

The Hanes Wine Review, March 2016 Edition

Over the years and through countless wines one thing has become clear to Hanes. Given his own developed take on the 100 point rating system, the baseline for competently made, typical, perfectly acceptable wine is 88 points. Hanes has not run the numbers but no doubt were he to, the vast majority of wines reviewed would be judged as 88 points.

This is likely attributable to a few main factors. After 16-17 years of “being into wine” it is now easier to select wines with a higher basement, that is, not liable to outright suck. And because Hanes pays for the vast majority of the wines consumed he does not run into random sucky bottles. Which used to happen either when Hanes reviewed random wines brought to him by wholesale reps or when Hanes’s friends would bring the random bottle or two (not that these were guaranteed to suck but statistically the chance was greater).

So, dear reader, you should feel comfortable with any wine rated 88 points or more as something worth trying. You may like it more than Hanes, that’s the wonder of personal preference. At 87 points or down, Hanes either finds the wine personality less or flawed in some way, large or small.

On a related note, Hanes has been on the winery direct mailing list of Turley (the famous producer of Zinfandel wines) since the 1999 vintage. He recently noticed that he has tasted 12 different vintages of some of their wines, for example, the Old Vines bottling. It makes Hanes chuckle to consider having tasted these many vintages of any given wine. It’s a testament to something. Just not sure what. Age more than anything. Tenacity. Financial irresponsibility. It’s just intellectually interesting to know that one has followed something so closely for such an extended period of time.

This month’s big winners... It is kind of nuts to pay \$46 for a Barbera but if you are going to do so, it should say Bartolo Mascarello on the label. Their 2013 bottling is joyfully expressive and powerful and Hanes would buy many more bottles were it, say, \$30 instead. The Mondeuse from Lagier Meredith has always been fun to try but not always fun to drink. The 2013 version is enjoyable without being ingratiating. Fairly complete and offers a deep selection of what the grape is capable of. Priced around \$42. Hanes would love to see the wines of La Stoppa from Italy’s Emilia-Romagna region get more love. Every time Hanes tastes them, they are great. Witness here their more or less entry level wine, the “Trebbiolo Rosso.” For \$24 you get honest wine that speaks of a place and crackles with life. You gotta try this stuff if you like them there “natural wines.” As the chance to try multiple vintages of bottlings occurs it is clear that Hanes favors Bedrock’s white blend from the Compagni Portis Vineyard. The 2014 was, as they say, “glou glou,” and a simple pleasure to drink and well worth \$26. A couple of sub-\$30 Northern Rhône reds hit the sweet spot, the 2013 Crozes-Hermitage “Le Mazel” from Rémy Nodin as well as the 2013 Vin de Pays “Les Corendies” from Billon. It is always nice to drink Rhône Syrah that tastes like Rhône Syrah without having to wait at least 8-10 years to get there. Some are tempted to write the epitaph for the august Vouvray producer Huet as newish ownership takes the house in new directions (for some years now without the long time winemaker). But the 2014 “Le Haut Lieu” Sec bottling can make a believer out of you and was mighty fine drinking for like \$33.

The best \$20 and under picks.... Their “neutral” demeanor may take some getting used to for folks but if you are in the market for food friendly, inexpensive white wines you need to be trying some wines from the Savoie in France. Hanes tried two from the Jacquère grape – the 2014 Carrel “Jongieux” and 2014 Perrier “Apremont Cuvée Gastronomie” and both for under \$15 make for wonderful meal accompaniment. More in the back yard deck chugging mode is the 2014 Domaine de l’Olivier Chardonnay from the Languedoc. At \$7 this beats most domestic Chardonnay offerings by a good margin. Buchegger does it again, this time the 2014 Grüner Veltliner “Gebling” which is gulpable for \$16 and should be a regular purchase for those who like this grape. Something is going on here as it’s another white wine which makes this edition’s list of best cheapies. The 2014 ColleStefano Verdicchio di Matelica was nicely complex and changed a lot in the glass, just not sure of it as a crowd pleaser. Well priced at \$17.

And the disappointments... Having recently praised the Beaujolais producer Coudert, their 2014 Brouilly was ever so slightly underwhelming, at times hollow if not lean. One hopes and suspects that time will rectify many

faults and luckily Hanes has a couple of bottles to age. Priced fairly at about \$23. First time with the “Sherman’s Gold” Zinfandel bottling from Bedrock. The 2014 was not to Hanes’s taste, lacks body and flavor which does not leave much left over. \$35 is way too much here. Tissot from the Jura in France rarely does wrong by Hanes but the 2014 red blend “D.D.” was off balance and not anywhere near as “fresh” as expected. In general the \$26 price is fair, that is, what you have to pay for such wines these days. Expected more from Laura Aschero’s 2014 Rossese grape bottling from Liguria, Italy. But it just could not rise above the funk. Cost about \$27. That said, it was cool to learn via research that this grape is known as Tibouren in France (as produced by Clos Cibonne).

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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 March!

CALIFORNIA RED

Lagier Meredith
Napa Valley, Mount Veeder
Mondeuse
2013
\$42.00
14.4%
Quite clean with a dark glow to the opaque violet core as well as the more scarlet rims, richly saturated to the point of looking brooding. The nose has an eager explosiveness to it, tossing flowers, pebbles and mountain trail dirt and cocoa at you, over time mixing in minor touches of leather and cured beef, sour character to the cherry, cranberry, red currant fruit yet in no way underfruited. Full-bodied with a layered heaviness on the palate, here the oak cream and chocolate/vanilla swirl are more overt during the attack. After that the acidity tightens things up and pushes the cherry, currant, blueberry fruit to the fore.

Stony and here has a fresh leafy edge as well, not sufficient to detract from the floral lift at the end. Tangy citric punctuation, mainly white grapefruit. The ripeness keeps it from getting mean but it’s not overeager to please. 90

Calera
San Benito County, Mount Harlan, Reed Vineyard
Pinot Noir
2012
\$73.99
14.4%
Pinkish ruby to violet in hue, clear with much richness than lighter transparency, the color pushes well into the rims. There’s some smokiness and stoniness to the nose, cherry pits and blackberries, forest pine, licorice, a consistent element of caramel, ends on a dusty, earthy note. Medium-bodied, presents good supporting tannin which forestalls the arrival of the redder complexioned strawberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit. Stone, poor dirt in abundance, however, in a clean manner. Not that oaky, dollop of butterscotch

and vanilla but just that. Pretty florality in the middle with lemon zest shades. It lacks sustained lift due to its structure but it's not unyielding. On the young side and in need of further softening in order to lengthen the finish. 90

Turley
Central Valley, Lodi, Dogtown Vineyard
Zinfandel
2013
\$38.00
15.9%

The purple core just achieves opacity and without any filminess, the rims a youthful brick red, scarlet hue, richly colored without a saturated glow. The nose has a mild plastic edge to it, easily shrugged off in favor of the ripe raspberry, cherry liqueur scents, a few notes of pine, lemon honey and lavender, betrays minimal presence of sweeter oak. Medium-bodied, the attack brings plenty of blueberry, raspberry, red cherry fruit flavors, however, it lacks the rambunctiousness to push fully to the finish. That said, it has good balance and is not too heady given the alcohol percentage. Orange pekoe tea, cut flowers and to a lesser extent menthol provide support. Toffee crisp and butterscotch whisper quietly, not oaky here either. It's really quite nice but not the full throttle experience you suspect it was capable of. 89

Lagier Meredith
Napa Valley, Mount Veeder
Syrah
2013
\$48.00
14.5%

Black and red bruised core, dull crimson red rims, unblemished while close to opaque, looks more like it's middle-aged. Curious nose, starts off with syrupy cherry and berry fruit then segues to green melon and apple, fresh floral perfume, some pine forest breeze, sage and some pickle brine, the vanillin oak recedes with extended air time. Medium-bodied, round and soft to the point of disappearing, as in you cease to feel its presence. Smattering of white pepper, anise, pine with a clean earthiness, more like potting soil than tilled field earth. The cherry, raspberry, apple, strawberry fruit has snap and plays higher in the register than expected. The florality turns musky here and creates more bog than lift. Finishes with a boost in caramel, butterscotch and vanilla. All the friendly flavors are there, needs to snarl more often. 89

Harrington Wines
Regional Blend, California, Hard Luck
Blend
2014
\$25.00
14.1%

Glowing quality to the ruby-violet core, more of a magenta red towards the rims, nice shine and clarity. Some herbaceous snap to the nose, however, it's primarily orange peel, tea leaf, incense and a whole lot of strawberry, red cherry to pomegranate fruit, feels sturdy but not too dense in the nostrils, not a lot of lift. Full-bodied, has enough acidity to slim it down during the attack and avoid too much candied sweetness in the still sugary raspberry, strawberry, watermelon, cherry fruit. Takes on a more tart white grapefruit citrus character here. The grassiness is more of an embellishment than main factor, you get more sharper cooking spices and wood spice. Lavender led floral swipe at the end. More simply enjoyable than distinguished, has the structure to match the fruit's sweetness. 50% Grenache (Cedar Lane Vineyard), 50% Carignane (Lover's Lane Vineyard). (Composite Cork) 89

Bedrock Wine Co.
Contra Costa County, Evangelho Vineyard, Evangelho
Vineyard Heritage
Blend
2014
\$30.00
14.1%

Gives you as much crimson red as purple in the core, clean and full to the rims, at times casts a pinkish touch. The nose comprised mainly of crushed red berries, cherries and pomegranate, not much citrus, subtle mutter of garden herbs, not much oak presence, clean to the point of evanescence. Medium-bodied, tangy without giving up smoothness, can't say it is all that acidic but the tang comes from somewhere. Orange to lemon notes penetrate better here. Close to hard candy character in the cherry, raspberry, blueberry fruit. Floral with some pine. While it has good activity in the mouth there's little going on to suggest a direction for tertiary development. As residue the oak toast and cream linger. Unspecified percentages of Carignane, Mourvèdre, remainder Zinfandel, Palomino, Alicante, Mission. 88

Bedrock Wine Co.
Amador County, Esola Vineyard, Sherman's Gold
Zinfandel
2014
\$35.00
14.5%

As much a rusty red at the core as purple, bricks further out in a youthful fashion, clear and spotless throughout. The nose starts off quite sweet with cherry compote, blackberry and blueberry scents as well as lighter tones of caramel, butterscotch, mildly floral otherwise it tends to fall somewhat flat, lacking either layered richness or downy lift. Light to medium-bodied, concentrated hard candy style to the cherry, blackberry, boysenberry fruit, matches sour to sweet equally. Does not show much by way of tannin nor acidity and the relative lack of body has it lose momentum through the mid-palate. That all said, it is nicely perfumed and has some grapefruity citrus kick. Wish there simply was "more" of it there. 87

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Bedrock Wine Co.
Sonoma Valley, Compagni Portis Vineyard
Blend
2014
\$26.00
14.2%

Straight up golden hue of medium depth with good shine and strength through the rims. Ample nose of pear, apple, mango, apricot fruit that slightly inclines towards poached characteristics, not shy with the butterscotch, caramel accents yet returns to a dewy floral freshness, light blanched nuttiness, does trail off a touch prematurely. Full-bodied, like rolling around on a waterbed, gives even as it pushes into you. Spicy mandarin orange citrus with clove, cinnamon notes and vanilla, butterscotch to toasted coconut as well. Lavender, violets then pear, cantaloupe, apricot, persimmon fruit, softly generous. The acidity is okay and nudges it when needed. This is "comfort food" white wine and deserves to be consumed uncritically and with abandon. Unspecified percentages of Gewürztraminer, Trousseau Gris, Riesling, Roter Veltliner, Chardonnay, other. 90

FRANCE RED

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)
Beaujolais, Fleurie
Gamay Noir
2014
\$18.99
13.0%

Purple with a good deal of garnet red mixed in, fully consistent to the rims, perfect clarity matched with darkness of hue. Nice snap to the nose courtesy of bright cranberry, red cherry, strawberry fruit, strong undercurrent of cut grass and stone shards, develops the kind of dry texture which could make you sneeze, mild follow-up of white grapefruit pith, aims more at precision than complexity. Medium-bodied, surprising tannic punch, although it is the acidity which kicks it across the finish line. Same basic array of cranberry, cherry, raspberry, sour red fruit profile. Notes of tar and graphite as much as basic stone, the dry herbaceousness holds off until the finish. Long, smooth finish which has energy to spare and no ostentation. 91

Nodin, Rémy
Rhône, Crozes Hermitage, Le Mazel
Syrah
2013
\$23.99
13.0%

Dense purple core with more crimson hued rims of glowing effulgence, strong coloration throughout. The nose is very floral with a decided citrus blossom touch, gently blends in leather, game and wet fur, olive pits, beef jerky, on the whole it's high-toned but not offputtingly so, just adds more sour bite to the cherry, cranberry fruit scents. Medium-bodied and closer to lighter than heavier, the tannin is moderate leaving the acidity to provide the steady pulse. Smooth overall, emphasizing raspberry, cherry, blackberry fruit and violets to orange peel accents. There is a lightly consistent caramel undercurrent as well. This shows good fluidity and clearly was put together in an intelligent fashion. There's not much to "tame" but there's no reason it could not develop interesting tertiary elements. 90

Billon, Maryline et Christophe
Rhône, Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes, Les Corendies
Syrah
2013
\$22.99
12.5%

Blackish purple mixed with dried blood red, opaque with a warm translucency along the more brick red rims. Pretty florality infuses the nose, cocoa powder and then worn leather and dried beef jerky, the green olive gets cloaked by some buttered popcorn notes, in turn there's a dusty minerality sprinkled on the ripe plum, mixed dark berry fruit scents. Medium-bodied, very smooth texturally, glides right into the mouth, the acidity gently frames it, albeit there is a drier dustiness in the mid-palate. Spicy with more of the floral

dimension, matched by white citrus, stones and a caramel, vanilla thing which is not overdone but is present. Much more stony than minerally, like a hunk of rock to suck on. The blueberry, black cherry, blackberry fruit persists from attack to finish. Does not have depth in any one category but blends together enough threads for a tasty tapestry. 90

Thivin, Château
Beaujolais, Côte de Brouilly, Cuvée Zaccharie
Gamay Noir
2013
\$38.99
13.0%

On the darker side, solid purple to plum red core, more reddish at the rims, unblemished, stately presence in the glass. The nose has a muscular cut to it, good pacing as well as heft but takes the time to let the cherry, blackberry, boysenberry fruit unfold and match the underlying wet mud, animal fur notes, gains zip from white grapefruit pith, time to open helps it gain supporting florality. Medium-bodied, the acidity frames the mouth entry and quickly hands off to the tannin which displays above average grip and persistence. With this, the cherry, raspberry, blackberry fruit retains sappiness and lasts through the end. That grapefruit gains precision by melding with the stoniness and that animality recedes in favor of primary expression. Will need a few years to seem less blockish and reveal the nuances of which it is capable. 89

Coudert, Domaine
Beaujolais, Brouilly
Gamay Noir
2014
\$22.99
13.0%

As much brick red and crimson to the color as purple, has a burnt, brooding look, dark and yet excellent clarity. There's some initial funk to the nose which gives way to tarry earth, horsehide sweat, green grass and peppercorns, has a citrusy snap to it, the cherry, blackberry scents get a little lost in the shuffle, more all of its muscularity it achieves some pungent lift. Medium to full-bodied, its weight makes the tannin less prominent, leaving the acidity to try and trim it down. Tart cranberry, red cherry, strawberry fruit flavors abound, here it crystallizes into a puckering white grapefruit bite. It is somewhat hollow in the mid-palate but fruity at the finish. Quite herbaceous with that tar and leather yet the strength of the fruit keeps the overall experience clean. Curious to see what a few years does to settle it into itself. 89

Tissot, Domaine André et Mireille (Bénédicte & Stéphane)
Jura, Arbois, D.D.
Blend
2014
\$25.99
11.0%

Hazy glow to the cranberry red color, turns to a fresh blood red or orange rust hue along the rims, well saturated. The nose is sharp and sour and at times close to briny, good amount of wet herbal matter alongside the brisk cherry, red berry fruit, when it allows itself it can display a prettier floral side, some pulverized stone and pebble bits, however, for all of its primary nature seems bound up. Medium-bodied, witheringly sour and acidic and feels unbalanced and just not right. That noted, no lack of cherry, strawberry, rhubarb fruit and here you get a jolt of mixed white citrus. Loses a good bit of the funk but doesn't seem cleaner for it. More of that neutral stone, pebble stuff through the finish. Not the most captivating bottle this producer has sent to market. Unspecified percentages of Poulsard, Trousseau, Pinot Noir. 87

FRANCE WHITE

Huet, Domaine
Loire, Vouvray, Le Haut-Lieu, Sec
Chenin Blanc
2014
\$32.99
12.5%

Solid yellow straw color, more flat than shiny but certainly not lifeless, sits squarely in the glass. The nose needs time to unwind but when it does you get a credible dose of brown sugar, honey, orange to lime citrus, apricot, pineapple and kumquat fruit scents, fresh and clean but falls short of racy, lacks the finishing kick to penetrate fully. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, the acidity takes hold early and spreads it wide like a net rather than get it super focused. Powdered sugar and honey, more of that sour lime and lemon citrus, edgier here without getting close to withering dryness, which was expected and partially desired. Pineapple, green apple, passion fruit and cherry, broad array of fruit flavors. Subdued beeswax and wet stone, not screaming out stuff beyond the basic primary elements. Reasonable to expect improvement with age but drinking very well right out of the chute. 90

Colin-Morey, Pierre-Yves
Burgundy, Bourgogne
Chardonnay
2014
\$30.99

12.5%

Slight distortion to the basic green-gold straw color, as a faint shine yet the hue remains consistent core to rims. The nose is on the soft side with lime to lemon soft drink notes, dewy flower petals, ripe apricot to peach fruit, there's an insistence which is not piercing but forces you to acknowledge its presence in the nostrils, not mindlessly gregarious. In the mouth it's medium-bodied and acidic in a sour sense, acts as a counterpoint to its natural inclination towards that sweeter soft drink inflected lime and lemon mix. You get some fruit pit character to the peach, apricot, apple fruit, aided by wet stone. Given its acidic nature it does manage to lubricate a sort of flattened progression through the palate, softening as needed at the finish. On the whole it's more friendly than cerebral and leaves you more satisfied than intrigued. 89

Carrel, Domaine Eugène
Savoie, Vin de Savoie, Jongieux
Jacquère
2014
\$9.99
11.5%

Crystal clear white gold color, high level of reflectivity, fully hueless and transparent rims. Strong essence of lime with some lemon to the nose, at first smoky in a mineral sense before turning decidedly floral, serene apple, peach, pear fruit scents quietly steady. Medium-bodied, adds palate presence through a gluey texture which coats the mouth. Flowers, licorice, lime zest and mint predominate, however, there is a earthy, clay-like element of good power. Tries hard to build a smoky texture, ends up closer to tarry. Fresh ripeness to the pear, apple, melon fruit flavors and this seems to be more fruit forward than other vintages sampled. Neutral finish, the book closed and put back on the shelf. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 88

Perrier et Fils, Jean
Savoie, Apremont, Cuvée Gastronomie
Jacquère
2014
\$12.99
11.5%

Shiny golden straw coloration, some hue loss at the rims, fair amount of tiny bubbles accumulated inside the glass long after the pour. Briskly paced nose of green apples, violets, anise and mixed tart white citrus, some streamwater pebbles and such but not an especially stony nor mineral wine, if anything leans more towards nutty qualities. Medium-bodied, derives a certain sourness from the citrus and nuts even if it on the whole evinces a very neutral personality. The orange and lemon notes open up into apple, persimmon, pear and apricot fruit flavors. The acidity

gets your mouth watering and is able to keep you interested. More of that reticent limestone like stoniness. A wine that would be agreeable on its own and with a variety of food due to its steady lack of flash. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 88

Olivier, Domaine de l'
Languedoc/Roussillon, Pays d'Oc
Chardonnay
2014
\$6.99
12.5%

Fat golden hue which pools deeply into the glass without sacrificing shine. The nose is redolent of floral paste and orange citrus, something like a leesy whipped cream aspect, heavy set apricot, peach, apple to even pineapple fruit scents dominate, much more dewy than clean overall. Full-bodied, not that acidic and what is perceptible feels powdery and tacky. That said, here too the voluptuousness of the apricot, cantaloupe, peach and persimmon fruit forgive a host of sins. The orange to grapefruit citrus takes up more territory here and with a sour twist at the end. As a result, the floral side loses some prettiness. This is about as credible as it gets for this price point and it's a very viable party style wine. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 87

ITALY RED

Mascarello, Bartolo
Piedmont, Barbera d'Alba
Barbera
2013
\$45.99
13.5%

A dark cranberry red mixes into the purple core giving it a lightness in spite of its general opacity, the rims in turn are dark and a semi-saturated crimson red, looks as if it will soon start to take on more meaningful reddish orange hues. The nose is richly layered and bursting with blackberry, plum, cassis fruit as well as baking spices, mocha and orange peel, has an interesting mentholated lift as well, some matted straw and earth nuances but overall pure and clean. Full-bodied, here too has both weight and density and carries it off with remarkable smoothness, above average acidity helps as likely so does below average tannin. Ruled by the power of the plum, dark berry fruit, however, broadens nicely into orange/grapefruit, leather, dark chocolate and clay, earth notes. Ends on a more floral note with the fruit taking on a red bing cherry snappiness. It could smooth out and becomes more seamless over time yet no sense risking losing the exuberance of the fruit. 91

Occhipinti, Azienda Agricola Arianna
Sicilia, Il Frappato
Frappato
2013
\$37.99
13.0%

There's clarity in the dark purple core, deep ruby rims, not overtly shiny but has visual life. The nose conjures up a musky floral, white grapefruit lift, some caramel alongside a leather to tar funk, cinnamon stick, ripe and juicy raspberry, red berry fruit scents, open and broadly constructed. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, sweet with the floral dimension dominant from the start. Slightly acidic but quite easy to drink, just a zing at the end. Orange peel paired to cherry, raspberry, blackberry and close to blueberry fruit, again both sweet and sour. Light briny nuances appear over time but nothing to challenge the fruit. Polished and suave from first to last sip. 90

Stoppa, Azienda Vitivinicola La
Emilia-Romagna, Trebbiolo Rosso
Blend
2013
\$23.99
13.0%

The violet in the core is easily matched by a fresh blood red hue, complete to the rims, clear in spite of general darkness. The nose brings some animal fur funk and merde, outlasted by candied cherry, dark berry fruit scents, light earthy notes, mixed sour citrus, outside of the funk it's primary and fruity. Medium-bodied, has a puckering mouth feel, acidic and dry and yet possessed of that same sweetly candied cherry, raspberry, blueberry fruit. Tart orange citrus comes into play, eclipsed quickly by wet leather and tarry earth. Element of clove or ginger spice and then something close to menthol. The fruitiness extends very well through the finish even though it's the wet earthiness which shows most retronasally. 60% Barbera, 40% Bonarda (Croatina). (Composite Cork) 89

Aschero, Laura
Liguria, Riviera Ligure di Ponente
Rossese
2014
\$26.99
13.0%

Bright, sparkly and fully transparent cranberry red color, takes on a mild metallic orange shade near the otherwise hueless rims, quite pretty. The nose has a lot of merde, fart to it, matchstick notes, otherwise it's hard candy styled cherry, strawberry fruit scents and a hint of mixed white citrus. Light-bodied with a kick to the tannin which brings textural dryness underneath

the otherwise super-sweet raspberry, cherry, strawberry fruit as well as caramel and ginger accents. Not as much citrus here but more twigs, bark and meadow grasses. Tangy white grapefruit citrus. The merde aspect comes off more as wet leather and animal hide than straight up flatulence, aeration time does little to resolve. Nice wine, probably true to type, hard to not get distracted by the funk. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc Select 100) 88

ITALY WHITE

ColleStefano, Vitivinicola
Marche, Verdicchio di Matelica
Verdicchio
2014
\$16.99
12.0%

Presents a golden color of some depth, the pour leaves a lot of bubbles clinging to the glass sides, the shine is okay and the hue lasts well into the rims. The nose is soft and expansive, featuring vanilla fudge, anise, orange peel, and ripe peach to apricot scents, behind this all is a mineral, metallic quality which never quite gets to speak out. Medium-bodied, citrusy with emphasis on sweet and sour white grapefruit and lemon flavors, here the fruit adopts a more tropical feel of pineapple, guava, nectarine and then apricot, melon. The acidity does a good job of keeping the pace brisk and allowing the sour to stay a few steps ahead of the sweet. More of a mineral water, wet stone thing here, less overtly metallic. Finishes on a drying, nutty note. For the price packs a lot of diversity in there but it's not the kind of broad array which will appeal to the masses. (Screwcap) 88

Anima, Poggio
Sicilia, Terre Siciliane, Uriel
Grillo
2014
\$11.99
13.0%

With a lightish golden hue, it neither seems dull nor shiny, more of a mildly translucent block in the glass, just very basic. Good deal of raw nuts in the nose, lemon peel, wet stone, peach pits, has a sort of humble breadth to it, not short but does not linger. In the mouth it is medium-bodied and sits itself squarely, acidity is firm rather than piercing. The nuttiness persists while the violet led florality really steps it up, aided by licorice accents. The lemon citrus plays off a honeyed touch. Likewise, a leesy vanillin bit has its few moments before a more hard scrabble volcanic rockiness takes over. When allowed to warm the fruit takes on a tropical character of pineapple, papaya,

mango and nectarine. Good value and personality.
(Screwcap) 88

GERMANY WHITE

Immich-Batterieberg, Weingut
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Enkircher, Escheburg, QbA AP #2
Riesling
2013
\$33.99
11.5%

Layered golden hue, somewhat flat, a few flecks of green. The nose is lightly dusted with powdered sugar, then crushed stone, lemon peel which gets close to lime, nutty at turns, lean and focused apricot, peach, pear fruit with a skin aspect, more saline as it warms. Full-bodied, powerful acidic skeleton, plays up more green apple, pear to pineapple ahead of apricot, white pit fruit flavors. The citrus leaning more towards orange and pink grapefruit, adds some residual sweetness. Echoes of wet slate and river stones more than metallic minerality. The citrus escalates with time. Light patina of molasses. It's a young wine that needs a good long while to sort itself out. 90

Dönnhoff, Weingut Hermann
Nahe, Kreuznacher, Krötenpfuhl, Kabinett AP #2
Riesling
2014
\$19.99
9.0%

Above average richness to the golden color, while blockish does not lack for shine, the glass sides covered in bubbles long after the pour. Gentle and fresh nose, stream pebbles and a floral mist, comprised mainly or mixed citrus zest, element of soft rubber develops as it warms, fruit stays in the white pit fruit range. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, however, with a firmness greater than its heft. This achieved without much cut from the acidity. The citrus fairly explodes here, bountiful lime, tangerine, pink grapefruit flavors. Nectarine and pineapple flavors trump peach and apricot, yet without sour bite. That element of rubber stays consistent, a bit part. Tactful with an easy smile, finishes cleanly, just what you expect from this producer. (Screwcap) 89

Fürst, Weingut
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Mosel, QbA Trocken AP #5
Elbling
2014
\$9.99
11.0%

Bright and lively greenish white straw color, leaves a bunch of fizz on the glass sides for some time post pour, perfect transparency. Violets and lemon peel

start first in the nose, some pickle brine and metallic flecks, at times a flicker of vanilla, freshly picked apricot, apple fruit, has a bigger nostril presence taken as a whole than if parsed into components. Medium-bodied, goes in two directions at once, on the one side it is acidic and slightly fizzy with grapefruit citrus as well as pineapple, nectarine, cherry, star fruit flavors. On the other side is that whipped cream to vanilla sweet softness and a bread floral wetness. The quinine, mineral water element tilts it to the former and keeps the whole experience compact. Finishes on a dime but not without warning. 1 liter bottle. (Screwcap) 88

AUSTRIA WHITE

Buchegger, Weingut Walter
Kremstal, Gebling
Grüner Veltliner
2014
\$15.99
12.5%

Pale yellow to white straw in color with a few green flecks, clear and bright, sits innocuously in the glass. Lovely nose of deceptive depth, brings out violets, mineral water, orange peels, honey, and pear, peach, yellow apple fruit, curiously lacking any snap pea or general herbaceous notes, sweetly inviting with very good length. Medium-bodied, just as ripe here with nectarine, peach, persimmon fruit flavors and a blend of orange to pink grapefruit citrus. Powdered sugar and honey kick it up a notch. The acidity is acceptable and does what it can to firm up this fun loving crowd. Towards the mid-palate you get a dose of chili pepper and the previously missing snap peas. Smooth finish, you gulp it down without really noticing. (Screwcap: Stelvin) 89

SPAIN RED

Bernabeleva, Bodega
Madrid, Vinos de Madrid, Camino de Navaherreros
Garnacha
2014
\$13.99
14.5%

Warm glow to the ruby-violet hues, not hazy but not crystal clear either, fades some at the rims where it takes on a pinkish magenta cast. Bright more than sappy cherry, raspberry fruit in the nose, smattering of strawberry, quartz and mineral dust, parched dirt, dried out potpourri, not at all herbaceous, airy but overall seems mute or at best of very few words. In the mouth it is light to medium-bodied, tannic yet supple, flows well. Orange and some white grapefruit citrus intermingle with the raspberry, cherry fruit and add zip.

Ginger spice, more pressed flowers, licorice. At first its harder contours are offputting, however, it does sweeten and fill out with air time. Still, not intent on pleasing as much as quietly sitting off to one side out of the spotlight. 87

SOUTH AFRICA WHITE

Badenhorst Family Wines, A.A.

Swartland, Secateurs

Chenin Blanc

2014

\$10.99

13.5%

Has a solid, integrated look to it, full golden hue with a reflective surface, a few green glints around the rims. The smokiness in the nose is solid, however, yields with ease to the caramel, vanilla fudge, orange sherbet scents, the pineapple, honeydew melon, nectarine, papaya fruit adds some needed angularity, some ginger spice as well. In the mouth it's full-bodied and even spicier, verging on clove from the ginger base. The acidity has brawn to spare and gets a little pushy. Naturally you get more sourness in the pineapple, nectarine, green apple, papaya fruit since sourness is more a basic taste sensation than a textural element of the olfactory sense. So there. Floral with violet and orange blossom notes. Has some jalapeño at times. More handsome than pretty. (Screwcap) 88