

The Hanes Wine Review, August 2017 Edition

As is predictably the case this edition was supposed to be birthed three weeks ago as the “July Edition” but life just gets in the way. Particularly work in the yard. So, quick and dirty, here is what Hanes has imbibed of late.

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This month’s big winners... Almost a “bargain” wine at \$23 or so, the 2014 bottling of Jerome Galeyrand Pinot Noir from Marsannay in Burgundy called “Combe du Pré” was pretty delish and gets right down to business. Did not buy deeply but should have. Having had a few older Ueberroth bottlings as well as the latest release of the 2014 Turley Zinfandel from the Ueberroth Vineyard, Hanes has to say that sticking with youthful exuberance is the way to go. This was one heck of a bottle, as they usually are right out of the cannon. \$48 is about fair these days. The Champagne wines of Marie-Noëlle LeDru are hard to find but if you do, them’s some tasty wine. The “Grand Cru Extra Brut” has a healthy amount of complexity and a regal bearing. \$70 is likely fair for it. But that’s part of why Hanes does not often buy Champagne. Hanes rarely drinks wines from Oregon but landed some from Vincent Wine Company. The overperformer of the bunch was the 2015 Pinot Noir from the Ribbon Ridge AVA, offers a little bit of everything and at a decent price of \$27. Liked it more than the single vineyard wines. Once & Future is the new winery of the founder of Ravenswood and they only have a couple of releases under their belt. The wines are very pricey (there’s no “Vintner’s Blend,” hah) but they did an excellent job with the 2015 Teldeschi Vineyard Zinfandel “Frank’s Block.” Pure, not overoaked and very good punch. \$42 is just what you have to pay. In California the Mourvèdre grape can at times lose its unique character as found in expressions from Southern France. Harrington’s 2015 Mourvèdre bottling from the Sumu Kaw Vineyard is low alcohol with nice acidity and plenty of fruit. \$30 is the price of admission. Hanes has an uneven track record with the Beaujolais wines of Georges Descombes and it’s usually the Brouilly which is favored. That noted, the 2015 Régnié was wonderful and for the vintage hints at some benefit to aging. \$23 is a very good price.

The best \$20 and under picks... This was not a good month for cheapie wines, mostly because Hanes tried to play catch up and drink lots of wine that had been sitting around the house for months (read: try not to spend money on new purchases). But even with these circumstances in play, Hanes did joyfully quaff the 2015 Tiberio wine from the Pecorino grape, a grape deservedly on the upswing. For about \$16 this offers energy and a great interplay between flavor and structure. Worth looking for. This latest “non-vintage” offering reached the bar set by previous renditions, this being the Broadbent Selections Vinho Verde. As should be the case on the whole for Vinho Verde wines, inexpensive at around \$8, this version was heftier but still quaffable and a solid buy.

And the disappointments... Usually Arnot-Roberts cranks out a highly respectable Californian Trousseau but the 2015 just did not do it for Hanes. Did not come together. Not entirely sure if vineyard sources changed or the vintage sucked for Trousseau or what. Ehh. Can be had for around \$37 or so. Ever so much a highly sought after hipster wine, the wine of l’Anglore (made by Eric Pfifferling) finally hit Hanes’s gullet. In this initial test case it was the 2015 Rhône blend called “Véjade,” a blend of Grenache and Mourvèdre. Nice wine, leaves you curious, has that “natural” wine feel to it. \$55 or so is a damn silly price for what you get. It’s good, no doubt, but for this coin it’s far back in the line of potential candidates for Hanes’s coin. Hanes does not have a lot of experience with the Domaine de la Côte Sainte-Épine’s Saint-Joseph wines. The 2015 “Vieilles Vignes” bottling is fairly priced at about \$26 but there was not much meat on the bones and it didn’t make one feel all greased up for more. The basic 2015 entry level trocken (dry) Riesling from Schäfer-Fröhlich was “okay” and in this day and age decently priced at \$18 but focus does not necessarily mean cohesive. Lackluster drinking experience and most fans of dry German Riesling are probably dropping the coin for the high end bottlings.

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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/oldervintages2016.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 August!

CALIFORNIA RED

Turley

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Ueberroth

Vineyard

Zinfandel

2014, \$48.00, 16.1%

The color in the core is more black than purple while retaining clarity, washed out brick red rims, looks older than it is. Smoky nose of grilled meats and leather, not alcoholic but there are notes of witch hazel, underlying damp earthiness, forest scrub, the currant, plum scents seem an afterthought, sinewy lift. Full-bodied, barges into your mouth like it owns the place. The attack features licorice, orange zest, menthol and leather. Not as smoky here and the sweetness of the syrupy cherry, boysenberry to plum fruit more easily register. After a few sips the tannins really clamp down. Metallic, earthy finish with increasing white grapefruit presence. Muscular confidence, knows if it hits you first the fight is over. 92

Once & Future

Dry Creek Valley, Teldeschi Vineyard, Frank's Block

Zinfandel

2015, \$42.00, 15.0%

Opaque blackish purple core with heavysset crimson rims, brings a thundering medieval look. Big floral perfume in the nose, shock of orange zest, lesser degree of milk chocolate, pure blackberry to black cherry fruit scents, noticeable density and minimal burn. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with a very nice tannic skeleton, quite sweet and sugary with prune and raisin notes intermingled with the blackberry, boysenberry base. Less floral and more citrusy, bay leaf and basil notes, has a decided savory side. Perhaps a touch short, may change over time as the

tannin softens. Does not show signs of overoaking and has good purity. Should prove worthy of medium plus term aging. Includes small percentage of Carignane and Alicante Bouschet. 91

Turley

Napa Valley, Howell Mountain, Cedarman

Zinfandel

2014, \$32.00, 15.6%

Dark purple core easily achieves opacity, dull if broad ruby red rims, no real saturated glow to it. Mint and licorice both pretty up the nose, however, the main factor is grill smoke and meat fat, very pungent lift which at times loses connection to the plum, blackberry to golden raisin fruit scents. Full-bodied, syrupy in texture with an extremely sweet and candied character to the raspberry, cherry, blueberry fruit, punctuated by moments of pear and apple. Cinnamon to ginger spice, candied oranges, more by way of eucalyptus and menthol than mint. While not monolithic in scale it finishes as broadly shouldered as it starts and cleans up at the end too. No discernible alcoholic burn in the nose or on the palate. Very easy drinking. 90

Turley

San Luis Obispo County, Paso Robles, Pesenti

Vineyard

Zinfandel

2014, \$38.00, 15.8%

Moderately dark purple core with nice clarity throughout, the rims turn a bit more scarlet red, noticeably wide. Sugary nose of blueberry, raspberry jam to prune, raisin, concentrated more than heavy, eucalyptus and a medicinal breeziness help it move, the fruit so overpowering you barely register butterscotch or toffee oak notes, manages to keep the alcohol fumes in check. Medium-bodied and there's nice fluidity to it, even with some tannic grind towards

the end. Here too it's all about the sweet fruit, blueberry, boysenberry, cherry, fresher without the dried fruit edge. Mixed citrus adds pep and the pleasing menthol to eucalyptus continues along. Peppery tang for punctuation through the finish. Not the most complex but the fruitiness will satisfy your sweet tooth. 90

Harrington Wines
Regional Blend, Central Coast
Pinot Noir
2015, \$25.00, 13.8%

There's a purplish bruise to scarlet red coloration to it, not much shift from core to rims, even with good clarity also pools deeply into the glass. Smoky nose with fallen leaves, underbrush tones, some wet fur, not fully sauvage but flirts with it, bright cranberry, red cherry to raspberry fruit scents puncture the nostrils. Full-bodied, here its sappy and clings to the mouth pores, even as it turns drier and with more noticeable acidity on the back half. Leather, earth and meadow grasses predominate nothing green about it and, again, plenty of sap in the blackberry, raspberry to cherry fruit. Mixed white citrus lends some sparkle at the end. The fruitiness makes it gulpable now yet its best days may be 4-6 years from now when there's some valuable tradeoff for a drop in the fruit. Grapes sourced from Siletto Vineyard (San Benito County) and Casa Toyon Vineyard (Santa Cruz Mountains). 90

Harrington Wines
El Dorado County, Sumu Kaw Vineyard
Mourvèdre
2015, \$30.00, 12.9%

There's some purple in the core but it is more so a cranberry to watermelon red color, bright and very full to the rims, unblemished and clear. Nice wooly to waxy character to the nose, plenty of sour cherry to red berry fruit, clean and surprisingly devoid of earthiness, were it not so compact and firm you'd consider it fruity and primary. Medium-bodied, attractive acidity helps the cherry, cranberry, boysenberry fruit alternate between sweet and sour and brings pucker to the end. More mixed white citrus here as well as intermittent notes of pressed flowers. Keeps some of the woolliness, however, even more fruity here. Twigs, grill smoke and Indian spices round it out. Young and not horribly complex but its energy is infectious. 90

Bedrock Wine Co.
Russian River Valley, Carlisle Vineyard
Zinfandel
2015, \$39.00, 14.9%

Ruby-purple core with more bright garnet red rims, excellent clarity as well as surface sheen. There are

some alcoholic fumes to the nose, however, the power of the syrupy, crushed blueberry, blackberry, raspberry fruit could just about overpower anything, menthol and spiced oranges add some dimension as does the milk chocolate notes, smells like it was bottled yesterday. In the mouth it's much of the same, full-bodied with a smoothly layered texture, if some burn at the end. Overloaded with cherry, blackberry, blueberry fruit until that uneven finish. Sweet garden herbs, pulped orange to grapefruit citrus, menthol and light witch hazel all play roles. On the one hand it is utterly delicious but the burn/turbulence prevents it from achieving greatness. 90

Bedrock Wine Co.
Regional Blend, Ode to Lucien
Blend
2015, \$38.00, 14.1%

The purple in the core cloaked by a blackish crimson red cast, clear throughout and a bit more magenta red at the outer rims, were it not for the clarity looks more middle aged. Damp earthy nose, tobacco leaf and wet wool, the nose has subtle lift due to its general weight, no funk and no herbaceousness, the plum, cherry, red currant fruit crushed together more than separate voices. Full-bodied, in the mouth there's a bright citrus quality, zippy blood orange to white grapefruit. Sweet core of maraschino cherry, raspberry and blueberry fruit keeps it active and helps to play up any available acidity. Tree bark, tea leaf, earth and milder potpourri fill it out, again immaculately clean and devoid of funk. Sinewy finish where it sheds weight but not flavor. 75% Mataro (Oakley Road Vineyard), 15% Grenache (Gibson Ranch), 10% Syrah (Gibson Ranch). 90

Bedrock Wine Co.
Sonoma Valley, Pagani Ranch, Pagani Ranch
Heritage
Blend
2015, \$39.00, 14.5%

Black purple core that is clean enough that it somehow avoids opacity, the rims a brooding crimson red, sleek surface as well. The nose has a medicinal quality, cleansing, witch hazel and mint, plummy fruit with cherry, blackberry jam mixed in, tries really hard to lift and spread but really too bottom heavy. Full-bodied, here the acidity able to give it a spark while there is a drying pucker that is more in line with tannin, in any case the texture allows the flavors better delineation than what the aromas get in the nose. White grapefruit, mint, licorice and mesquite smoke weave in and out. The plum, cassis, cherry fruit expends its power upfront and trails off by the increasingly bitter finish. May need some time to integrate more fully and find its balance. Unspecified percentages of Zinfandel,

Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir, Lenoir, Carignane, Mourvèdre, etc. 90

Harrington Wines

Mendocino County, Lover's Lane Vineyard

Carignan

2015, \$25.00, 13.6%

Brilliant shine and immaculately transparent, ruby red throughout and slightly darker at the core. Pleasing spiciness to the nose, has an airy lift, youthful snap to the cherry, strawberry scents, a bit of a meadowy breeze but on the whole it comes off as neutral. Light-bodied, here the tannin and to some extent acidity give it an electric charge that's anything but neutral. More floral but a large grapefruit to blood orange component moves to the head of the line. Then there is an herbaceous bitterness at the end to keep it vibrant. In turn you get more sour cranberry, raspberry to cherry fruit. With air time it smoothes out some and puts on a tad bit more weight. Seems at once country style rugged and suave. 89

Bedrock Wine Co.

Regional Blend, California, Drummond's Cuvée

Petite Sirah

2015, \$45.00, 14.2%

Black and opaque core which somehow manages to emit a glow, burnt sunset red rims, even looks heavy. The nose comes off as parched and dusty, pressed flowers with a twist of tangerine, has a medicinal cleansing aspect, the plum, cherry fruit scents fairly inert, not much going on. In the mouth it's full-bodied and has the kind of formidable tannin you'd associate with the grape from many years ago, throwback style wine. Sour blueberry and Italian plum fruit dominate, earthy with tree bark, twig notes. Here it's more white grapefruit than orange or tangerine. Admirably focused and trim but little grace. Shows promise of integration once the tannin subsides but that is likely years off. Grapes sourced from Eaglepoint Ranch (Mendocino) and Palisades Vineyard (Calistoga). 89

Tensley

Santa Barbara County, Tierra Alta Vineyard

Syrah

2014, \$24.99, 14.5%

Bright glow to it, the purple core remains mostly transparent, broad crimson red rims of good vivacity. Focused burst of blueberry, blackberry fruit in the nose, mesquite grill smoke, green olives, beef fat, slowly builds a floral side, clean and not easily distracted. Medium-bodied, the acidity is strong and contributes to a taut and compact feel. Broad grapefruit to sour orange citrus, beef jerky, molasses. Stony as well, brown dirt more than loamy earth. The cranberry, red cherry fruit keeps the profile crisp.

Some lavender, garden herbs, gets smokier through the finish. After it has opened for awhile takes on more weight and follow-through at the finish. 89

Harrington Wines

El Dorado County, Sumu Kaw Vineyard, Sub Rosa Blend

2014, \$25.00, 13.6%

Dull purple to black core, clear, further out a dried blood to worn brick red hue, flat and without much shine. The nose presents a core of maraschino cherry, strawberry to green apple fruit, wet wool and leather, lavender, underbrush, while perfumed there is also a steady undercurrent of "sous bois" notes. Medium-bodied, puckering acidity gets your attention from the first sip, the tannins take time to accrue and make a textural impact. Lavender, sage, basil accents and a lemony citrus stripe. While candied and concentrated, the cherry, raspberry to blueberry fruit front loaded and lacks staying power. The savoriness is its strength. While it appears quite capable of broad tertiary development, not sure it is a long-term play. Certain brutishness to it. 65% Mourvèdre, 35% Syrah. 88

Arnot-Roberts

Regional Blend, North Coast

Trousseau

2015, \$36.99, 11.8%

Very light and utterly transparent, unusual orange rust to cherry red hue, diminished rims, brilliant shine throughout, were it not for that it would look forty years old. The nose has a vague medicinal quality as well as witch hazel, prickle brine and mineral earth, takes some time for the floral side to accrete and support the tenuous strawberry, cherry fruit scents. Light-bodied with a strong tannic grip which can be surprising given its otherwise soft grazing of the palate. Merde, rubber, earth and dried grapefruit pulp percolate and there's also a twiggy nature, now and then seems underripe. Spicier finish and by then the candied rhubarb, raspberry, strawberry fruit begins to coalesce, too little, too late. Lacks integration and harmonious flow. Grapes sourced from Luchsinger Vineyard (Lake County), Bohan Ranch (Sonoma Coast), Bartolomei Vineyard (Mendocino County). 87

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Sandlands

Napa Valley

Chenin Blanc

2014, \$26.00, 12.2%

There's a glowing green-gold hue to it, has the intensity of glow-in-the-dark plastic, otherwise flat and lacking in shine. Lime to lemon citrus, rose water, beeswax and witch hazel give the nose punch, the fruit

tends more towards green apple, pear and peach pit than more robust scents, takes time for the underlying stony qualities to unravel. Medium-bodied, the texture is tangy and zesty, never settles down. The acidity seems good plus but not a deadly rapier. More nutty here with less florality and an increase in sour orange to lemon citrus. Apple, melon, apricot fruit wiry and lean. Clenches through the finish and lacks the palate breadth and coverage which makes wines from the grape enjoyable. 88

OREGON RED

Vincent Wine Company
Willamette Valley, Ribbon Ridge
Pinot Noir
2015, \$27.00, 13.1%

There's a cough syrup coloration to it that verges on maroon, minimal purple in the core and no brightening to ruby at the rims, crystal clear and deeply colored. Mild smokiness to an otherwise earth, loamy nose, powerfully ripe cherry, raspberry fruit that closes in on syrupy, wafts of orange peel and hay, hard to get past the earth and fruit. In the mouth it's full-bodied and sappy with a little more briny, herbaceous bite to round out the candied strawberry, raspberry fruit flavors and sweet to sour lemon citrus. Just enough acidity to tighten up the finish and with the citrus give it punctuation. The earthiness found in the nose recedes some, more tar and leather here. Very nice wine, a little unbalanced, can be sipped on its own but definitely stands up to food. 89

Vincent Wine Company
Willamette Valley, Eola-Amity Hills, Zenith Vineyard
Pinot Noir
2014, \$27.00, 13.5%

The core more black than purple, leading to a dusky brick red hue further out, not brilliantly clear but not murky either and more or less transparent. There's an unusual heaviness to the nose which now and then seems roasty, more black cherry to blackberry than red fruits, ginger spice and grapefruit, a touch stemmy but not green, on the whole the fullness actually makes it less noticeable. Full-bodied as well, the acidity gives it a pleasing jolt through the mouth entry before the density wins out. Accents of tomato skin and metallic earth, more cedar than baking spices here. The fruit starts out plummy if not outright prunish, cherry and blackberry again. But by the finish the fruit hollows out. The texture is smooth but needs followthrough at the end. 87

OREGON WHITE

Vincent Wine Company
Willamette Valley
Pinot Blanc
2015, \$20.00, 12.2%

There's good depth to the golden hue, however, remains flat and without much shine, depending on a luminescent glow to increase appeal. The nose is on the sour, crabbed side of things with lemon to lime citrus, wet minerals and smoke, green apple and pear fruit and at times a brine like edge, albeit turns more floral as it warms. Medium to full-bodied, has more volume than cut, spicy with the minerality adding bite. Decent flavor with juiciness in the apricot, apple, pear flavors. The acidity comes across as above average for the type and it certainly scores points for cleanliness in the mouth. Tangerine, lime citrus juicier than the fruit. Which sort of hurts length as all you have by the end is a sensation of freshness. 87

FRANCE RED

Grand'Cour (Jean-Louis Dutraive), Domaine de La Beaujolais, Fleurie, Clos de la Grand'Cour
Gamay Noir
2015, \$27.99, 14.5%

Pleasingly simple light purple to dark garnet in hue, fully transparent with a high shine, no real saturation to speak of. Fetching nose of lavender, mint, orange peel and pressed flowers, for all of its perfume there's also a firmness in the nostrils, this adds weight to the strawberry, apple to peach fruit scents, mild earthiness, notable purity overall. In the mouth it's medium to full-bodied and creates good forward momentum. The tannin has insistence without hard edges. Darker fruit here, blueberry and blackberry to cherry and then a touch of strawberry. At times a hint of caramel. The tar and damper earth, some black tea leaf. The softer finish is worrisome but this remains a wine with future promise even as it pleases today. 90

Galeyrand, Jerome
Burgundy, Marsannay, Combe du Pré
Pinot Noir
2014, \$22.99, 13.0%

Red-ruby to violet core that swiftly shifts into a light brick red hue, trim and transparent throughout. Spicy nose with more musk than lift, plays low in the register, sour orange notes, rose petals, damp saddle leather, light herbaceousness on the back end, on the whole clean and without undue reliance on the cherry, cranberry fruit scents. Full-bodied and has the tannin to squat squarely on the tongue without moving. Nothing shy about the lemon, white grapefruit citrus and more rugged here if not unmannered. The cherry,

cranberry, raspberry fruit has sap upfront and bite as it ends. Caramelized brown sugar, sassafras and ginger knit in over time. Little nuance or sophistication but it's an honest and muscular expression of its place. 90

Aupilhac, Domaine d'

Languedoc/Roussillon, Pays d'Hérault, Les Servières Cinsault

2015, \$23.99, 14.5%

Blackish red core with rims of fresh brick red, the clarity lends it some liveliness. While the nose is marred by some merde and band-aid notes, there's attractive violets, licorice and orange peel nuances, the blackberry to cherry fruit scents stick to the basics, smells like wine that was allowed to do its own thing. Medium-bodied, with good plus level of tannin stays fluid and stretches out well through the finish.

Blueberry, cherry to strawberry fruit, tart and juicy. Starts out floral but the sour lemon to grapefruit citrus stamps that out quickly enough. Woody and earthy, too smooth to be chewy but comes close. It's like energetic movement in a reclining chair. Quietly sip after sip wins you over. 90

Descombes, Georges

Beaujolais, Régnié

Gamay Noir

2015, \$22.99, 13.0%

Semi-dusky look to the purple bruise core, more red-magenta to scarlet at the rims, brooding depth of hue all around. Thick, musky nose of incense, potpourri, fresh leather and grapefruit peels, given the normal alcohol level tends to run hot, the plum, black cherry scents inch close to prune territory. Full-bodied and fluffy, very expansive mouth feel horizontally and vertically. Ripeness evident in the plum, currant, cherry to cranberry fruit, while the tannin deadens the mouth entry some, the acidity sparks the back end. More mixed citrus here and earthier without that musk. Burst of violets at the end. It's genially clumsy and all that ripeness likely hides sharper, more menacing angles underneath. 90

Aupilhac, Domaine d'

Languedoc/Roussillon, Mont Baudile, Le Carignan Carignan

2014, \$30.99, 13.0%

The brightness of the garnet color aided by the high degree of clarity and shine, mild loss of intensity at the rims otherwise quite consistent throughout. Sharp dustiness permeates the nose, angular and can be pinching, red cherry, cranberry to red currant scents compact with swift pacing, suddenly turns airy and fades away. Light to medium-bodied, thick skeletal beams of acidity and tannin give it a pugnacious character, daring you to mock its size. Bracing spurt of

white grapefruit and sharp broken rocks and pebbles caked with hardened brown dirt. Deserves ample time to open and flex and stretch, then you get more sour cherry, red berry fruit. Its ability to cling to your mouth pores keeps it in the forefront of your mind. 89

Anglore (Eric Pfifferling), l'

Rhône, Vin de France, Végade

Blend

2015, \$54.99, 13.0%

Filmy yet on the whole transparent, there's a luminescent glow to the orange tinged ruby red coloration, washed out rims. Band-aid and animal fur frame the nose, then has a cleansing lift of mint, pressed flowers, raspberry to strawberry fruit, and pickle brine, given the persistence of the funk has a certain delicacy to it. Medium-bodied, has a tannic web which anchors it to the palate. Sweetly candied raspberry, rhubarb to strawberry fruit, bright red fruit profile. Just a little bit of orange citrus, pine to mint, then through the mid-palate most of the sweetness evaporates in favor of stone and poor dirt. There's an odd tingle or fizzy sensation at the very end which echoes more than the flavors. Interesting but not quite compelling. 50% Grenache, 50% Mourvèdre. 89

Fontsainte, Domaine de

Languedoc/Roussillon, Corbières

Blend

2015, \$15.99, 13.5%

While clear there's a flatness to the reddish-black color, like dried blood, more crimson rims, fully hued but no glow or such. Sweetness in the nose close to maraschino cherry, prune while conversely there's twigs, tree bark, pulped grapefruits, and earth to distract from the fruit, has a lot going on but hard on the whole to call it pretty. Medium-bodied, a touch angular with both acidity and tannin jabbing you. But here too the fruit has excellent depth and the cherry, blackberry flavors last throughout. Big elevation in the sour white grapefruit element and there's an odd sort of smokiness like you are not sure where it came from. More merde inflected earth without seeming unclean. Feels very authentic and of a place yet not a wine you are going to pound easily. 60% Carignan, 30% Grenache, 10% Syrah. 88

Graillot, Domaine Alain

Rhône, Crozes Hermitage

Syrah

2015, \$36.99, 13.0%

Black core and opaque, while not showing sediment or the like, there is something "fuzzy" about how it rests in the glass, the thin crimson rims have a warm glow. Some alcoholic burn to the nose, plum, black currant fruit gives it thickness, meadowy with tree bark and

twig notes, then coffee grinds and grill smoke, unevolved. Full-bodied, lots of volume here too, more leathery and sauvage here. Tannin drying and formidable in a steadily quiet manner. There is something about the phenolics which suggests they may turn green with time, especially if they outlast the cherry, currant, plum fruit. As it opens more minerals and white grapefruit present. The density can fatigue the palate but otherwise shows nice energy. Hard to say what it's future holds. 88

Arlay, Château d'
Jura, Côtes du Jura
Pinot Noir
2011, \$24.99, 12.5%

Medicinal looking crimson with strong bricking towards the rims, already hinting at some orange, perfectly clear and transparent with above average shine. There's no lack of pretty cherry, raspberry fruit in the nose, however, it's earthiness and twigs, meadow grasses in the driver's seat, develops a smoky lift after some time, no much else going on. Medium-bodied but can feel lighter at times, has sufficient gritty tannin to help it grind into the palate and gain presence. Spicy and even can come off as hot now and then, moderate doses of leather and mineral earth. Stays in the raspberry, strawberry to red cherry fruit range but not necessarily bright and snappy. The finish is compact if not short. Not a bad wine yet it fatigues you the more you sip. (Composite Cork) 88

Côte Sainte-Épine, Domaine de la
Rhône, Saint-Joseph, Vieilles Vignes
Syrah
2015, \$26.99, 13.5%

Opaque blackish purple core that only admits of thin crimson red rims, presents a semi-brooding appearance. Violets and lavender in the nose, some vanilla and buttered toast, has a green streak, the initial flourish in the cranberry, red cherry, raspberry scents not long lasting, wants to lift but keeps getting pulled back down. Medium-bodied, there's very strong and drying tannin which can verge on giving it a feel of underripe phenolics. Layered on top is a decent amount of jammy blackberry, cherry, blueberry fruit, however, it pulls a disappearing act before the finish. Any orange citrus, potpourri, tea leaf also short lived. No lack of volume and stuff going on but never really meshes. Leaves you thinking time will expose the flaws more than harmonize. 87

FRANCE WHITE

Colin et ses Fils, Domaine Marc
Burgundy, Saint-Aubin, La Fontenotte
Chardonnay
2014, \$24.99, 13.0%

Bright green to white hay in color, very nice clarity as well as brilliance. Crisply focused toast to the nose, lime juice, sauna stones, the overall angularity tends to push the flowers to the side, may soften with age, lightly doughy, green apple to pear fruit scents of humble length. Medium-bodied with a wiry build which tends to accentuate the acidity. Pervasive sourness, from the pineapple, green apple, pear fruit through to the lime, lemon citrus. Conversely, a sort of powdered sugariness weaves in and out. Loses most of the doughy, yeasty qualities in favor of stone and to a lesser extent minerals. On the whole stays balanced and the finish extends decently for all that sourness. Very enjoyable, however, food likely required to fill in the gaps some. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 89

Aupilhac, Domaine d'
Languedoc/Roussillon, Lou Maset
Blend
2014, \$14.99, 13.0%

Brownish gold to orange in hue, straw and hay like, more flat and solid than reflective. Floral nose with notes of powdered sugar, orange zest and vanilla bean, some apricot and peach fuzz but not especially fruity, while it has some weight in the nostrils on the whole the experience is neutral. Full-bodied, minty with violets and lime to tangerine citrus upfront. Lighter stream pebbles and water, fairly fresh for its weight. The acidity has more push than cut, leans into you. Here too the fruit plays a side role, apple, pear to apricot, maybe some green melon. Does turn a little spicy at the end to temporarily hold your attention. Basic, unflawed but not a wine that demands your attention. 40% Ugni Blanc, 40% Grenache Blanc, 20% Clairette. 87

FRANCE SPARKLING

LeDru, Marie-Noëlle
Champagne, Grand Cru Extra Brut
Blend
NV, \$69.99, 12.0%

Passive pour still yields a massive head upon the pour, quickly sizzles down to a full surface dusting, wild snow storm of bubbles below the surface, pale brownish yellow hay color, almost like apple cider. There's a fresh yeastiness to the nose along with a curious dollop of cocoa powder, some baking spices along with apple, pear fruit, more mute mixed white citrus and chalk dust, relaxed bordering on laconic.

Full-bodied with stern acidity, just about shoves itself into the mouth. Not as foamy as visually suggested but there's a steady churn. Certainly dry with more emphasis on minerals and general dustiness. The dough, yeast weaves in and out, not consistent. Tries to get floral but swallowed up in lemon, grapefruit bitterness. While there's peach, apple, pear fruit it's a side dish. So much going on that it can be a task to keep up. 85% Pinot Noir, 15% Chardonnay. (LE7) (Composite Cork) 90

ITALY WHITE

Tiberio, Agricola
Abruzzi, Colline Pescaresi
Pecorino
2015, \$15.99, 14.0%

Rich golden hue that suggests an older wine, dull if layered, minimal loss at the rims. Honeyed nose with a curious touch of coconut, otherwise its lemon custard and then a substantial amount of smoky minerality, dried savory herbs, green apple, melon to pear fruit scents, blunt blow to the nostrils. Full-bodied, both spicy and sweet with licorice, anise and blood orange notes and still that honeyed aspect. The acidity is a machete to that honey, though, and by the time you swallow you will need that yellow apple, melon, pear to apricot fruit to keep a touch of sweetness alive. Slow twist at the finish as if it's arm wrestling your tongue. More power than clarity, fun roller coaster ride. 89

Valle Isarco (Eisacktaler Kellerei), Cantina Produttori
Alto Adige/Südtirol, Valle Isarco (Südtirol Eisacktaler)
Müller-Thurgau
2015, \$13.99, 12.5%

Palely luminescent green-gold color, pleasing surface shine, minute trace of fizz after the pour. Spicy nose with an herbaceous snap to it, sour grapefruit, stony with a light smokiness, has enough going on that you almost forget to look for fruit, albeit there is a modicum of pineapple to green apple to be found. Medium-bodied, a shadow of residual sugar during the attack withers in the face of its general dryness. Snap pea and cut grass predominate, grapefruit and lemon, milder minerality. Shows broader if not deeper fruit, peach and apricot to supplement the tart pineapple base. Again, a lingering smokiness at the end. While not exciting, it is very competently made. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 88

GERMANY WHITE

Darting, Weingut Kurt
Pfalz, Dürkheimer, Fronhof, Kabinett Trocken AP #8
Riesling
2015, \$17.99, 13.0%

Pleasing fullness in the golden hue, fills up the glass adequately, minor trace of fizz on glass sides, Stream water base in the nose with a crinkly texture which evokes river rapids foam, mineral dust, there's a vanilla cream underpinning to the peach, apricot to pineapple fruit, lime perfume and mixed floral musk, overall it's more sturdy than breezy. Medium to full-bodied, the acidity tends to cover the palate like a thick blanket. Here too it's led by a pretty lime, lemon to pink grapefruit spritz, more perfume than persistent flavor. Has a savory edge but the peach, nectarine, pineapple, passion fruit flavors chug along. Does finish prematurely, maybe some more residual sugar would have helped to extend. More breadth if you can let it warm some. 1 liter bottle. (Screwcap) 87

Schäfer-Fröhlich, Weingut
Nahe, QbA Trocken AP #17
Riesling
2015, \$17.99, 12.0%

Softly glowing golden hue, lightly luminescent, long after the pour bubbles still cling to the glass sides, turns colorless at the rims. Strong lemon pith component to the nose, mineral water, wet stone, taut with only meager green apple, pineapple to peach fruit scents, gets smokier when allowed to warm. Medium-bodied, trim and focused as expected with good balance throughout, the acidity not overly sharp but it's plenty dry on the whole. Leans more to the peach, apricot pit and apple here, only hints at a tropical road not taken. Can be floral but more so you get repetitive verses of stone, stream water and chalk. Fizzy texture persists as well. Curiously the citrus steps back here, moderate lemon to grapefruit. Nice but nothing leaps out at you and probably have to love trocken wines to really warm to it. (Screwcap) 87

PORTUGAL WHITE

Broadbent Selections
Vinho Verde
Blend
NV, \$7.99, 9.0%

Plenty of the usual fizz upon the pour, brilliant shine to the straw gold coloration, immaculately transparent save for the bubbles glued to the glass sides. Light whipped cream accent to the otherwise floral, mineral nose, some mixed citrus zest, licorice and pear, melon to cherry fruit scents, softly cleansing presence. Light-bodied but perhaps a little heavier

than typical, acidic with lime, grapefruit zing, green apple, pear, strawberry flavors and a mineral water finish. Before that, though, you get that creamy vanillin crest in the mid-palate. Flattens out as it warms so sort of demands being served ice cold. Very poundable. Unspecified percentages of Trajadura, Loureiro, Pedernã (Arinto). (Screwcap) 88

SOUTH AFRICA WHITE

Badenhorst Family Wines, A.A.

Swartland, Secateurs

Chenin Blanc

2016, \$10.99, 12.5%

Dull golden color, while flat has decent fullness, touch greener around the edges. Smoky, toasty nose that cuts into the nostrils, lime with some lemon citrus, some whipped cream and mint in the background, mix of crisper pear and apple with apricot fruit scents, allowing it to warm does not settle it down much. In the mouth it is full-bodied, tingly and toasty here too, hint of butterscotch. Here the lime paired with powerful pink grapefruit to raise the pucker factor. The fruit takes on a sour tropical nature, pineapple, papaya to star fruit flavors. This leads into some minerally, metallic notes. If you like some bite in your wine there is a good value with personality. (Screwcap) 88