

The Hanes Wine Review, October 2014 Edition

Hanes is certainly in a rut. As has been the case often of late, getting this darn review out takes way too long. The wines were segregated and downloaded at the beginning of October yet here it is on the cusp of November and it's a race to call this the October Edition. So, no time to even analyze this fact. Need to format the PDF version, clean up the HTML for the website and get this puppy out.

This month's big winners... First time having a Turley Zinfandel from the Cobb Vineyard, the 2012 is nice stuff and reasonably priced in their stable of wines at \$26. Glad to see them sourcing juice which translates to affordable [sic] wines. On the Turley tip, their winemaker has a new winery called Sandlands and it is like the hottest ticket in town. Allocations sell out in an hour. Crazy. Anyway, Hanes managed to get some. While not in love with the Syrah, their 2011 Carignane is quite nice and a both pretty and distinctive wine. They gotta do something about those shipping prices though, killer. This is the second vintage of the Clos Fantine "Cuvée Tradition" from Faugères Hanes has tried and this is some nice wine. Makes you want to try their other bottlings. Very fairly priced for \$21 or so. Almost a "value" wine! Chanrion's 2012 Côte de Brouilly gets mention simply because it's quality is in the same ballpark as other Beaujolais wines Hanes consumes and it's cheaper. Cheaper is good. Here that means \$22. While admired, for some reason the Domaine de l'Ecu never quite "catches fire" in terms of popularity. Anyway, their 2012 "Granite" bottling is awesome, ripe without giving up acidic spine. Fairly priced about \$23.

The best \$20 and under picks... Valle dell'Acate continues to make one of the better bargain (~\$16) Frappato wines out there. Kudos to this cooperative for keeping it real. Likewise, Cantalupo's Il Mimo rosé is pretty great each year, 2013 being no exception. \$11 means buy by the case. The name of the winery/producer changes now and then but "Le Telquel" from Puzelat-Bonhomme is a nice rustic rendition of Gamay and the 2013 is a good choice for consuming with bigger dishes. Clocks in around \$17. You better get the 2013 "Verduno Pelaverga" (Pelaverga being the grape) from Burlotto while it is still under \$20 and can be considered a value. Pleasingly rustic with a sweet core of red fruit, just the kind of wine that makes you wish you drank more obscure Italian wines. Hild certainly wins the best Elbling of the month award. Their 2013 QbA Trocken is crisp and lively and certain to prove versatile at the dinner table, all for around \$15.

And the disappointments... Everyone knows the Jura is smoking hot for wine geekery and the new name in town is the Domaine du Pélican. So, had to try some even if the prices are stoopid. The 2012 "Trois Cépages" red blend was credible but not worth \$45 by a long shot (but the Savagnin Ouillé is nice). Corsica is also all the rage these days so ever the slave to fashion, Hanes bought a bottle, this being the 2012 Abbatucci "Rouge Frais Impérial" made from the Sciaccarellu grape. Or the Sciaccarello grape as it is entirely unclear if one spelling or the other is "correct." In any event, it was an interesting exercise but did not inspire Hanes to go long on Corsican wines. \$26 a bottle is not helping matters either. Another cherry popping, twas the first time trying a Turley wine from the Sadie Upton Vineyard and it was alright at best. This 2012 was oaky and lacking depth. And more expensive than the Cobb. Was not entirely sold on the 2012 Texier Brézème which is unusual since this is typically a slam dunk. Hanes is unsure about vintage characteristics regarding this wine. Ehh, no one hits a homerun every at-bat. Vacheron's Sancerre is hit or miss for Hanes, love some vintages, ehh on others, bigger spread than other Sancerre wines at this price point. 2013 seems closer to the latter, just doesn't have that nervosity. And at \$36 that's kind of ouchy. Was psyched to try the Monteforche Cabernet Franc from the Veneto. Must have been the bottle cap. But not such a nice drinking experience. At \$17 these days you smile and shrug, the price of experimenting. Was also not that crazy about the 2011 Timorasso wine from Fratelli Massa although I am sure the cool kids will defend its honor. Easy pass for \$25.

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Unlike *those other* professional reviews, Hanes only will share what he likes if it is *currently available* in stores for immediate purchase. If these wines are not to be found in some of your local stores, they suck and that's not Hanes's fault.

If you are interested in reading tasting notes by Hanes on the *older (or non-imported) wines* he has recently consumed, these notes are gathered here: <http://www.haneswinereview.com/reviews/oldervintages2014.html>

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

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

Winery/Producer Name

Region of Origin, Appellation, Brand Name/Wine Style, Single Vineyard (if any applicable)

Grape Type

Vintage Year, Price Hanes Paid (if available), Alcohol Percentage (if available)

Tasting Notes, Hanes's Numeric Score (on the traditional, yet inane, 100 point scale (which for Hanes truly begins at around 80 points and more or less ends around 94 points)

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

CALIFORNIA RED

Turley

Amador County, Cobb Vineyard

Zinfandel

2012, \$26.00, 15.8%

The cleanliness of the purple core saps it of richness, however, no lack of vivacity, this holds for the more garnet to brick red rims, for all of its transparency and shine looks older than it is. The nose displays nice focus, if some cleansing heat, cured beef, leather alongside blueberry, raspberry, elderberry, menthol and some mint, light edge of caramel, basically a cavalcade of berries. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with a concentrated, hard candy sweetness which extends fully through the finish. If it were heavier would evoke the "old school" Turley style. Lemon drops, mint, sweet herbs, yet has a savory touch as well. Golden raisin and date accompany the raspberry, blueberry, strawberry fruit, all sugary and clingy. Has some tannin in there but no match for the dulcet tones. Citrusy notes grow over time. While the finish is kind of hollow and loses intensity, it is otherwise so fun you'd be a jerk to enumerate the flaws. 91

Sandlands

Contra Costa County

Carignane

2011, \$28.00, 13.2%

The purple core lightened some by a brick red to garnet hue, the clear rims don't quite make it to ruby, stay more in the basic red range, nice coloration throughout. At first the nose is dominated by white

pepper and white grapefruit, sour red fruits and a light herbal quality, with airtime you get more mocha and pine scrub, fresh overall with more stone chunks than minerality. Close to full-bodied, there's some tannic punch there, you feel an astringent pucker in your cheeks. Cranberry, raspberry, pomegranate fruit, the white citrus remains active. Granite to graphite notes, no greenness but there is something vaguely stemmy like whole cluster fermentation stuff. That pucker shortens the finish some but no lack of fruit. Comes across as natural and fairly uncaring if you warm up to it or not, doing its own thing. 90

Bedrock Wine Co.

Sonoma Valley, Pagani Ranch, Pagani Ranch

Heritage

Blend

2012, \$37.00, 14.6%

Opaque and fully saturated, the core is a deep purple, the rims a glowing magenta red to pink, looks like a day-glo poster in the glass. The nose is dense to the point of creating difficulty in parsing it out, there is a potpourri like floral musk, concentrated plum, blackberry, blueberry fruit scents, a mild mentholated touch, likewise glimmer of beef jerky, end with a blast of lemon citrus and seasoning spices. Full-bodied, the drying and clumpy tannin quickly accrues on the tongue, not that much dampens the sweetness of the more redder fruit here, cherry, raspberry and strawberry as much as plum or blackberry. Chocolate and caramel are proportionate, never seems oaky. Dryness impedes flow of the flowers and menthol to mint notes. Sort of grinds to a halt before the finish. Leaves you unsure how the tannin will resolve over time as well as how much fruit will be left by then.

Unspecified percentages of Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Grand Noir, Lenoir, Carignane, Mourvèdre, etc. 88

Turley

Amador County, Sadie Upton Vineyard

Zinfandel

2012, \$40.00, 15.7%

Minimal violet, almost entirely red-ruby to magenta in color, very clear, the rims take a mildly burnt cast with a hint of orange. At first the nose is filled with caramel and buttered popcorn scents before mint, eucalyptus, flowers and raspberry, strawberry, cherry liqueur takes over, has a minimal amount of brown dirt earthiness, however, there is a monochrome character to the nose overall. Medium-bodied, curiously light and glides smoothly rather than grip the palate. Here the oaky popcorn, coconut, butter, caramel comes through more, perhaps owing to its lighter weight. Strawberry, watermelon, green apple, raspberry fruit, all high and flighty, no deeper resonance. Very sweet attack which trails off by the finish. Tannic in a way which suggests light phenolic underripeness. Insistent in the narrowly tailored message it presents. Liked the first few sips much more than the last few. 88

Sandlands

Monterey County, Santa Lucia Highlands

Syrah

2011, \$30.00, 12.9%

Day-glo quality purple core, pulsates with vibrant saturation, same for the wide garnet to scarlet rims, not cloudy but does not have a sleek sheen to it either. The nose comprised of matted grasses and damp earth, sour Italian plum to cherry fruit, menthol, hard caramel candy and a touch of wet saddle leather, primary and surprisingly inexpressive. Medium-bodied, at first dominated by a vanillin cream but if you can hold off it integrates fairly well. Strong acidity supports the presence of white grapefruit, tea leaves and grill fat, little doubt you are drinking Syrah. The blackberry, cherry has some cranberry in it, never truly sweet. Indeed, savory herb takes over, matched up with pine needles and camphor notes. Loses body through the finish. Has the structure to age medium term and see what happens. 88

Bedrock Wine Co.

McDowell Valley, Gibson Ranch

Grenache Gris

2013, \$20.00, 14.0%

While the ruby-violet color is transparent there is also a light gauziness, maintains a consistent hue intensity through to the rims. The nose is a little stemmy but there's ample strawberry to cherry syrup accents, no other sweetening element, muted wildflowers, not

much going on. Medium-bodied, dry and tacky on the tongue which saps juiciness out of the strawberry, watermelon, green apple fruit. Has decent degree of sourness as well. Twigs, grass, burst of cinnamon and nutmeg, spiced orange peel. Overall, remains neutral in feel and profile. No flaws, nothing leaps out at you to hold your attention. 87

Turley

Napa Valley, Turley Estate

Zinfandel

2012, \$38.00, 15.1%

Garnet-purple core, not all that deep and opaque, reddish rims, seems more mannered than alive visually. Caramel, molasses, vanilla, clove spice, gingerbread yet somehow not really oak dominated nose, some eucalyptus, curiously mute, even the blackberry, blueberry, cherry fruit scents quiet, some greenness shortens whatever fun is available. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, the acidity is good, biting and more succinct as a result. Rhubarb, strawberry, banana and green apple woven into molasses, brown sugar and haphazard eucalyptus. Unfortunately, past the fruit and some oak "makeup" there's not much else to hang your hat on, leaves you feeling puzzled. 87

NEW YORK RED

Bloomer Creek

Finger Lakes

Cabernet Franc

2010, \$22.99, 12.4%

A mild filminess pushes the blackish purple core into opacity, the rims are a bright rust red with a tinge of orange. There's a twiggy, leafy aspect to the nose, however, at the same time a plumminess which fills in many holes, wet tobacco leaf and cumin spice, at times you get a waft of green apple, likewise moments of merde and mud, low oak presence here. Medium-bodied, semi-gritty, rough mouth texture, raspberry, red cherry fruit, watermelon, sometimes like Sweet Tarts, there are oaky nuances which help to supplement the fruit towards the finish and provide body. Forest floor matter more than cut grass, no tannic astringency. Not sure it would be identifiable as Cabernet Franc in a blind tasting, however, not a bad drop per se. 87

NEW YORK WHITE

Wiemer Vineyard, Hermann J,

Finger Lakes, Seneca Lake, Dry

Riesling

2013, \$17.99, 12.0%

Pale yet glowing gold color, has a greenish tint, empty rims. Big level of rubber in the nose, this laid over the

vanilla cream element, lemon sherbet, wet stone, pear and apple skin, however not especially fruity, full nostril presence but not heavy. Medium-bodied, the fizzy mouth feel contrasts the whipped cream, vanilla aspect. The lime, lemon citrus more peel than pulp. Offers apricot, peach skin as well, to a lesser degree. Oddly, the chalk, stone gives it a flat feel during the finish, at times it develops a saline edge. It is clean in that it likewise feels somewhat empty at times, loses vivacity of flavor. Pleasing but unmemorable. 87

FRANCE RED

Clos Fantine

Languedoc/Roussillon, Faugères, Cuvée Tradition Blend

2012, \$20.99, 14.0%

Dark purple core, opaque verging on black, thin red-ruby rims, very lively and saturated. The nose unveils violets, milk chocolate, plum to black cherry fruit, orange peel, stays fun throughout, tends to push the leather, wood smoke, earth notes in an unfocused way, doesn't seem fruity but in the end certainly fruit-driven. Medium-bodied, generally soft in texture but has a good deal of underlying tannin to create pucker during the attack. Sweetening clove, ginger spice and orange pekoe tea shades, a powerful floral musk builds with each sip. Chocolate is able to soften the profile a little. Loaded with plum, blackberry, blueberry fruit, ripe but not sugary. Olive pit, leather, tar peek through at the end. Very well designed. 40% Carignan, 30% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache. 90

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)

Beaujolais, Fleurie

Gamay Noir

2013, \$22.99, 13.0%

The very clear and transparent purple core does not betray its saturated glow until it segues into red magenta at the rims where it glows warmly, not as much pink as these wines sometimes have. Possesses a fair degree of stone dust and powder in the nose, enough to temper the ripeness of the cranberry, elderberry, cherry fruit scents and mocha accents, flirts with an herbaceous side which does not develop, however, a pork rind to beef jerky element does appear. Full-bodied, pleasing floral perfume, balanced and long presence to the cherry, watermelon, raspberry fruit, the tannin tends to prevent it from developing a hard candy sweetness. Some grapefruit nuances. As for that tannin, there is some astringency at the end, a sign of stemminess or underripe phenolics or the like. Very sturdy and built to weather any storm. If the fruit holds out could smooth out and improve with 5-6 years more bottle time. 89

Breton, Catherine et Pierre

Loire, Chinon, Beaumont

Cabernet Franc

2012, \$31.99, 12.0%

Purple core, neither opaque nor transparent, a lot of garnet red in the rims with brick no doubt in its future, good degree of color saturation throughout. Very ripe nose, drips with cherry, black currant to cassis fruit, that noted, the bell pepper, cigarette ash, leather and witch hazel last the longest, lots of twists and turns on its journey. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, equally endowed with sweet cherry, blackberry, cassis fruit although the tannin is up to the task of not only framing but beating back this sugary goodness. The bell pepper and herbaceousness supports without going overboard. Floral with orange peel and tar accents. Develops green apple after awhile. Generally round mouth feel, could say it ends a touch short. Can't complain and it likely will prove more interesting once the baby fat is gone and the bones show more clearly. 89

Puzelat-Bonhomme

Loire, Vin de France, Le Telquel

Gamay Noir

2013, \$16.99, 12.5%

Not filmy but it has a warm fuzzy glow to the semi-translucent purple to pink-magenta hue, strongly colored rims. The nose features bell pepper, meadow grasses, dried lemon peel before notes of nutmeg and something close to clove, ends with forest mud and wet leather alongside pressed together blueberry, cranberry, cherry fruit which is more forceful than long, overly muscular. Medium-bodied, excessively tannic and rough, gives it a sticky mouth feel. Grass, stone, dried caked earth, big zip to the white grapefruit citrus. Here the baking spices take a few steps backwards. Past the mid-palate the acidity gets mouth watering. Moments of bell pepper. The cherry, strawberry, raspberry fruit steady at an unspectacular level. At times shows a merde funk. Not ready for prime time, needs additional bottling aging and/or long decant. (No vintage on label, you just have to know who to ask to find out.) (Lot 220414) 89

Voûte des Crozes (Nicole Chanrion), Domaine de la

Beaujolais, Côte de Brouilly

Gamay Noir

2012, \$21.99, 13.0%

From a distance it's mostly violet, however, up close it is more garnet to dark red magenta, clean but not light enough for actual transparency, lush right through to the fully hued rims. There's an herbaceous twist to the nose, dried grass and poor brown dirt, this saps the excess sweetness out of the raspberry, blackberry, cherry fruit, quite a bit of overall ripeness, white

grapefruit to orange citrus pulp, for all of its heaviness seems pure and unadorned, minimal funk which may or may not be a good thing. Full-bodied, here you get an initial blast of white pepper which holds your attention a few ticks before all that raspberry, cranberry, red currant fruit steams on in. Acidity churns away under all the baby fat. Sweet orange to grapefruit citrus. Leather and earth but, again, minimal sauvage funk. Clove, ginger spice but no real oak presence that would add tiresomely to the sweetness. Accessible and big enough to impress, less sure about its merits for intellectual analysis. 89

Grand'Cour (Jean-Louis Dutraive), Domaine de La Beaujolais, Fleurie, Le Clos Cuvée Vieilles Vignes Gamay Noir
2013, \$29.99, 12.0%

Filmy red-ruby to violet in hue, clearly minimal if any filtration, dusky rims. Fluffy, rich nose of garrigues, olive pit, nutmeg, dried straw, the raspberry to strawberry scents verge on jammy, lasts quite long in the nostrils. In the mouth it's full-bodied, too fat to really notice any tannin underneath. Evident grapefruit and lemon citrus. The rhubarb, strawberry, red cherry fruit prettied up by nutmeg, cinnamon, bay leaf, potpourri, cocoa. Its layered quality keeps it full through to the finish, even kind of slutty at times. Lacks elegance but makes up for it in power. Might be more interesting once it sheds some baby fat. 89

Pélican, Domaine du Jura, Arbois, Trois Cépages Blend
2012, \$44.99, 12.5%

Crystal clear ruby-violet in hue, this holds well into the rims, touch more red garnet there, sleek and shiny surface. Smoky, toasty nose, smells expensive, pickle brine doused on the raspberry, cherry, strawberry scents, agreeably herbaceous, a waft of chocolate now and then, feels like it is trying to do too much. Medium-bodied, not silky but smooth at its weight. Big white pepper component, grass and caraway seeds, high toned on the whole. The apparent oak here is creamier, less overt toast. Lemon, white grapefruit citrus activates in the mid-palate, adds sour lift and brightness. The raspberry, cranberry, cherry fruit lively if not that deep. Lacks distinctive personality, easy to see how it would please most imbibers. 60% Pinot Noir, 35% Trousseau, 5% Poulsard. (Composite Cork: Diam10) 88

Texier, Eric
Rhône, Côtes du Rhône Brézème Syrah
2012, \$25.99, 12.5%

The purple hued core quickly segues to ruby and then scarlet red, broodingly deep, clean as a whistle and with a shiny surface. Sappy blackberry, cherry to boysenberry fruit scents frame an agreeable nose, pine and orange pith then opens into a funkier merde and muddy earth profile, touch of dried beef along with mesquite smoke, ends with a burst of witch hazel, helps to open it and release density. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, perhaps lacking in acidity or tannin as it leaves an impression of softness. Violets, caramel, candied orange peels, menthol, beef jerky and salt lick all swirl about. Apple and peach blend into cherry, raspberry, blackberry fruit. Not a mean bone in its body, trails off at the end like it felt it was talking too long. Lots to enjoy now, unsure about making old bones. 88

Abbatucci, Domaine Comte
Corsica, Vin de France, Rouge Frais Impérial Sciaccarellu
2012, \$25.99, 12.5%

Cough syrup red in color, wonderfully shiny and transparent, glows without saturation, only slight fading at the rims. Cherry, strawberry, raspberry fill in the nose, provides some salinity to minerality, orange peel, the concentration of ripeness in the fruit makes it difficult to get at much else, however, doesn't come across as fruit dependent in a simplistic manner. Light-bodied, well-structured with tannic and some acidic spine, hard candy quality to the strawberry, raspberry, rhubarb fruit, if the mouth feel did not start to dry by the finish the fruit might be too much. Even the orange to lemon citrus has a soft drink sweetness to it. There is mocha powder and gingerbread notes as well. After repeated sips, starts to finish with a medicinal bitterness. First glass more interesting than the last. 88

FRANCE WHITE

Ecu (Guy Bossard et Fred Niger Van Herck), Domaine de l'Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine, Granite Melon de Bourgogne
2012, \$22.99, 12.0%

Deepened gold color, not dull, about average shine, warm glow and hue holds well into the rims. Big, thick nose of honey, lemon pulp, lavender and apricot to apple fruit before the smoky stoniness takes over, seems plump and primary right now, unsure what that honeyed note may suggest for ageability. Full-bodied, has a strong blanket of acidity which gives it a firm structure without impeding flavor. Wet stone, clay like

notes, lanolin and honey, the white grapefruit bite holds off towards the end. The apple, pear, apricot fruit succinct but not lacking, simply not what the wine wants to express. Perhaps uncommon sweetness and this without many doughy or yeasty accents. A soft bludgeoning. 90

Pélican, Domaine du
Jura, Arbois, Savagnin Ouillé
Savagnin
2012, \$44.99, 12.5%

Decent depth to the golden core, not especially vivid, has a greenish tint, stays consistent with what the hue it has, youthful appearance on the whole. Toasty nose, charred wood, lime, sauna stones, nutmeg, tart green apple, pineapple to pear fruit scents, has a light doughiness under it all, aggressive but not vicious. Medium to full-bodied, acidic with a palpable lime to lemon citrus edge. Runs on the hot side even at 12.5% alcohol, nuances of vanilla, toasted coconut, custard, cinnamon. At times floral when this does not succumb to yeasty, doughy flor notes. Tingly and alive mouthfeel, nimble for its weight. Full finish. More fun than serious in demeanor. 90

Pépière, Domaine de la
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie
Melon de Bourgogne
2013, \$14.99, 12.0%

While there's good plus richness to the golden hue, perhaps to the point of looking older than it is, still on the dull side, holds well at the rims, fairly unremarkable visually. The nose offers up a saline quality, crushed seashells before honeyed notes, flowers, anise and something akin to lemonade, only moderate peach, apricot fruit scents, not particularly juicy, marked most by textural fatness and weight in your nostrils. In the mouth there's a similar experience as it feels heavier than usual, full-bodied and clingy. Has acidity but unable to display cut and verve. Stony smokiness and dustiness, at the same time here the pineapple, nectarine, green apple, peach fruit ripe and forward. The lemon, orange citrus too is sweet, moments of white grapefruit brings sourness. Even the grassy element seems rounder and softer than usual. It's quite nice but not quite the lean and succinct package one expects, curious that. (Composite Cork) 89

Pépière (Marc Ollivier et Rémi Branger), La
Loire, Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine Sur Lie, Clos des
Briords, Cuvée Vieilles Vignes
Melon de Bourgogne
2013, \$19.99, 12.0%

Pale golden core, transparent yet lacks shine, what hue is there diminishes as it reaches the rims, nothing here to catch your visual fancy. The nose is demure,

mainly crushed seashells and stone dust, Mandarin orange and lemon citrus, touch of mint and violets, solid enough peach, apricot fruit, mild smokiness at best, creaminess wins out in the end, starts to act like it is focused and then loses it. Medium-bodied, thankfully has sufficient acidity to center and ground it, helps to push the vanilla, whipped cream accents aside, bring out that more pungent smokiness and chalk dust. The citrus has no distinct flavor, the fruit on the whole apple, peach, pear. Glimmer of brine or jalapeño. Licorice. Seems like all stops were pulled out to even achieve this, so a tip of the hat is due. 88

Duplessis, Gérard
Burgundy, Chablis
Chardonnay
2012, \$29.99, 12.0%

Pale white straw to worn gold in color, transparent but not necessarily empty. Flinty, stony nose yet with a palpable honeyed aspect which masks the weakness of the peach, apricot fruit scents, orange pulp, mint, licorice, gets the job done in conveying its terroir while still maintaining appeal for those who want a glass of Chardonnay. Medium-bodied, savory and zesty with good+ acidic punch. Flint, slate, wet chalk sets an early tone. Honey fleshes out the attack here too, filling out further with sparkly lemon, orange citrus. The mint, licorice, violets reappear, at moments sweet garden herbs too. Can't really complain about the level of apricot, pear, peach, golden apple fruit without such being a clear strength. That said, unusually sweet finish. 88

Vacheron et Fils, Domaine
Loire, Sancerre
Sauvignon Blanc
2013, \$35.99, 12.5%

Good depth to the golden hue, almost too much so, pools into glass more than shines across the surface, does lose some intensity at the rims. The nose is soft and friendly with mint, flowers, dried honey and orange marmalade alongside the yellow apple, pear, apricot fruit, as it warms it develops more stony smokiness, albeit without much punch. Medium-bodied, here the acidity has just enough power to enliven the grapefruit to orange citrus and create bite, at the same time the stoniness and smoke kick it up a notch or two. That said, it still lacks a keen edge and ability to pierce. Anise, mint, violets, bubblegum and non-juicy apple, apricot, pear fruit act as window dressing. More honey than chili pepper. Does gather what it has to keep pushing towards the end for a full finish. 88

FRANCE ROSE

Clos Cibonne

Provence, Côtes de Provence, Cuvée Spéciale des Vignettes

Tibouren

2012, \$31.99, 13.5%

Brilliant pink color with an orange tinge, pales widely around the rims, overall has a highly attractive shine. Minerally crinkle to the nose, this grounds the strawberry, cherry scents as well as orange peel, lavender, licorice and basil notes, sweet but not sugary, it expands at a consistent rate, amazingly long presence in your nostrils. Full-bodied, soft and round, the sneaky acidity supports in a mostly subtle manner. Lemon, tangerine zest accompanied by cocoa touches, cinnamon sticks and assorted flowers. Slightly peppery, minor grass notes, nothing stops the blossoming of strawberry, rhubarb, raspberry fruit. Takes on additional sturdiness as it approaches room temperature. Both savory and sweet at the end, balanced with a playful recklessness. 90

FRANCE DESSERT

Ganevat, Domaine Jean-François

Jura, Vieux Macvin du Jura Sous la Roche Blend

NV, \$47.99, 17.5%

Filmy orange color with a brownish base, yellows near the rims then empty, not especially older looking, just looks as it should for how it was made. Honey and orange marmalade driven nose, maple syrup, roses, apricot paste, given its weight in the nostrils has good pacing and freshness, achieves openness and accessibility over complexity. Medium-bodied, leans heavily on cinnamon, cumin, ginger spice with a layer of orange zest and honey to molasses on top. Green apple, apricot, loses keener bite due to the presence of raw pie dough aspect. Percolates well in the mouth even as it feels aged and settled down. Acidity is good plus for category of wine. Unspecified percentages of Chardonnay, Savagnin. 620 ml bottle. 91

ITALY RED

Burlotto (Marina Burlotto), Comm. G.B.

Piedmont, Verduno Pelaverga

Pelaverga

2013, \$18.99, 13.0%

Brilliant shine to the vaguely purple core, much more a garnet to scarlet red hue further out, faded rims. The nose has lots of white pepper then pulverized stone, powdered grass and white grapefruit, lean and rugged, there is a bright pungency to the cherry fruit scents, overall tickles your nostrils. Medium-bodied, the tannin

during the attack distracts you from the fact that it is pretty damn acidic too. Grassy, earthy, twiggy, lots of stone. Until it gets air time this all but fully hides the strawberry, cherry, raspberry fruit's juicy youthfulness. During the finish the white grapefruit comes through powerfully. Somewhat tarry end, concentrates the earthiness. Curiously, though, what lingers longest are notes of Maraschino cherry. 90

Valle dell'Acate, Cooperativa Agricola

Sicilia, Vittoria Frappato, Il Frappato

Frappato

2013, \$15.99, 13.0%

Crystal clear and sparkly ruby-violet color, attractive shine. A floral perfume douses the raspberry, watermelon, strawberry fruit in the nose, lemon drops, cucumber, whisper of mineral dust and dried lawn grass, cheerfully keeps the focus on the fresh and lively fruit such that you don't seek complexity. Medium-bodied, has a strong current of acidity throughout which at once gives it forward momentum and added zestiness. Additionally, tempers the sweetness of the cherry, strawberry, cranberry fruit and accentuates the lemon to white grapefruit aspects. More earth and stone here, evokes rugged hillsides, the florality most present retronasally along with a caramel and chocolate note. Quite nice, pure and versatile, likely best served with a mild chill on it. 88

Bolzano, Cantina Produttori

Alto Adige/Südtirol, St. Magdalener Classico, Huck am Bach

Blend

2013, \$19.99, 13.0%

Bright, shiny ruby red to magenta in color, fully transparent yet noticeably full through the rims. Sour nose, almost briny, matted grass and earth, the raspberry and red cherry scents a bit flat and inexpressive, seems to aim for rustic simplicity. Medium-bodied, stern attack with brawny acidity and more tannic punch than expected. Sour here too, additional white grapefruit but can't deny the solidity of the strawberry to watermelon, raspberry fruit, even green apple notes. You get a heavier floral musk than the nose delivered, perfumed. Retains an earthy dimension to the end. Interesting in a slightly off-center fashion. 90% Schiava, 10% Lagrein. (Composite Cork) 88

Vietti, Cantina

Piedmont, Langhe, Perbacco

Nebbiolo

2011, \$18.99, 14.5%

Bright ruby-violet color, clean enough to be mostly transparent, full rims. Very floral nose, violets, cocoa, plush plum to cherry scents, lighter on the leather, the

same for the earthiness, overall it's primary and generously fruity. Medium-bodied, pretty darn tannic and you appreciate it for this. Stiffens the syrupy cherry, berry fruit and restrains the chocolate aspect. Wildflowers, lavender and a touch of mint, here you also get orange peel shades. After some time to open leather to cowhide lends it dimension. Tingly presence at the end, firm mouth feel continues. Well done and fairly priced. 88

Monteforche (Alfonso Soranzo)

Veneto, Lo Sfuso di Collina

Cabernet Franc

2013, \$16.99, 12.5%

Dark red-ruby to purple in color, deep yet clear enough it would be transparent if the hue were any lighter, brightly saturated rims. There's some herbaceousness to the nose but no real bell pepper, more stone than earth, violets, sour cherry to plum fruit scents, can't say it's fruity but it certainly is primary, tends to sink into the nostrils, minimal lift. Full-bodied, likewise heavy in the mouth even if it has good tannin to support its verticality. Flowers, orange peel, meadow grasses, straw, no funk and this without antiseptic cleanliness. Acidity helps freshen up the finish as well as add a more red fruit complexion to the cherry, raspberry and plum fruit, tart ending. Has a slight underlying and intentional fizz throughout. Dry at the end. Provides no intimation of what tertiary development would look like. (Bottle cap) 87

Valdipiatta, Tenuta

Tuscany, Chianti Colli Senesi

Sangiovese

2011, \$17.99, 14.0%

Not richly hued, moderate purple in the core, mostly composed of scarlet red to orange, burnt edge to it. Mute nose, mostly fruity, light straw as well as mentholated musk, maraschino cherry, smooth feel due to its fullness, nothing here to offend. Medium-bodied, fully massaged tannin and acidity, here even more powerfully candied maraschino cherry, blackberry as well. The floral aspect countered by underlying meadow grasses, however, in converse aided by cocoa powder presence. Clunky finish. Basic table red, nothing remarkable yet not overtly flawed, not much you can say about it. 90% Sangiovese, 5% Canaiolo Nero, 5% Merlot. 86

ITALY WHITE

Sartarelli, Azienda Agricola

Marche, Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi Classico

Verdicchio

2013, \$10.99, 13.0%

Basic gold color, neither dull nor shiny, rich nor thin, does thin out around the rims, pretty much all in place. Lemony nose with a touch of lime, violets, stone dust, has a higher tone to balance out the sugary qualities, more snap than juice in the peach, pear, yellow apple fruit scents, something close to cocoa adds to the overall friendliness though, not a bracing presence. Medium-bodied, round in texture but not soft, has a salty, stony bite and mild bitter nuts aspect to accompany the otherwise sweeter peach, apricot fruit and lemon citrus. The acidity checks in well and probably creates more turbulence than clean cut. The floral side pushed back until finding room during the finish. Not quite a smooth operator but has flavor as well as energy. Though likely to confuse a few beginners with mixed messages. (Synthetic Cork: Nomacorc) 87

Massa, Azienda Agricola Fratelli

Piedmont, Derthona

Timorasso

2011, \$24.99, 13.5%

Fairly rich golden color but not quite into unusual territory, a touch on the dull side, not especially shiny, the rims dilute. Mint, orange blossom, lilacs infused nose, also has a minerally smokiness, openly knit with above average lift, the fruit consists of quiet peach, apricot, kumquat scents, overall turns dull during the dissolve. Full-bodied, bottom heavy and comes with a very dry, tacky mouth texture. Zingy white grapefruit, orange citrus elevates the sourness. Green apple, pear, apricot fruit derives most of its sweetness from a honey component plus a patina of flowers. Has a slightly "aged" feel, cider-like, relaxed like an unintentional nap. Not much acidity, that texture substitutes for structure. Definitely tastes off-center, however, might just be an example of "not every obscure grape is unjustly ignored." 87

ITALY ROSE

Cantalupo, Antichi Vigneti di

Piedmont, Colline Novaresi, Il Mimo Rosé

Nebbiolo

2013, \$10.99, 13.5%

Vivid watermelon red in color, takes on a light orange tint as it nears the washed out rims, sparkly surface. Very fragrant nose, however it dives deeper into your nostrils rather than lift, mixes together roses, cherry to strawberry fruit, orange zest, very ripe without sweetness, the mineral dustiness manages to create a presence now and then. Full-bodied, sets itself firmly which helps lengthen the finish. That saline, metallic minerality is more upfront here, surfaces before the strawberry, raspberry, cherry fruit does. The grapefruit, lemon citrus really shines in the mid-palate. A bit too

firm for the florality to achieve consistency. Has a certain brashness to it, big wine. (Synthetic Cork: Micro Cell) 89

GERMANY WHITE

Weiser-Künstler, Weingut
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Trabener, Gaispfad, Kabinett
Trocken AP #8
Riesling
2013, \$24.99, 10.5%
White straw color with a mild green edge, glows sufficiently to ignore the general paleness. Smoky nose, evokes sauna stones, clay and iron flecks, offers dried lemons and old rose petals, the apple to apricot fruit scents snappily lean and don't linger long. Full-bodied, the acidity is wicked strong and shows no reluctance to suck up any and all moisture in your mouth. You sense that there's a great deal of tropicality latent, flavors of pineapple, papaya, guava appear next to the apple, peach, nectarine. Stony more so than minerally, the citrus flirts with white grapefruit but is in the main lemony. There's so much tingle and reverberation on the palate that it's hard to relax with it. So, best consumed next to equally aggressive food. 89

Hild, Weingut Matthias
Mosel Saar Ruwer, QbA Trocken AP #21
Elbling
2013, \$14.99, 12.0%
Clean and transparent white to green straw, were it not for its pale glow you might find it colorless, very nice shine has it sparkle in the glass. The nose offers sufficient stone powder and mineral dust to distract from the vanillin creaminess, limeade, pear, apple to pineapple fruit scents, feels as if dappled with powdered sugar yet never loses its keen edge and ends with a strong smokiness. In the mouth it is medium-bodied, possessed of brawny acidity, however, not out to cause pain, just wants major wattage. The lime joined by lemon and lighter white grapefruit, citrus is a major component. Green apple, peach, pineapple fruit all snap, crackle and pop. Slightly fizzy mouthfeel creates variety of texture and helps to accentuate the presence of stone and chalk. Here it ends with a floral touch. Proudly simple and versatile enough to sip as well as stand up to a variety of foods. (Screwcap) 89

Immich-Batterieberg, Weingut
Mosel Saar Ruwer, Kabinett C.A.I. AP #1
Riesling
2012, \$21.99, 10.5%
Flat appearance even if there is above average concentration to the golden hue, distorts your vision

through to the rims, some trace bubbles caught on the glass sides. The nose starts off favoring minerally smoke and stone but gives way with ease to honey, baking dough and cinnamon notes, the mixed white citrus comes off semi-mute, the apple, peach scents relaxed and more cellar matured than vine ripened. Medium-bodied, has some dry extract and the acidity is okay, however, the blade could be sharper. Honey, orange marmalade, ginger, mint and vanilla bean cushion the entry, the apple, pear, peach fruit lacks staying power. That said, the stone, stream water elements prod things forward well and at times it delivers rubber nuances. In the end, this is the approachable beginner version of a geek wine which hampers its sense of purpose. (Screwcap) 89