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Vinography Unboxed: Week of 1/6/19



Hello, and welcome to my periodic dig through the samples pile. I'm pleased to bring you the latest installment of Vinography Unboxed, where I highlight some of the better bottles that have crossed my doorstep recently.

This week included more whites and reds, so lets dive right into some crisp fruity goodness. We can start with the Sauvignon Blanc from Acumen in Napa. I tasted through their reds the other week and sort of forgot this bottle in the pile, but having tasted those wines, I'm not surprised to find another competent wine, crisp with green flavors that won't disappoint fans of the grape.

Perhaps the most distinctive of the whites this week was the latest rendition of Vermentino from Troon Vineyards, an ascendant producer in Southern Oregon. This

is quite a distinctive and characterful interpretation of the grape and one that I found myself returning to multiple times to watch it evolve. I highly recommend it as an outstanding domestic example of the grape.

Also on the slightly less common front, I've got the Pinot Blanc from Dutton Goldfield, which is one of my favorite of their less well-known wines. Some people see the slender, tapered Alsatian-shaped bottle and assume the wine will be sweet, but that would be a grave mistake. This wine is crisp and bright and worthy of any meal at which you'd consider a Chardonnay.

I've got a couple of very crisp Riesling's this week as well, first from one of the top historical producers in Michigan, Chateau Grand Traverse. Their wine is zippy and chalky with mineral overtones. You could say the same thing about Trefethen's Dry Riesling from Napa as well, which has a lovely delicacy to it.

Moving into the two reds this week, both are worthy. The first, a Malbec from the aforementioned Troon has all the blue fruit goodness you'd want from that variety, plus some nice stoniness that keeps it far from being a fruit bomb. The second red is another Pinot from Dutton Goldfield, this time their Fox Den Vineyard bottling, which is taut and lean and juicy and just what you want from modern California Pinot grown in a cool climate.

Notes on all these and more below.

2017 Troon Vineyard Vermentino, Applegate Valley, Oregon

Pale blonde in color, this wine smells beautifully of pear and butterscotch and yellow flowers. In the mouth, notes of bee pollen and yellow flowers waft over a core of pear and asian pear flavors have a nice citrus snap to them, thanks to excellent acidity. Distinctive and compelling. 12% alcohol. Score: around **9**. Cost: \$20. [click to buy.](#)

2017 Acumen "Mountainside" Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley, Napa, California

Pale gold in the glass, this wine smells of wet chalkboard, lemon and apples. In the mouth, golden apples and a bit of lemon pith mix with lemon juice and a hint of honeysuckle. Green apple and lime juice notes linger in the finish. Good acidity. 14.4% alcohol. Score: around **8.5**. Cost: \$30 . [click to buy.](#)

2017 Chateau Grand Traverse "Dry" Riesling, Old Mission Peninsula, Michigan

Light gold in the glass, this wine smells of poached pears and mandarin oranges. In the mouth, citrus pith and Asian pear flavors mix with orange oil as the mineral-driven wine finishes crisp and dry. Excellent acidity. Lean and racy. 12% alcohol. Score: around **8.5**. Cost: \$13. [click to buy.](#)

2017 Trefethen Family Vineyards "Dry" Riesling, Oak Knoll District, Napa, California

Palest gold in color, this wine smells of mandarin orange oil and citrus pith. In the mouth, flavors of mandarin orange, wet chalkboard and unripe apples have a crisp, rainwater clarity to them with some very nice mineral undertones. Bone dry with very good acidity. 12.5% alcohol. Score: around **8.5**. Cost: \$16. [click to buy.](#)

2017 Dutton Goldfield "Dutton Ranch - Shop Block" Pinot Blanc, Green Valley, Sonoma, California

Pale gold in color, this wine smells of wet chalkboard, pear and lemon pith. In the mouth, beautiful pear and pomelo pith flavors have a crisp snap to them thanks to excellent acidity. A faint chalky quality lingers in the mouth with hints of quince paste. Very mineral-driven and tasty. 13.5% alcohol. Score: between **8.5** and **9**. Cost: \$30. [click to buy.](#)

2016 Dutton Goldfield "Dutton Ranch - Walker Hill Vineyard" Chardonnay, Green Valley, Sonoma, California

Light to medium yellow-gold in the glass, this wine smells of lemon curd, pineapple, and mixed tropical fruit cocktail. In the mouth, lemon curd, pineapple and papaya flavors are bright on the palate thanks to excellent acidity, and they are shot through with a whiff of vanilla and oak. Silky and quite smooth. 14.1% alcohol. Score: between **8.5** and **9**. Cost: \$50. [click to buy.](#)

2016 Troon Vineyard "Cuvee Cot" Malbec, Applegate Valley, Oregon

Dark garnet with purple highlights, this wine smells of blueberries and boysenberries. In the mouth, that blue fruit character continues with boysenberry and cassis notes set against a wet chalkboard minerality that is pretty striking. Faint powdery tannins show themselves in the blueberry scented finish. 13.4% alcohol. Score: around **8.5**. Cost: \$40. [click to buy.](#)

2016 Dutton Goldfield "Fox Den Vineyard" Pinot Noir, Green Valley, Sonoma, California

Medium garnet in the glass, this wine smells of cherry and raspberry fruit with a hint of citrus oil. In the mouth, the wine is juicy with sour cherry and raspberry and redcurrant fruit, plus a touch of green herbs. Faint but leathery tannins buff the edges of the mouth while citrus notes linger in the finish. Excellent. 13.5% alcohol. Score: between **9** and **9.5**. Cost: \$55. [click to buy.](#)

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