

The Hanes Wine Review, October 2016 Edition

Hanes has still been thinking about the issues which were knocking around his noggin last time around. There are some times when being a wine aficionado and collector is more tiring than fun. Way back when Hanes was first getting into wine the point was to do some research and the “hard work” of tasting a broad array of wine, this with an eye on figuring out what he liked, then kicking back and relaxing with all the hard work already done.

But it's never that easy unless one is satisfied with wine at the level of “product” where vintage variation is slight and the wine itself is ubiquitous and easy to locate. Once you move away from that things get more complicated. (Alas, same has happened with craft beer too.) Overall, it's not a bad “problem” to have per se. But if one has the temperament of wanting to feel “all caught up” then wine appreciation can be vexing. At this juncture Hanes has less and less enthusiasm to chase after new wines or previously unknown producers. As he gets older, it's time to relax and actually put the extant body of knowledge to work. Take advantage of what is known and worry less about missing out on the next great thing. Which in turn might help the wallet since the next great thing usually costs more than yesterday's crown prince.

This is not to say Hanes won't take a flier on some new shiny bauble. Of course, he will. But it's also time to be realistic about how much Hanes should average on the price of a bottle. Again, all that knowledge amassed should help save money now and then rather than lead ineluctably to \$40+ bottles of wine. We shall see, we shall see.

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This month's big winners... Perhaps Hanes's favorite wine this edition, the 2015 Weiser-Künstler Riesling Kabinett from the Ellergrub is lights out joyful wine. Hanes did not get the sense that it will make old bones but it is seriously good right now and can be had for around \$29. Jean-Louis Dutraive makes a bunch of Fleurie bottlings but to Hanes it's his Brouilly which usually rises to the top. No different in 2015 and also under \$30. Did not drink much domestic wine in past months. The nicest consumed was the 2014 Sonoma Coast Syrah from Arnot-Roberts. Only have had a couple of wines from this Californian producer, all with good results. The usual complaint obtains, \$45 makes it difficult to purchase in any quantity beyond one bottle to try. Still the current vintage, the 2004 Sassella from Balgera is very nice Nebbiolo of character and worth the \$32 or so it costs. Had been some time, long time in fact, since trying a Sancerre from Hippolyte Reverdy. So ponied up the \$24 for the 2015. Very enjoyable, not a “classic” version of Sancerre but that may be the vintage talking. In any event, would buy this producer again. Oh goody, more wine Hanes likes and wants to buy.

The best \$20 and under picks.... It might cost more for you but Hanes scored the 2014 Terres Dorées Beaujolais Côte de Brouilly for \$20 and it remains a consistent value purchase as prices for cru Beaujolais continue to rise ever higher. Highly recommended. Jean Perrier is steady when it comes to producing affordable wines from the Savoie. Which are now harder to find than back in the day when no one sought out these wines. The 2015 Jacquère Named “Cuvée Gastronomie” for about \$12 hits all the right notes. Once more Domaine Barou of the Rhône brings it, the 2014 Syrah “Cuvée des Vernes” is the real deal and still a great bargain at \$13 or so. Hanes never before had Bellivière's “Pollux” bottling, which is Loire Gamay. The 2014 is pretty nice stuff and fairly priced at \$20. One assumes the 2015 will be out soon. Cederberg and their Buketraube wine from South Africa has been mentioned before and because the 2014 version is so delicious it is being mentioned again. \$14 well spent. The “lesser” regions of the Loire are starting to up their game and one can still find value there. Case in point, the sub-region Saumur Puy Notre Dame and the 2014 Domaine de l'Enchantoir Cabernet Franc “Le pied à l'étrier.” Perfectly acceptable and correct and about \$15. No complaints here. The 2014 “Artifice Tinto” from Pérez González in Spain's Canary Islands is a pleasantly challenging wine and remains affordable at \$20 whereas so many wines from this region cost more. A good candidate when you need to get your Listán Negro fix.

And the disappointments... Another reminder of why Hanes doesn't spend his money on Oregon wine. Albeit, it's a humbler entry level wine but Willful's 2014 “Jezebel” Pinot Noir was nondescript and at \$22 lapped by many French cheapie Pinot wines. Hanes is not interested in the underlying cost to produce the wine, he just wants the biggest bang for his buck. Another winery Hanes wants to like more, but trying the 2014 Montesecondo IGT Sangiovese from Tuscany did not flip the switch. Not horrible but not making a case for a return purchase. About

\$23. Hanes has to make certain purchases in order to maintain street cred with the cool kids in the wine world. With this mind, picked up a bottle of 2014 Eminence Road Cabernet Franc from New York's Finger Lakes. Another not quite pleasing drinking experience, at least it only cost \$20. No sense in belaboring it too much but once more Hanes has been left wanting by Yvon Métras. The 2014 basic Beaujolais bottling was not much fun to drink and heck for \$33 there's a lot more out there to choose from. Hanes is sure he will try Métras again but preferably when someone else is buying. Having liked this wine before, the 2015 Granbazán Etiqueta Verde Spanish Albariño was just okay. \$15 is fair, maybe it's a so-so vintage, dunno. Would try future vintages and see if it returns to form. Need to try the brown label one too at some point.

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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 October!

CALIFORNIA RED

Arnot-Roberts
Sonoma County, Sonoma Coast
Syrah
2014, \$44.99, 12.2%
The core is a sort of crimson black hue yet it has such clarity that it appears transparent, the rims a fresh blood red, sparkles in the glass. The nose comes off as somewhat lean, no lack of grill fat and gristle, damp leather and twigs, tree bark, harder to tease out any cherry, mixed berry scents but when they do manage to show up they carry a liqueur like consistency. Medium-bodied, taut in the mouth as well with a puckering acidity that highlights grapefruit citrus and stoniness. The fruit is more sour red cherry, blueberry, raspberry than richer "dark" fruit. The leather and beef jerky flavors transition to here but it's not quite gamey. Easy to be entranced by its verve and energy but it

peters out by the finish, so it's likely going to need food to compensate. 90

Harrington Wines
Arroyo Seco, Cedar Land Vineyard
Grenache
2014, \$30.00, 14.1%
Cough syrup red color, can't quite muster enough for purple, washed out garnet rims, normal clarity and surface shine. Almost wooly, there's plenty of twig, leaf, tar notes along with sticky raspberry, strawberry scents, so primary and earthy that it's a challenge to tease out any other youthful complexity. Full-bodied, starts off like it is going to blossom into a perfume then gets all sappy and clingy and hugs the tongue like you are going to drop it. Here you get a tease of lemon to white grapefruit citrus to go with the earth, tea leaf and sage to oregano herb notes. The raspberry, cherry, blackberry fruit is actually not as sugary as expected. Tannin is low, acidity is low, does not suffer from any dry patches. Would appeal more were it not so

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unevolved and primary and incapable of showing its path forward. 88

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Abrente

Napa Valley

Albariño

2015, \$22.00, 13.0%

Attractive depth to the golden hue, helps it fill the glass, dull with minimal shine. Floral nose with grilled nuts, honey and orange blossom accents, robust apricot and peach fruit scents, pungently perfumed but can't quite shake this bitter note which spoils some of the fun. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, violets and licorice, orange zest, melon and apple nudges ahead of the peach, apricot. Even nuttier here and the molasses patina mostly gone by the mid-palate. The acidity on the whole keeps it trim and streamlined. The floral element grows as it warms. Here too the bitterness nags at you some yet its inherent prettiness cannot be denied. 89

OREGON RED

Willful Wine Company

Oregon

Jezebel

Pinot Noir

2014, \$17.99, 13.5%

Pink ruby color, light and bright, clear, fully consistent core to rims. Freshly set in the nose, solid presence, lightly grassy, some lemon, basically tutti-frutti red fruits, grips the nostrils more than you'd think given its dependence on the fruit. Medium-bodied, yet there's a sluggishness on the palate, more tannic grind than expected, rougher texture. Cranberry, cherry fruit, closer to red currant than basic berry fruit. Not herbaceous, offers more lemon to grapefruit. Leaves room for some softening via caramel, toffee notes. Appears to be made for broad based consumption, nothing wrong with that per se, however, uninteresting beyond that basic quaffing. (Screwcap) 86

NEW YORK RED

Eminence Road Farm Winery

Finger Lakes, Elizabeth's Vineyard

Cabernet Franc

2014, \$19.99, 12.1%

Straightforward ruby magenta to purple color, mostly opaque core, the rims more basic ruby. Odd amount of merde and flatulence to the nose, lots of dried grass, the bell pepper not dominant but present, solid cherry, currant fruit yet it does not last that long, too marked by that flatulence. Medium-bodied, rugged if not

ragged feel here too, more mud, wet leather, merde. The fruit has a strong red complexion, tart strawberry, raspberry, Bing cherry flavors. Brine and pickle lead into damp bell pepper notes. While there can be a syrupy texture to the fruit overall it comes off as astringent and dry. Perhaps too active to really settle into a smoother drinking experience. 87

FRANCE RED

Barou, Domaine Emmanuel

Rhône, Indication Géographique Protégée des

Collines Rhodaniennes, Cuvée des Vernes

Syrah

2014, \$12.99, 13.0%

Crimson to purple core, fairly clear, dimmed brick red rims, overall more clean than vibrant. Great piercing power to the nose, green olives, bell pepper and grill gristle, sour white grapefruit notes, damp minerals, the cherry to red currant scents angular yet able to persist. Light to medium-bodied, gains traction and some stickiness by the finish. Here's there's an edge of burnt coffee and cocoa, takes some of the prettiness off of the florality. But the crisper energy remains in the grapefruit citrus and olives, as well as tar to graphite elements. The cherry, plum, currant fruit stays full throughout, however, lending tang as well as general juiciness. A few leafy accents through the finish. Plenty of true Syrah character. 90

Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun), Domaine des

Beaujolais, Côte de Brouilly

Gamay Noir

2014, \$19.99, 12.5%

Cranberry red to purple colored core, light pinkish hues at the rims, clear with nice shine. The sizable amount of stone dust dried brown dirt cuts the juiciness of the strawberry, raspberry scents, pleasing herbaceousness, sour orange to white grapefruit pith, overall it's straightforward with a wiry left that scrubs the nostrils. Medium-bodied with above average concentration for its weight, zingy, the acidity keeps it fresh while the tannin adds volume. Lots of snap to the raspberry, red cherry, green apple fruit, the citrus element is ripe and juicy yet remains on the sour side. The stone and grass continue on, providing subtle anchor to the fruit. A few tar or black tea leaf notes. Pleasing now, every reason to believe a good deal of complexity will develop over time. 90

Grand'Cour (Jean-Louis Dutraive), Domaine de La

Beaujolais, Brouilly, Cuvée Vieilles Vignes

Gamay Noir

2015, \$28.99, 14.5%

Plum red to crimson with a mildly darker purple core, while clear there's a flatness to it, not dull but not shiny

either. Minerally nose with a forest scrub freshness, very ripe cherry, blackberry, raspberry scents with a patina of cocoa, no funkiness to the point where its purity makes it simple. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with a sappy attack that eventually turns dry by the finish. Spiced orange, potpourri and fennel add to the sweetness of the cherry, cassis, blackberry fruit. The acidity is average plus but not really providing shape. So one has to guess that it is tannin which dries out the finish. Ever so slightly earthier at the end too. Viscerally enjoyable and providing minimal glimpse into its more mature future. 90

Raquillet, François
Burgundy, Mercurey 1er Cru, Les Naugues
Pinot Noir
2014, \$29.99, 13.0%

Plum purple to red in hue, quite clear while deeply colored to the rims, spotless with healthy glow. The nose takes a little time to unwind, floral with creamy vanillin notes, butterscotch, spicier ginger to clove notes, juicy raspberry, cherry to strawberry fruit scents, fresh yet in its own way musky, good persistence. Medium-bodied, has a drying web of tannin however the acidity seems slight. In spite of the dryness the feel is generally round and supple. Even mildly syrupy when focusing on the strong strawberry, raspberry to watermelon flavors, yet somehow never really sweet. Floral with some of those same vanillin touches. Has a pleasing compactness without seeming short. Arguably punches above its weight and should be age-worthy midterm. 89

Vissoux, Domaine du
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Les Garants
Gamay Noir
2014, \$26.99, 13.0%

Some purple but the core remains mainly a plum pulp red, plain scarlet rims, immaculately clean with a sleek surface reflectivity. Fresh nose, decidedly floral with rhubarb, blackberry, raspberry scents, eventually a skirmish occurs between stone notes and something close to caramel, light herbal fluff, more muscular than dense so as to not lose that freshness. Full-bodied, carries than muscularity over into the mouth where it displays equally ripe tannin and acidity as well as palate coating cranberry, cherry, blackberry fruit. Can't quite shake that caramel to butterscotch stuff. Stone and a touch of saline to brine. Some sour orange to grapefruit accents. There's something calculatedly suave about it, like it would casually turn off the lights before you got to see it naked. 89

Grand'Cour (Jean-Louis Dutraive), Domaine de La
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Chapelle des Bois
Gamay Noir

2015, \$26.99, 14.0%
Pinkish ruby to violet in color, clear enough to diminish the glow, full to the rims. Thickly perfumed nose of cranberry, raspberry, strawberry fruit, quite primary, stony with a sweeter grapefruit component, floral, entirely unevolved like was just pressed yesterday. Full-bodied, fleshy and soft, melts into the mouth like cotton candy. Some sour orange, grapefruit citrus then sparkly minerality to balance out the ripe cherry, strawberry, raspberry, watermelon, banana fruit, touch of green apple. Hard to sense any acidity, by the back palate the tannin starts to mildly assert itself. In the glory of its youth, seems best to enjoy it now rather than wait for any unpromised complexity. 89

Bellivière, Domaine de
Loire, Vin de Table de France, Pollux
Gamay Noir

2014, \$19.99, 12.5%
There's a darker crimson to purple look to it, however, its saturated glow makes it seem less somber, richly colored throughout. There's a leathery to pressed damp earth quality to the nose, if one may, a clean funkiness, pickle brine, pulped grapefruits, something almost medicinal, the cranberry, red cherry scents are at once ripe and standoffish. Medium-bodied, here it smoothes out and turns more gregarious, the sour red fruits dance and tease while the white citrus tingles throughout. Stony with a sea salt to brine edge. As tart as it is, easy enough to overlook the florality. The acidity should take a bow, relentless. For all its excess energy does not lose focus of trying to please. (Composite Cork) 89

Desvignes, Louis et Claude
Beaujolais, Morgon, Javernières
Gamay Noir

2014, \$25.99, 12.5%
Fairly dark violet to cranberry red, were it not so clear and clean it might come close to brooding, full to the very rims, sits in the glass like it belongs. Herbaceous and a touch green in the nose, this in a good way, stony and wiry but in no way lean, brine, sour cherry to blackberry scents, more interested in puncturing than filling. Full-bodied as much for the formidable tannin as for the weight of the material itself, heavy on the sour grapefruit and gains an impassive inertness from the stone. You struggle to get at the fruit through the tannin thicket, but aging should unchain the tangy cherry, plum, persimmon fruit. Close to soy like savoriness, this is not built for short term, instead coiled to unwind at a glacial pace. If you drink it now, open and decant the day before. 89

Clos de la Roilette (Coudert Père et Fils)
Beaujolais, Fleurie, Griffes du Marquis
Gamay Noir
2014, \$29.99, 13.0%

Glowing red-ruby to scarlet, touch more violet in the core, spotless throughout and the coloration runs flush to the rims. Big, gregarious nose of cranberry, red cherry, blackberry, plum fruit, juicy white grapefruit, stone to saline notes, any oak seems subtle and nicely woven in as well as more crisp than creamy, cocoa, languid length. Full-bodied, heavily layers itself on the palate. Lavender, olive pit, stone, orange peel and then a dollop of caramel make for pleasing contrasts. The tannin asserts itself in the mid-palate, a big sucking that manages to unsettle the flow of the otherwise broadly set cranberry, blueberry, cherry fruit. Smoke, metal, and tar begin to appear and favor the stoniness, helping the wine right itself. Then once more clenches at the finish. Might be shutting down already, whatever the case not providing basic continuous enjoyment at this moment. 88

Enchantoir, Domaine de l'
Loire, Saumur Puy Notre Dame, Le pied à l'étrier
Cabernet Franc
2014, \$14.99, 13.0%

Excellent clarity as in no filminess while the core is a perfectly opaque purple, shows dark and glowing red magenta rims, deeply saturated. Traces of peanut shell in the nose, bodacious bell pepper, then matted straw, fine mineral and stone dust, tar and cement, takes awhile for the plum, black cherry scents to get noticed, however, they are no slouches. Medium-bodied, strong tannic clenching but still manages full palate coverage. Tangy grapefruit and mineral component, tarry earth, hits you full force with the bell pepper and generalized herbaceousness. Very dry mouth feel, tends to shorten the cherry, currant, plum fruit. Doesn't strike you as underripe, more so an old school "vin de garde" feel. (Composite Cork: Diam3) 88

Rottiers, Domaine Richard
Beaujolais, Moulin-à-Vent, Champ de Cour
Gamay Noir
2014, \$35.99, 13.0%

Light filminess to the red purple core, strong violet presence in the otherwise red magenta rims, pleasant glow. Sour nose of cranberry, red cherry fruit, lemon zest, stone and then an odd, powerful blast of cocoa powder, sizable amount of earthiness which at times verges on dried grassiness, the fruit unable to assert itself into a dominant position. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, sturdy tannic frame and again a general tartness which tends to shorten things. Very close to the nose, lemon to white grapefruit, stone and

here more minerals. The cherry, cranberry, apple fruit all angular. Retains that cocoa dusting. Mild floral lift. That tannin still running the show through the finish, maybe a touch or underripe phenolics. Doubt the fruit will win out in the long haul. (Composite Cork: Diam3) 87

Réméjeanne, Domaine La
Rhône, Côtes-du-Rhône, Les Chèvrefeuilles
Blend
2014, \$12.99, 14.0%

Semi-transparent purple core, broad maroon red rims, pleasing shine to the surface. There's an initial funk to the nose which segues into twigs, bark and damp forest earth, brightens via grapefruit zest, witch hazel, camphor and cranberry, red cherry scents, has as much grip as cleansing action. In the mouth it's medium-bodied and while you sense the juiciness in the raspberry, cherry, blackberry fruit the palate starts drying out from the first sip and the finish is borderline parched. More mixed white citrus here and fairly floral, none of the funk found in the nose. Leathery, some cocoa powder and mocha roast. The fruit just can't make it to the finish line which knocks the experience down a peg or so. 70% Syrah, 10% Grenache, 10% Mourvèdre, 5% Carignan, 5% Marselan. 87

Métrás, Yvon
Beaujolais
Gamay Noir
2014, \$33.99, 11.5%

Soft filminess to the lightly violet, more so scarlet to washed out red brick hues, takes on an incipient orange tint at the outer edge. Funky nose of burnt tire rubber, cow patties in the sun and baled wet hay, no doubting the cherry, blackberry fruit but it gains tenuous support at best from the dried flowers and orange peel notes, even extended air time does not resolve the former elements. In the mouth it's medium-bodied, loaded with tart acidity and a prickly texture, as if slightly unstable. More of a center to the strawberry to cranberry fruit, cherry more of an indecisive dance partner. Peppery, biting grassiness and then a white grapefruit pucker. Gains length due to forward momentum rather than a natural fluidity. Still, the finish is crabbed and mainly has your tongue moving about trying to reintroduce moisture to the mouth pores. Defiant wine. 87

Clos Fantine
Languedoc/Roussillon, Faugères, Cuvée Tradition
Blend
2014, \$21.99, 14.0%

Deep purple core of full opacity, dense crimson red rims, vividly hued with above average surface shine. Peanut shells and merde appear first in the nose,

smells like carnival dirt at the end of a long day, then attractive violets and pulped white citrus, the plum, cherry fruit shows some layering but not that much staying power. Full-bodied, at first suggests a more velvety mouth feel but turns grainy and dusty and clumps on the tongue. Twigs, bark and brown dirt more than citrus, the florality comes in fits and starts. There's an angular sourness to the blueberry, plum, blackberry fruit but its blockish character helps it reach the finish line. Too chewy for simple quaffing. 40% Carignan, 30% Mourvèdre, 30% Grenache. 87

FRANCE WHITE

Reverdy et Ses Fils, Domaine Hippolyte
Loire, Sancerre
Sauvignon Blanc
2015, \$23.99, 11-14.0%

Slightly darker than expected but still a basic yellow to green hue, strong to the rims, flat surface, more block like than shiny. Pungent and borderline sugary nose of floral dew, spun cotton candy, orange and lime soft drink, a touch stony but nowhere near smoky, under all that the peach, apricot scents often get misplaced. Full-bodied with plenty of flesh yet thankfully has a keen edge to the acidity which can pierce the palate as appropriate. Needed as the fruit has as much mango, guava and ripe pineapple as peach or apricot. Even the lime and lemon citrus seems confectionery. Less floral here and more chalk and pebble dust. It's actually really fun to drink but if you want some imperious austerity in your Sancerre keep looking. 90

Perrier et Fils, Jean
Savoie, Apremont, Cuvée Gastronomie
Jacquère
2015, \$11.99, 11.5%

Clear if not quite shiny white straw, very mild green cast, hueless rims. The nose brings sweetness via whipped cream notes to embellish and deepen the apple, peach, apricot, melon fruit, cinnamon and lighter clove appear as well before an interesting saline, mineral touch. Medium-bodied, has more volume than basic weight and this persists through the finish. The acidity seems blunt but does not lack for power. Here the stony, salty accents come right at you, at times evokes salted ham. As much pineapple, papaya as peach, apricot, apple, a dry and dusty sort of tropicality. Momentary glimmers of dried rose petals and then lemon peel. Very nice with better complexity than most at the price point. (Synthetic Cork: Vinotop) 89

Maillet, Domaine Jacques
Savoie, Autrement
Altesse
2014, \$25.99, 12.5%

Work old gold appearance, almost cidery, a touch dull and lacking in shine. Honey, beeswax, orange reduction and raw pie dough appear first in the nose, there's a naturally rich sluggishness to it that might at times evoke maderization, more sweetly concentrated than fresh, the smokiness never kicks in, simple array of apple, pear, peach fruit scents. Full-bodied, more balanced here as the florality gives it lift and releases some sugariness from the honeyed aspect. The acidity also chugs along credibly and carves off unnecessary flesh from the apricot, peach, apple, melon fruit and orange to lemon citrus. Some general powderiness but does not deliver substantial minerals or stone, however the finish is dry. Needs air time and shows more complexity as it warms. 88

Maillet, Domaine Jacques
Savoie, Le p'tit canon
Blend
2014, \$21.99, 11.0%

Above average depth to the golden hue yet the flatness saps most of the visual impact, lightly translucent. Minty and mineral nose, rose water, a little bit of nuttiness as well, crisp apple to pear scents, peach pit, has a relaxed heaviness in the nostrils. Full-bodied, spicy with a pickled edge through the attack, more lemon here and mineral water than metallic notes. The apricot, green apple, pear fruit remains lean and direct. There's a vague dustiness to the mouth feel without being overly dry. The weight perhaps makes it seem less fresh but there's nothing tiring about it. The more you sip, the more it reminds you of cider with a sour tang. Unspecified percentages of Jacquère, Altesse. 88

Texier, Eric
Rhône, Côtes du Rhône, Adèle
Blend
2014, \$15.99, 12.5%

Flat golden hue of good depth, solid in the glass even if it looks like it's just sitting there, slightly weaker rims. Heavy, sticky nose of pear, peach, apricot with notes of cinnamon and nutmeg, stream water, outside of the fruit it's curiously neutral, more about texture than aroma. Full-bodied, even heavier here as well as sweeter with molasses, honey to caramel notes and candied oranges bolstering the pear, melon, apricot fruit. The acidity does not seem weak, however, not doing all that much to shape the experience. More florality than baking spices here. Ends with a drying, sort of caked mouth feel. Simple pleasure, nothing

wrong with that. 80% Clairette, 20% Marsanne.
(Composite Cork) 88

Roulot, Domaine
Burgundy, Bourgogne Aligoté
Aligoté

2014, \$23.99, 12.0%

White to green hay in color, while the hue is faint it holds the light and glows well in the glass, not much surface shine. The nose is quite smoky and minerally, verging on burning, good tension with notes of saline and dried lemons, fruit really not a decisive component, apple, pear to peach pit at best, if allowed to warm you get a somewhat expressive florality. In the mouth it's full-bodied and muscular, shows no reluctance in barging into the mouth and letting the acidity create a fuss. But it's not malicious and here the flowers, peach, apricot, almost cherry fruit more suave. Sauna stone and mineral water more than metallic, finishes with an acceleration in the lemon to white grapefruit citrus. For what it is, damn aggressive and in your face. Not quite sure if better or worse for it. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 88

Chanterêves
Burgundy, Saint-Romain, Combe Bazin
Chardonnay

2014, \$39.99, 12.5%

Fairly deep if dull and block-like yellow hay color, fills the rims almost by default, nothing captures your imagination visually. Lightly minty nose, buttered toast, lime and popcorn notes yet the oak overall balanced and in proportion to the peach, apricot fruit scents, has fullness more than expressiveness in the nostrils. Medium-bodied, displays good traction and keeps reminding you its there. Fair amount of minerality to counterbalance the toast and buttery notes. More oomph here in the apricot, peach, pear to melon fruit. Baking spices and some tangerine citrus rounds things out. Acidity is pretty good plus for what it is. No issue with the wine at all, just with the price. (Composite Cork: Diam6) 88

ITALY RED

Balgera Vini
Lombardy, Valtellina Superiore, Sassella
Nebbiolo

2004, \$32.99, 12.5%

Clear, transparent medicinal red color, more of a burnt orange around the rims, Well matured. Tar, leather, pulped grapefruits and wildflowers abound in the nose, has a jagged sort of nostril feel, very cleansing, the cherry to mixed berry fruit scents come on as an afterthought. Medium-bodied, the tannin is still powerful so must have been fierce when young, the

acidity a brawny sidekick as well. Pine, licorice and grapefruit pretty it up some. There's a hard candy sweetness to the raspberry, cherry fruit, more strawberry than darker berry and moments of green apple, fruit lasts very well. Tar, graphite, campfire ash, almost shows a foxy wet fur element towards the end. Could use a bit more lifting perfume but that's about it. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 90

Glicine, Cantina del
Piedmont, Barbaresco, Currà
Nebbiolo

2011, \$56.99, 14.0%

Immaculately clean and clear red rust to brunt orange color, washes out a little around the rims. Floral nose with maraschino cherry, raspberry scents, orange peel, fair amount of damp earth, overall clean and uncomplicatedly direct. Light-bodied, has a hard candy sweetness to the strawberry, cherry, raspberry fruit which makes it hard to resist, sweet enough to marginalize the otherwise decent tannic dryness. Some lemon zest notes, rose petals and twigs, the more you sip it the more leafy and earthy it becomes. Fattens some in the mid-palate. Anise and licorice notes pretty up the finish. At the end of the day strikes you as a near to medium term ager, a wine to enjoy now even if needing a decant to do so. 89

Montesecondo, Azienda Agricola
Tuscany
Sangiovese

2014, \$22.99, 12.0%

Almost pinkish ruby to red plum flesh in color, consistent core to rims, very slight filminess. Some kind of funk when first opened, takes up most of the nose before straw, hay and stone notes muscle in, you'll have to wait some time before the red cherry, strawberry scents reveal themselves, hard to say there's a lot there. In the mouth it's light-bodied, the acidity is lively and makes it crackle and pop on the palate. The funk not absent here but it is fresh enough that you don't care as much. Cherry, raspberry, apple fruit zips across the tongue, grassy but not "green" per se. Stony as well, moments of white grapefruit. Definitely needs food to show best. Its purity is its strength and weakness. 90% Sangiovese, 10% Canaiolo. 87

Colosi, Cantine
Sicilia
Nero d'Avola
2014, \$10.99, 14.0%

Crimson to rust red edge to the blackish purple core, its clarity is evident along with depth of hue. Ripe and sugary nose of plum to prune fruit, candied cherries and spiced oranges, some menthol notes now and

then, very primary and obvious. In the mouth it's full-bodied with most of its weight upfront, drying out and slims down by the finish. Cocoa and cinnamon to ginger adorn the plum, cherry fruit, less prune-like here, even notes of green apple. Maybe there's some underripe tannin which creates that astringency at the end. Earthy is a vague, can't think of anything else it might be way. Not flawed, just a very basic wine that delivers on its promises unmade. (Composite Cork) 87

Colombera (Colombera & Garella), Azienda Agricola Carlo

Piedmont, Coste della Sesia, Cascina Cottignano Blend

2013, \$19.99, 12.0%

Quite transparent and clear scarlet red in hue, touch of violet at the core, the rims start to show some burnt orange. Fluffy wildflowers and meadow grasses, stone and back road dirt most present in the nose, not to deny its core of maraschino cherry fruit scents, blends in some lemon to white grapefruit citrus too, despite candied fruit has a rugged demeanor. Medium-bodied, again the fruit just able to provide counterweight to the feisty tannin, cherry, raspberry and some blackberry too. Does tend to clamp down in the mid-palate. More of that tilled earth stone and matted straw stuff, asphalt, not quite leathery. But there is something smoky if not charred about it. Outside of the fruit lacks anything with a "pretty" touch to it. 65% Nebbiolo, 20% Croatina, 15% Vespolina. (Composite Cork: Diam5) 87

GERMANY WHITE

Weiser-Künstler, Weingut

Mosel Saar Ruwer, Enkircher, Ellergrub, Kabinett AP #4

Riesling

2015, \$28.99, 7.5%

Bright yellow hay color, clear on the whole, leaves some trace bubbles behind on the glass sides long after the pour. Powdered sugar and orange citrus give the nose a sweet and sour character, melon, apple and apricot fruit scents, light dusting of minerals and chalk, a bit denser than expected so doesn't quite have the lift you might want. In the mouth it's full-bodied and here it really delivers with zesty and bold pink grapefruit, tangerine to lime citrus along with a richly tropical array of pineapple, guava, papaya and nectarine fruit alongside cherry and peach. The acidity is not razor sharp but more than up to the task of inducing a brisk pacing. Even produces a sort of puckering saline edge at the end, falling short of straight up minerality. Hard to predict if it will develop interesting tertiary flavors with aging but lip smacking good now. 92

Klundt, Sven

Pfalz, Godramsteiner, Steinweg, QbA Trocken AP #13 Riesling

2014, \$27.99, 13.0%

Flat and dull but the gold hue is thick enough to layer down into the glass, consistent core to rim. The nose is mainly lemon, wet stone, stream water and pear to apple fruit, light smokiness helps add dimension but overall it comes off as blunt. Medium-bodied, quite dry and marked by a dusty extract, here the florality dominates yet somehow without creating much sense of movement, pretty lilacs, violets and orange blossom. The fruit lacks expressivity and mostly expresses pineapple, peach, nectarine flavors. The stony and mineral component takes up a lot of ground, mainly due to how bound up the fruit feels. The acidity has more grip than cut. At times makes you want to reserve judgment due to potential to change once it unclenches but right now somewhat of a chore to drink. 87

SPAIN RED

Pérez González, Borja

Canary Islands, Ycoden Daute Isora, Artífice Tinto Blend

2014, \$19.99, 13.5%

Light purple to the core, mostly a scarlet red hue, brilliant shine to it as well as completely transparent. The nose evokes tar, wet leather, cement and meadow grasses, at times some peanut shell to merde notes, hard candy character to the strawberry, red cherry fruit scents, maybe at times a little bit of grapefruit. In the mouth it's light-bodied with a good shock of acidity and a credible tannic follow-up, no paucity of structure here. More sour citrus without getting in the way of the powerful tar, leather notes and sage, marjoram as well. Again, no lack of sweetness in the red berry, cherry fruit as well as tart finish but it can get lost in the shuffle. Aggressive for its weight and leaves behind a perfume of summertime apartment building rooftops. 90% Listán Negro, 5% Vijariego Negro, 5% Baboso. 89

Terroir al Límit Soc. Lda.

Priorat, Vi de la Vila de Torroja Blend

2012, \$46.99, 13.5%

Deep scarlet hues throughout the otherwise purple core, dark but unblemished, fresh brick red rims, vivid coloration. Playful nose of anise, lavender, strawberry to red cherry fruit, subdued notes of cocoa as well as saddle leather, has more cleansing lift than thick perfume. Medium-bodied, while ever present the tannin weaves in and out and shapes more than grips, does add to the dryish finish. More grapefruit to orange

zest here and the florality really hits its stride. Some of that same cocoa and sweet garden herbs. The initial roundness in the raspberry, strawberry to blueberry fruit fades as it lacks the juiciness to moisten the finish. Comes across as intelligently put together with a great deal of thought expended. 50% Garnacha, 50% Cariñena. 88

SPAIN WHITE

Bazán, Agro de
Rías Baixas, Granbazán Etiqueta Verde
Albariño

2015, \$14.99, 12.5%

Yellow in hue with more of a brown than green cast, the pour leaves many large bubbles clinging to the glass side, more flat and solid than brilliant. Crisp nose yet has weight, green apple, pear fruit with saline to pickle brine accents, wet seashells and some more attractive citrus zest and quiet florality. In the mouth it's full-bodied and comes off as more complete and well-rounded. The acidity helps it stave off chubbiness while the stone and chalk aspects come more to the fore. Likewise, more emphasis on grapefruit to sour orange citrus. A bit of vanillin whipped cream dances with the chili pepper, brine stuff. The pear, apple, peach fruit is slight and clouded over by a floral dew. It's a decent wine but seems indecisive. (Synthetic Cork: Nomaticorc) 87

Bengoetxe
Chacolí de Guetaria, Getariako Txakolina
Hondarribi Zuri

2014, \$18.99, 12.0%

Good clarity to the dark golden hue that shows an incipient amber edge, some light fizz clings to the glass walls, strongly hued rims. Smoky nose with a salty quality, fried lemon peel, wet stone, touch of mint, aggressive enough that you may find it easy to miss the apple, pear, persimmon fruit scents, not to punch hard rather than keep jabbing so moderate staying power. In the mouth it's medium to full-bodied, the acidity muscular and tends to weigh it down even further. Sauna stone, clay, slate and pit fire smoke predominate, at times earthy and tarry. The grapefruit and lemon citrus can't quite rev the engines. Again, relative paucity of fruit, papaya, pineapple to green apple. It's all about the terroir, to the point where you question if there's anything else to be had. 95% Hondarribi Zuri, 5% Gros Manseng. (Composite Cork) 87

SOUTH AFRICA WHITE

Cederberg

Cederberg

Bukettraube

2014, \$13.99, 12.5%

There's a fetching luminescent glow to the green-gold color, slightly worn look, not dull but not shiny either. Ripe and thick nose of pineapple, papaya, mango and nectarine fruit, a few cherry accents, mineral water, wet stone and grapefruit fill in the blanks, gets smokier as it warms, for as much as it bumps up against sour it stays sugary in the end. In the mouth it's medium-bodied with a fat middle in spite of the crisp acidity and tangy bite. The white grapefruit to lemon citrus gains speed here and the stone moves onto a more smoky and mineral profile. There's a rambunctious fun in the apricot, pear, nectarine, pineapple, papaya fruit, never too tart. Even takes on a honeyed nature at the end. Not that most linear vintage of the wine yet has all the enjoyability. (Screwcap) 90