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Vinography Unboxed: Week of 10/28/18

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 a lot of really great stuff, including some superstars.

Let's start with a very pretty Riesling from one of the top producers from Germany's Rheingau region, Leitz, and indeed one of the best known wineries in Germany. This lovely wine comes from a small slate-filled vineyard next to a Benedictine abbey near the town of Geisenheim. It's lip smacking good with just a fain't hint of sweetness. Just add Thai food.



Next on the list is a white from a new-to-me producer Reva, which appears to be a winery AND resort in Monfortino, in Italy's Piedmont region. This distinctive blend of two types of Sauvignon was quite tasty, and worth seeking out, though I could not find any for sale in the US. More wines from this producer in a moment.

Finally before we get into the reds, let's talk about German Pinot, which is really undergoing an awakening. Or maybe the rest of the world is just waking up to how good German Pinot can be. In any case, I've got a lovely pink Pinot from Seehof to recommend this week, that can hold its ground with any Pinot Rosé anywhere else in the world. And at \$16, what's not to love?

Getting into the red wines, let's return to our new friends in Piedmont, with their Barbera and Dolcetto, both of which are polished and tasty, but thankfully restrained in their use of oak.

Closer to home, I've got a blockbuster list of Cabernets for you this week, starting with a couple of vintage releases from Renaissance Vineyard and Winery, whose granite-inflected wines are remarkable and rare.

Then there's the top wine from Inglenook, their Rubicon, which is in fine form, and will be even better with a few years on it to let the oak perhaps meld better with the wine. But it's wonderfully restrained in a valley that still favors excess extraction, ripeness and alcohol.

Speaking of restrained, I've got a couple of stunning Cabernets from the higher elevations of Napa to recommend. These two wines from Acumen vineyards are wonderful -- clocking in at close to 14% alcohol with great acidity, great balance, and remarkably well integrated oak. Totally delicious and worth finding if you can handle the tariff.

That's it for this week. Enjoy!

2015 Leitz "Rudesheimer Klosterlay" Riesling Kabinett, Rheingau, Germany

Pale greenish gold in color, this wine smells of paraffin, Asian pears and tangerine oil. In the mouth, very pretty mandarin orange juice, Asian pear and tangerine flavors have a filigreed, if a bit soft, acidity. Gorgeous wet chalkboard minerality emerges in the finish. Just a very faint sweetness lingers on the palate. 9% alcohol. Closed with a screwcap. Score: around **9**. Cost: \$19. [click to buy.](#)

2017 Reva "Grey" Langhe Bianco DOC, Piedmont, Italy

Pale gold in color, this wine smells of crushed stones, passionfruit and kiwi. In the mouth, very pretty flavors of green apple, kiwi and passionfruit have a gorgeously silky texture. Excellent acidity keeps the wine bright,

and a nice wet pavement minerality creeps into the finish. Delicious. An equal blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris. 13% alcohol. Score: between **9** and **9.5**. Cost: \$??.

2017 Seehof "Vom Boden Trocken" Rosé of Pinot Noir, Rheinhessen, Germany

Pale salmon colored in the glass, this wine smells of citrus peel, watermelon rind, and berries. In the mouth, juicy berry and citrus peel flavors have a wonderful snap to them thanks to excellent acidity. A picture perfect Pinot rosé. Delicious. 12% alcohol. Closed with a screwcap. Score: around **9**. Cost: \$16. [click to buy.](#)

2016 Reva Barbera d'Alba DOC, Piedmont, Italy

Dark garnet in color, this wine smells of bright berries and citrus. In the mouth, boysenberry and mulberry flavors have a bright orange peel note to them, and a gorgeous juicy sizzle, thanks to excellent acidity. Beautifully silky tannins take a back seat to the fruit. There's very little sensory trace of the wine's substantial 15% alcohol. Score: around **9**. Cost: \$28. [click to buy.](#)

2017 Reva Dolcetto d'Alba DOC, Piedmont, Italy

Medium to dark garnet in color, this wine smells of mulberry and leather and a touch of green herbs. In the mouth, there's a trace of barnyard funkiness along with boysenberry, green herbs and a touch of citrus and leather. Excellent acidity and good length. 13.5% alcohol. Score: around **8.5**. Cost: \$19. [click to buy.](#)

2004 Renaissance Vineyard & Winery "Claret Prestige" Proprietary Red, North Yuba, Sierra Foothills, California

Light to medium ruby in color, this wine smells of dried herbs and red apple skin. In the mouth, gorgeously supple flavors of red apple skin, cedar, and dried herbs have a sweet floral aroma and beautiful powdery tannic texture. Light, supple, and stunning in its depth and minerality. Gorgeous. 14.1% alcohol. Score: around **9.5**. Cost: \$62. [click to buy.](#)

2005 Renaissance Vineyard & Winery Cabernet Sauvignon, North Yuba, Sierra Foothills, California

Medium ruby in the glass, this wine smells of red apple skin, cedar, and mulling spices. In the mouth, dried cherry, sandalwood, leather and dried herbs are draped in a gauzy blanket of fine grained tannins. Lovely notes of red apple skin and dried herbs linger in the finish. In a beautiful place at the moment. 14.5% alcohol. Score: between **9** and **9.5**. Cost: \$50. [click to buy.](#)



2014 Inglenook "Rubicon" Red Blend, Rutherford, Napa, California

Dark garnet in color, this wine smells of dried herbs and cherries and a touch of oak. In the mouth, bright and juicy flavors of cherry and green herbs and new oak are wrapped in a fleecy blanket of tannins but enlivened by excellent, even zippy acidity. I wish I tasted a bit less oak in this wine, but its not so egregious that a few years in the cellar won't make for a harmonious whole. Beautifully balanced, otherwise. 14.2% alcohol. Score: between **9** and **9.5**. Cost: \$200. [click to buy.](#)

2014 Acumen "Peak" Cabernet Sauvignon, Atlas Peak, Napa, California

Dark garnet in color, this wine smells of black cherry and cassis. In the mouth, gorgeously juicy flavors of cherry and chocolate mix with a touch of dried herbs. Very fine grained tannins wrap the whole package up with remarkably well integrated and subtle oak treatment -- you'd never guess this was 85% new oak. Excellent acidity and a remarkably restrained 14.1% alcohol. Outstanding. Score: around **9.5**. Cost: \$150. [click to buy.](#)

2014 Acumen "Peak - Edcora Vineyard" Cabernet Sauvignon, Atlas Peak, Napa, California

Dark garnet in color, this wine smells of cherry, cassis and a touch of gunpowder green tea. In the mouth, beautiful flavors of cherry and cocoa powder and boysenberry are wrapped in a fleecy blanket of fine grained tannins. Very little trace of wood in this wine, save for the tannins which are sculpted and very supple. Excellent acidity and great length, and almost no trace of the 85% new oak. 14.3% alcohol. Score: around **9.5**. Cost: \$150.

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