bones start to show. 90

Harrington Wines

Tuolumne County, Gianelli Vineyard

Aglianico

2015, \$30.00, 13.4%

Great surface shine laid over an impenetrably dark purple core and saturated scarlet red rims, richly hued. The nose bursts with black licorice, anise and sage, the maraschino cherry scents contrast with the dusty earth element, there's a tiny bit of barnyard funk in the background. Full-bodied, the palate follows up nicely with an emphasis on hard candy sweet cherry, raspberry to blackberry fruit, hint of green apple, and then more licorice. Really gritty tannin, almost like sandpaper against the tongue. Meadow grasses, parched earth and worn leather give it some dimension, sour orange citrus dominates the finish. Lots of floral perfume too, credible given how the dryness of the palate grabs your attention. While drinking very well now it is reasonable to expect that 4-6 years should integrate it further. 90

Harrington Wines

Central Valley, Lodi, St. Jorge Vineyard, Amarela Blend

2015, \$20.00, 13.2%

Light haze to it, reddish purple core with a warmly glowing brick red aura. The nose smells of creamy oak, vanilla, butterscotch and then leaves, twigs and tree bark without getting funky, the cherry to blackberry fruit scents are superripe, finishes with notes of grill smoke and meat fat. Medium-bodied, strong acidic punch creates a big pucker during the attack. Here there's substantial white grapefruit to lemon sourness. A leathery quality slows this down through the mid-palate, mineral earth and now and then some peanut shells. Juicy and longlasting raspberry, blackberry to strawberry fruit, about as much of a "fruit bomb" as possible given its more demure body. Does not show the suggestion of oak found in the nose. Very lively wine. Mainly Trincadeira, remainder Tinta Roriz, Alicante Bouschet. (Composite Cork) 90

Bedrock Wine Co.

Russian River Valley, Sodini Vineyard Zinfandel

2015, \$37.00, 14.5%

Semi-opaque purple to plum red hued core, looks very fresh, the rims a more straight up scarlet red, no saturated glow. At first the nose throws a bunch of buttered popcorn, caramel and butterscotch oak scents at you then moderates into more sour and lean cranberry, blueberry, cherry fruit scents as well as dry earth and pebbles, horsehide sweat and a modicum of pressed flowers, curious inert feel. In the mouth it's medium-bodied and noticeably firm with more of an impression of acidic spine than tannic. Much sweeter than the nose suggests with substantial rhubarb, strawberry, blueberry, red cherry fruit. Floral with a pink grapefruit soft drink nuance, moments of grill smoke and sweet barbecue sauce. The oak much more integrated here. Anise, mukhwas and a touch of coal tar. Nice wine, might show more dimension once some fat is lost and might even be a little shut down at the moment. 89

Harrington Wines

El Dorado County, Sumu Kaw, Subrosa Blend

2015, \$30.00, 13.1%

Purple to plum pulp red hued core, dull and somewhat washed out garnet to brick red rims, more gauzy than filmy. Lightly honeyed nose, ripe raspberry, cranberry fruit scents, very primary with a blanket of floral dew, incense, suggestion of wet wool and tree bark, perhaps too full to let things gain clarity. In the mouth it's full-bodied, muscular and more than willing to push

down into the palate. Neither especially tannic nor acidic without sacrificing clear contours. Here the white grapefruit citrus provides a sour jolt, firming up the cranberry, raspberry, red cherry flavors. Mildly more stony but still with that twiggy which takes the pucker a bit too far. Kind of suspect this would drink at its best in 4-6 years hence. 50% Syrah, 50% Mourvèdre. 89

**CALIFORNIA WHITE**

Cowan Cellars

Russian River Valley

Ribolla Gialla

2016, \$28.00, 12.9%

Semi-dull straw yellow with an autumnal look, hueless rims, solid block in the glass. Big, solid presence in the nose, smoky almost like doused campfire wood and earth, damp florality behind this, the peach, apricot, pear scents ripe and more serene than bouncy, comes across like it is still weaving it all together. Full-bodied, good grip and palate traction, spicy with notes of ginger and cinnamon. The pear fruit has a poached sweetness and dominates the apple and cherry. The acidity presents more blunt force than precise cut. The smokiness most obvious through the finish and as residue. Much more open and playful in the mouth, dabs of wet flower petals, honey and lemon pulp. Should improve over course of next couple of years. 90

Michael, Peter

Knights Valley, Mon Plaisir

Chardonnay

2015, \$109.99, 14.6%

Layered golden color, close to but not quite green tinged, consistent core to rims. High level of toast to the nose, lilac led florality, lime juice, warm butter, peach to apricot to pear scents, the oak more or less obliterates everything in its path, smells expensive. Medium-bodied, good smoothness and polish. Hard to discern any acidity. But there's an avalanche of buttered popcorn, coconut custard, violets, lime juice, and warmed caramel, the peach, papaya, pineapple, to nectarine fruit sour yet concentrated. Floral dimension lessened, it could be pretty if you find creamier oak notes attractive. Basically, this hews to the recipe of the past 20 years in California where the oak does the heavy listing, the fruit is semi-tropical and there's minimal subtle nuance. 87

## OREGON RED

Vincent Wine Company  
Regional Blend, Oregon  
Gamay Noir

2016, \$20.00, 12.5%

Ruby-magenta to violet hued, consistent throughout, clear with a mild haziness, has a quite fresh look to it. Nice leafy, twiggy character to the nose, brings it a more high-toned feel without a hint of underripeness, juicy strawberry, raspberry fruit can seem heavy at times, orange blossom, some smokiness before the final dissolve, could see more earthiness come to the fore as the fruit recedes some. Medium-bodied, more than enough acidity to structure the attack and keep the mouth feel fresh and lively as that dulcet strawberry, cherry, raspberry fruit builds in stature. More mixed citrus sourness helps provide counterpoint. Some tarry earth at the end. A very friendly drink. Grapes sourced from Rebecca's Vineyard (Umpqua Valley), Bjornson Vineyard (Eola-Amity Hills). 89

## OREGON WHITE

Vincent Wine Company  
Willamette Valley  
Chardonnay

2016, \$23.00, 12.9%

Filmy and dull, offers a core of simple golden straw hue, little change at the rims, looks fuller due to overall translucency. Lilacs, cotton candy along with cantaloupe melon, apricot, pear fruit make for an attractive nose, mild undercurrent of butterscotch, has a pebbles to stream stone touch which helps reduce overall sugariness, likewise not overly full which gives it more lift than might be expected. Medium-bodied, dulcet upfront with violets, lilacs, tangerine citrus and pear, apricot, cherry to green melon fruit flavors. Again, offers a powdery type of sweetness but does turn more tart past the mid-palate. If there's any oak it remains subtle. Pleasing overall cleanliness and never feels like it's trying too hard. 89

## FRANCE RED

Foillard, Jean  
Beaujolais, Morgon, Les Charmes, Eponym'  
Gamay Noir

2014, \$31.99, 12.5%

Filmy ruby-purple core, just passes translucency in favor of opacity, more straight up magenta at the rims with a thin hint of pink. Stinky nose of farts and merde, moderates into damp leather and earth and then finally plum and blackberry fruit, fluffy and primary, juicy semi-sweet white citrus notes, sprinkle of cocoa dust,

caraway and sage. Full-bodied, really comes into its own in the mouth, lush and gushing with cherry, raspberry, blueberry fruit, sweet and sour both. Lemony zest with mineral and iron notes, much cleaner than the nose. Given the depth of the fruit the tannin has some oomph. Interesting that it is not showing any signs of shutting down. A youthfully joyful wine now, will be interesting to see what it's bones look like once the baby fat is gone. 91

Foillard, Jean  
Beaujolais, Beaujolais-Villages  
Gamay Noir

2016, \$18.99, 12.5%

Luminescent cranberry red color, fading slightly to a hazy magenta at the rims. The nose has a touch of sulfur as well as bags of mown grass, animal hide and muddy earth too, for all of that it's not offputtingly funky and the cherry, red berry fruit keeps pushing through. Medium-bodied plus and a totally different story in the mouth. Extremely expressive white grapefruit citrus as well as strawberry, raspberry to rhubarb fruit gives it a boisterous sweet and sour interplay. Tar, charcoal, and graphite here more than any barnyard, herbaceous stuff. Acidity is average and tannin keeps it firm through the finish. It's super fruity and kind of what you'd expect from a Beaujolais producer who makes "serious" wine when instead he just wants to make something fun. 91

Tawse (Maume), Domaine  
Burgundy, Bourgogne, Vigne Blanche  
Pinot Noir

2015, \$24.99, 13.0%

Shiny ruby red, completely full to the rims, good clarity for the depth of hue it has, vivid. While there's a leafy undercurrent of damp earth and newly fallen leaves, the nose rests its case on the purity of the cherry, raspberry fruit as well as bright white citrus and sweet tea leaf, light touch of oak deepens it, ginger spice, while clean it tends to clump together making it difficult to ascertain the constituent elements. Medium-bodied, from the start the oak caramel and butterscotch lends not so much sweetness as creamy texture. The acidity is fine and there's sufficient sour snap to the red cherry, cranberry, raspberry fruit that freshness is no issue. Close to potpourri floral richness though and thankfully the grapefruit citrus slashes through it. The minerally earthiness for now settles for background skulking. A happy wine, hard to imagine it shutting down. 90

Habrard, Domaine Laurent  
Rhône, Saint-Joseph, Sainte Epine  
Syrah

2015, \$37.99, 13.0%

Saturated purple core reaches opacity, the rims likewise a heavysset red magenta that conjures the hues of medieval tapestries, it's all so brooding. The nose opens and separates well, however, it's primary enough that regardless most of what you get is cherry, plum fruit, after that it's leather, grill smoke, iodine and an odd touch of something like eucalyptus, ever so plump and unevolved. In the mouth it's more of the same, full-bodied but at least here there's a quite nice tannic backbone to suggest the chance for longevity. In fact the dryness over time actually wears down the verve of the cherry, blackberry to black currant fruit. Heightened white grapefruit and iron fleck notes help a lot. Allowing for its puppy like buoyancy, has the basic elements in place for future promise. 89

Bellivière, Domaine de  
Loire, Coteaux du Loir, Le Rouge-Gorge  
Pineau d'Aunis

2015, \$39.99, 13.5%

Bright and borderline pink-tinged magenta to ruby color, glows in the glass with no loss at the rims, clear but closer to translucent than outright clarity. The nose is thick and jammy, surprisingly fruit dominated with strawberry, raspberry and watermelon scents, the obligatory white pepper makes a credible showing, more sandy than earthy, by the same turn more seaweed than grassiness, can seem savory in spite of all that fruit. Full-bodied, generous to the point of softness, again it's that red cherry, strawberry, rhubarb fruit which leads. Less peppery with a greater amount of tarry, loamy earth and leather, virtually no herbaceousness. As a result doesn't have that "snap" that the grape can offer. Lemonade more than lemon zest. Extremely gulpable which may not be the best thing for those looking for a cerebral experience. 89

Amiel, Domaine des  
Languedoc/Roussillon, À Peïssou  
Blend

2015, \$24.99, 14.0%

Dense and opaque purple core, only gains clarity through the crimson red rims, extremely vivid. Clean sort of funk, no real animal sweat notes, just wet wool, violets, garrigues and charred kindling wood, very demure mixed black fruits, curiously so. Big tannic structure contributes to its full body, firm and dry grip. That said, there is plenty of pretty florality and the plum, cherry, blackberry fruit, while at times sour, makes a great effort to persist to the finish. Momentary glances of white grapefruit pulp and juice. Tree bark, twigs and more leathery here. Certainly gains some

smoothness from the fruit but you'd still have to classify it as a rustic wine. Real tangy finish. 80% Syrah, 20% Grenache. 89

Foillard, Jean  
Beaujolais, Morgon, Cuvée Corcelette  
Gamay Noir

2015, \$30.99, 14.5%

Somewhat dark cranberry red to violet core, dusky sort of semi-opacity, the rims a saturated scarlet red. The nose is on the dull side, loaded with violets, then damp minerally earth and some barnyard funk, almost gets peppery at times, adequate cherry, blueberry, blackberry fruit scents but diffused and lacking punch. Full-bodied, while it has some tannic backbone it feels flabby and unfocused. Good gamey, meaty notes, baking spices and supporting earthiness plus a twiggy, leafy side. The fruit is ripe but short, mainly the same cherry to dark berry profile. There's a lot going on but it feels like it is receding away from you, may be the case that the wine is already shutting down. So, while clunky now have to keep faith in the producer and probably wait 10+ years. 88

Perraud, Domaine Isabelle & Bruno  
Beaujolais, Moulin-à-Vent  
Gamay Noir

2015, \$25.99, 12.0%

Murky purple core, nudges into opacity, the rims run more washed out scarlet and brick red hues, looks a bit older than it is. The nose starts out with a savage nervousity, wet animal fur and iron flecks before a slow moderation into violets, Indian spices and earth, well-packed with black cherry, plum fruit scents, on the whole comes across as sluggish. Full-bodied, sour a little volatile during the mouth entry, the acidity lurching left and right. Never really settles down even as the dewy florality, orange blossom and blackberry, cherry fruit expands. Giving it extra time to open does little to change things, however, you get a smoother finish. One could argue it is starting to shut down some but it's not likely that the volatility is a product of this, if so. 88

Arches de Bellivière, Les  
Loire, Vin de France, Castor  
Blend

2016, \$20.99, 13.0%

Fat, glowing purple core, fully opaque, dense pinkish magenta rims, just super saturated. Violets, chalk, charcoal and a mix of dried mown grass and bell pepper comprise the lion's share of the nose, the last element becoming dominant with air time, the fruit youthfully plummy if ultimately more likely to veer into cherry, blackberry, except for the violets nothing starts to lift and get airy. Medium-bodied, powerful tannin

gives it a dry, gritty texture which clumps up now and then. This tends to mask the otherwise syrupy ripe black cherry, blackberry to raspberry fruit, here closer to green apple than plum. Ginger, cinnamon and more violets abound, twigs and underbrush. Nagging sense that the phenolics are a tad underripe. Still, at the end and retronasally it's solid fruit and bell pepper, quite typique. You can tell that a skilled hand maxed out the potential of the grapes. 70% Cabernet Franc, 30% Cabernet Sauvignon. (Composite Cork) 88

Coulet (Matthieu Barret), Domaine du Rhône, Côtes-du-Rhône, Petit Ours Syrah

2016, \$21.99, 13.5%

The core the color of plum pulp, all vibrant red mixed with purple, more magenta red towards the rims, saturated while maintaining clarity. The nose leads with a brief burst of swirling violets then settles down into stony earth, meat fat grease and black currant, cherry fruit scents, more textural volume than breadth of aromas, lots of thrust and forward momentum. Light to medium-bodied, slimmed down to basics by acidity and tannin that arguably may be more than the primary material can take. Plenty of pulverized stone and pebbles as well as fallen tree leaves and bark yet clean on the whole. Lively red currant, cranberry, red cherry fruit with brawny white grapefruit in reserve. Presents few moments to relax, quite edgy. This suggests it imperative it is served with something fatty to dull the angles. But the basics are not bad. (Synthetic Cork: Ardeaseal) 88

Touraize, Domaine de la Jura, Arbois, La Cabane Poulard

2016, \$25.99, 12.0%

Clear ruby red core with a noticeable shift to brick red and orange at the rims, looks more matured than its youthful age. There's a good deal of airiness and clarity to the nose, strawberry, watermelon fruit, citrus blossoms, licorice and a minor underpinning of wet wool, clean to the point of disappearing. Light-bodied with a round mouth feel so palate coverage is not an issue. The tannin has some oomph and helps build mouth presence. Hard candy sweetness built into the strawberry, raspberry to green apple fruit but not a lot of staying power. A bit twiggy or leafy but no real greenness. Nice touch of lemon and something vaguely minty. As in the nose, it's just all gone too soon. Good for an uncritical quaff but lacks the stuffing to make a serious impression. 87

Texier, Martin

Rhône, Vin de France, La Boutanche Carignan

2016, \$18.99, 12.0%

Very clear but not necessarily light ruby red color, looks very natural and smooth. Demure nose, a touch funky at first than quietly unfolds strawberry, red cherry to apple fruit, pressed flowers and a considerable amount what could be called dusty stones, gravelly back road dirt, not a lot of overall length. Light-bodied with more tannic heft than it can handle, thus even though slim on the whole it feels anchored in place. That said, there's lively white grapefruit to orange citrus which teases out more refreshing acidity. Given the dry finish there's a pleasing syrupy quality to the strawberry, raspberry fruit flavors. More herbaceous here and that stoniness integrated better. Neutral enough to be a good quaffer with a broad variety of foods. 1 liter bottle. (Screwcap) 87

## FRANCE WHITE

Closel (Château des Vaults), Domaine du Loire, Savennières, La Jalousie Chenin Blanc

2015, \$31.99, 13.5%

Great shine and surface luster, the straw gold pools well into the glass too, clear enough, the hue diminished at the rims. Exquisite nose of honey, sauna stone smoke, lanolin, fresh peach and apricot fuzz, tangerine zest, anise and rose water, clean with sneaky complexity. Medium-bodied, wiry without undue firmness, the acidity contributes equally to structure as juiciness and salivation. Savory garden herbs, tangerine and white grapefruit pith, nice saline edge as well, worn seashells. The papaya, pineapple, apple, to apricot fruit is lean and laser, much more zest than juice. Oddly, seems more smoky cold than while warming. At times tastes like licking Formica. Hard to tell where it will go down the road but certainly just a youthful pup today. (Composite Cork: Diam3) 90

Luneau-Papin, Domaine Pierre

Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie, Vera Cruz Melon de Bourgogne

2015, \$18.99, 12.0%

Rich golden hue, the brilliant shimmer masks the amber touches, the glass looks impressively full. Seashells, chalk and a mild salinity introduce the nose, round and fleshy melon, apricot, pear fruit scents pour forth effortlessly, orange blossom and lilacs, dried honey, not horribly complex at this juncture but openly knit and rewarding to just sniff. Full-bodied, tends towards softness although the acidity doesn't seem absent per se. Floral with mint and honey, equally pretty and accessible in the mouth. Peach, apricot,

pear, yellow apple, plenty of orchard fruits. Less minerality, just straight up wet stone. While obviously just a puppy today there's few hints provided on where it might end up down the road. Hard not to enjoy it now. 89

Huet, Domaine  
Loire, Vouvray, Le Haut-Lieu, Demi-Sec  
Chenin Blanc  
2016, \$33.99, 13.0%

Straightforward golden color, a few green glints, good thickness in the glass, average shine. Green apple, pear, melon fruit scents bubble up first in the nose, tar and oil slick notes next, dried honey, wet slate and smoky residue, blunt enough that it does not last all that well before folding up the tent. Medium to full-bodied, moderate acidity, squares up its shoulders and can come across as dull or standoffish. That said, excellent smokiness with the same tarry, wet stone underpinning. Lots of zip to the tangerine, lemon citrus and as it moves through the mouth there's a spring water freshness. Pineapple, guava, peach, leans a lot more tropical here. Molasses notes don't sweeten it that much. Feels closed for business right out of the gate, leaves you suspecting there's more there for down the road. 89

Aujardière (Eric Chevalier), Domaine de l'  
Loire, Val de Loire  
Fié Gris  
2016, \$24.99, 12.0%

White to yellow straw, at times it looks like water but at the same time it layers down into the glass nicely, good surface shine too. Nose of apple sauce with cinnamon, lemon juice in no short supply, little bit of pear as well, takes some warming up before any stoniness or smokiness appears, as clean and decisive as apple cobbler can be. Medium-bodied with a grip much stronger than its weight, the acidity is in the bruising style, more hammer than knife. Here too dominated by green to yellow apple with a touch of pear and persimmon. Blanched nuts heighten the bitterness. Ginger, cinnamon spice sweeten without detracting from freshness. Has a pleasing "cellar aged fruit" character, having structure does not mean not capable of being relaxed. 89

Perrier et Fils, Jean  
Savoie. Apremont, Cuvée Gastronomie  
Jacquère  
2016, \$9.99, 11.5%

Green-white straw in hue, clear but not the greatest luster, quiet presence. Chalky and somewhat minerally nose, dried lemon pith with a hint of lime, crisp and fresh, fruit pit character to the apricot, peach scents, never quite gets smoky. Medium-bodied, mostly by

virtue of its grip and drying tackiness on the palate. The acidity has some bite, releases fully through the finish. Quite citrusy, sour lemon to white grapefruit. Crushed stone and chalk dust in turn coat the tongue. Slight turn to pineapple, nectarine, kiwi, star fruit more than peach, apricot. As in the nose, of few words but well chosen and not monotonous. Bitterness increases as it warms, more herbaceous too, keep it well chilled. (Synthetic Cork: Vinotop) 88

Aurance, Cave l'  
Burgundy, Mâcon-Villages  
Chardonnay  
2016, \$9.99, 12.5%

Simple golden color, moderate cleanliness, below average shine but full through to the rims. Fruity nose of pear, yellow apple, apricot scents, close to honeyed, notes of powdered soft drink lime, it's a touch heavy and not a lot of lift, nothing out of place per se. Medium-bodied, tends more towards dryness although never seems acidic. The lemon to lime citrus is soft and sweet. In turn the apple, pear, apricot fruit is short and mostly gone by the finish. Some ginger like spice as well as spotty bursts of whipped cream flavor. Acceptable for what it is but just. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 87

## FRANCE SPARKLING

Saint-Chamant  
Champagne, Cuvée de Chardonnay Brut  
Chardonnay  
2006, \$67.99, 12.0%

The golden hue deepening while retaining a youthful veneer, soft translucency, the beads are on the loose side and lift upwards at an accelerated clip. Doughy, yeasty nose, densely layered, given its heft the lemon citrus can slash now and then and the fruit focuses on green apple, pear which stiffens it further, as it opens the honey dimension grows in leaps and bounds, for what it lacks in precision it makes up for in bravura. Full-bodied, the acidity able to keep its eye on the ball but this is a sparkler which wants to infuse every pore of your mouth. At times "brut" seems to be pushing it, sweeter than that. Peach, apricot, yellow apple fruit slathered in honey and something like cinnamon. Croissant flakes and sweet dinner rolls trump the more diffuse yeastiness. Lemon squares. Close to mocha now and then. Forward and kind of trumpy in a good way, you drink it up real quickly. 90

## ITALY RED

Colombera (Colombera & Garella), Azienda Agricola Carlo

Piedmont, Lessona, Pizzaguerra

Nebbiolo

2014, \$38.99, 12.5%

Brick red core, more orange further out, squeaky clean, strong rims and nicely hued throughout. Very good lift to the nose with generous portions of licorice, rose petals, fresh leather, tea leaf, matted straw and hard candy-like red cherry, raspberry fruit scents. Light to medium-bodied, strong acidity and tannin give it much more pronounced presence. Stony earth, meadow grasses, sour mixed citrus, rose petals form its core. More angular here and loses the sweetness the nose hinted at. Blossoms with air time, retains an old school character while letting the cranberry, cherry, strawberry fruit shine unimpeded. 95% Nebbiolo, 5% Vespolina. 90

Ioppa, Azienda Agricola

Piedmont, Ghemme

Nebbiolo

2011

\$34.99, 13.5%

Transparent scarlet red to orange hue, more diminished orange around the rims. Polished nose of leather, pressed flowers, sandalwood, orange peel, the cherry to blackberry fruit fully woven into the other elements, has a middle aged feel. Medium-bodied, more acidic than tannic, this brightens the candied sweetness of the strawberry, cherry fruit and brings heightened presence to the semi-sour grapefruit, orange citrus component. Small pinches of cocoa, flowers and incense add breadth. The overall dry texture slows down movement towards the finish while it keeps its weight fully. 85% Nebbiolo, 15% Vespolina. 89

Ruggero di Bardo

Puglia/Apulia, Susumaniello

2016, \$9.99, 14.5%

Deep glowing purple core surrounded by heavy red magenta rims, clean on the whole. Plummy nose with chocolate, tar and some underlying florality, big and gluey texture in the nostrils, almost all fruit and seems even fruitier than that. Full-bodied and surprisingly tannic, dryness strong in the face of waves of blueberry, plum, blackberry fruit, able to turn sugary at the finish. Much greater tarriness here, closer to volcanic ash than earthy. Note of cocoa, creamed coffee, pressed flowers break up some of the blockishness. Mild white citrus tones. Nice study in contrast between the structure and the fruit. (Composite Cork) 89

Spinetta, Azienda Agricola La

Piedmont, Langhe

Nebbiolo

2013, \$19.99, 14.0%

Light purple at the core switching to crimson before orange rust at the outer rims. Abundant ripeness from the start in the nose, black cherry, blackberry fruit with noticeable white grapefruit notes along with fresh leather, tea leaf, cedar, big most perfume to it. Full-bodied, caramel, creamed coffee accents and close to smoky at times. Sweet boysenberry, cherry, blackberry fruit that slathers over any tannin, moments of brighter green apple too. Cedar, nutmeg eventually weave in. The thickness persists to the finish but the texture gets clumpy. Close to "over the top" and shows some alcoholic heat. Sure to make fans quickly among those who aren't into traditional winemaking per se. 88

Vajra, G.D.

Piedmont, Barolo, Albe

Nebbiolo

2013, \$38.99, 14.0%

Clean reddish purple core with fresh brick red rims, good brightness. Round and plush feel to the nose, mixing together licorice, rose petals, baking spices, damp earth and ripe plum, cherry fruit scents, maybe too dense to express the various elements with clarity. Medium-bodied, strong tannic punch at the start, subsides a little as it progresses across the palate. Takes awhile for the strawberry, blackberry, cherry fruit to get assertive. Same basic array of licorice, baking spices, lemon peel, drier earth with slight twiggy notes. Feels like it is not giving its all and the finish is on the weak side. 87

Tami'

Sicilia, Terre Siciliane

Frappato

2016, \$16.99, 12.5%

Glossy crimson red color, completely transparent with good consistency through to the rims. Some flatulence to the nose, band aid and tilled earth before revealing any strawberry, raspberry fruit scents, a touch twiggy and leafy as well, overall lean profile, some lemon zest for punctuation. Medium-bodied, while it does open up some with air time basically it is dry and feels tannic with an arch pucker than comes across as similar to phenolic underripeness. Stemmy and herbaceous, stony even, with none of the charm Frappato can possess. Attenuated strawberry, green apple to cranberry fruit, same for the sour lemons. Keep trying to find a reason to like it and keep coming up empty. (Composite Cork) 86



## GERMANY WHITE

Richter, Weingut Max Ferd.

Mosel Saar Ruwer, Veldenzer, Elisenberg, Kabinett

AP #27

Riesling

2016, \$19.99, 8.0%

Soft green tint to the yellow hay color, layers well deep into the glass while retaining clarity, attractive and in no way attenuated. Soft nose of mint, lemonade, wet pebbles, pear, cherry to apricot fruit, takes time to open and develop smokiness and it never quite coalesces, few words but still comes across as pleasant. Full-bodied, creamy in texture, the acidity is average yet avoids flabbiness. Patina of pineapple and papaya perks up the cherry, pear, apricot fruit base. Does not seem citrusy, this element indistinct. Dollop of whipped cream with that mintiness, does a good job of freshening up whenever it starts to get too sweet. Generally speaking, though, it is sweeter than one might prefer at this prädikat level. Too thick to really chug. 88

## SPAIN RED

Palacios, Alvaro

Priorat, Camins del Priorat

Blend

2016, \$23.99, 14.5%

The dark purple core slowly yields to a mix of scarlet and magenta reds, well-saturated and just short of glowing. The nose at first hits you with a lot of peanut shells, merde and general reductive notes but underneath that offers rich plummy fruit with black cherry, cassis backup, accents of fresh butter and caramel weave in and out, fresh damp leather and matted straw. Medium-bodied, good firmness without forgetting that approachability and fruit are its best cards to play. Green apple and strawberry add some nice pucker to the red cherry, raspberry base and also elevate perceptibility of the acidity. Some earthy, loamy notes but never funky per se. Seems to be missing a certain exuberance which help you overlook its dull personality. 40% Garnacha, 30% Samsó, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Syrah. 87