

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017

THE tastingpanel MAGAZINE

SOURCES OF

INSPIRATION

**GLENFIDDICH WHISKY
CELEBRATES THE SPIRIT
OF COLLABORATION**

The North American finalists of the World's Most Experimental Bartender competition in the cooperage at Glenfiddich Distillery in Dufftown, Scotland. Pictured: Jeneé Craver and Matt Schwalm of Philadelphia; and John Taube and Nathan O'Neill of New York City.

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“Variations on a Clone”

THE CENTRAL COAST GROUP PROJECT PUTS EXPERIMENTATION TO THE TASTE TEST

THE CALIFORNIA WINE INDUSTRY GOT A late start because of Prohibition. So, in order to catch up to well-established Old World winemaking, experimentation became the driving force around the Golden State. Vintners experimented with varieties, clones, micro-climates, yeasts, barrels and all manner of techniques.

The tradition of experimentation is still alive and well with the Central Coast Group Project as a dramatic case in point.

Scott Sampler has focused on clonal selection as well as the time the developing wine spends on the skins during fermentation. Explains Sampler, “Each ‘Opus’ represents a single Syrah clone from White Hawk Vineyard that went into the ‘Names’ cuvée. Each clone was picked on the same day from different blocks of the vineyard and vinified in exactly the same way—a rare opportunity to taste the differences among Syrah clonal selections from the same vineyard in a controlled sampling. The fun is in experiencing each of the single expressions and seeing how and what they sing when they marry.”

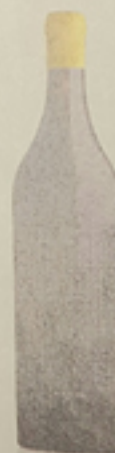


93 Central Coast Group Project 2012 Variations on a Clone Syrah, Op. 1, White Hawk Vineyard, Santa Barbara County (\$90) Deep and lush with ripe black raspberry and floral notes; smooth, seamless and richly evolved flavors; silky and showing a bit of animal and earth; the most flavorful of the three.

93 Central Coast Group Project 2012 Variations on a Clone Syrah, Op. 174, White Hawk Vineyard, Santa Barbara County (\$90) Dense, dark and earthy; fleshy and mature with balance and complexity; deep and intense; rich and long; the most elegant of the three.

94 Central Coast Group Project 2012 Variations on a Clone Syrah, Op. 877, White Hawk Vineyard, Santa Barbara County (\$90) Rich and dense with velvety texture and balanced, ripe blackberry fruit; earthy, intense and luscious; the most structured of the three.

94 Central Coast Group Project 2012 Names Syrah, White Hawk Vineyard, Santa Barbara County (\$75) The blend of all three is smoothly aromatic with lovely black-raspberry fruit; a period of 43 days on the skins has developed rich, mature flavors and great depth; intense and complex with great complexity and finesse.



90 Estancia 2015 Sauvignon Blanc, Monterey County (\$8) Silky and smooth with fresh, clean flavors of citrus and bright fruit; tangy and balanced. Superb value. CONSTELLATION WINE CO.

88 Olema 2014 Chardonnay, Sonoma (\$15) Clean and creamy with ripe pear fruit and suave texture; fresh, bright and balanced; long and dense on the finish.

88 Renzo Masi 2015 Il Bastardo Sangiovese, Rosso di Toscana IGT, Italy (\$9) Food-friendly and quaffable, with bright berry fruit and tangy acidity; made in the Chianti Rufina area from 100 percent Sangiovese. HB WINE MERCHANTS

88 Original House Wine 2014 Mountain Merlot, American (\$11) Herbal nose; smooth, ripe and fresh; clean and simple but rich and nicely balanced. 10% Cabernet Sauvignon. PRECEPT WINES

NOBLE VINES



90 Noble Vines 2015 446 Chardonnay, San Bernabe, Monterey (\$13) Tangy citrus, pear and racy acidity; lush, ripe and showing toasty oak and remarkably complex flavors. Quite a good value. DFV WINES

90 Granza 2014 Tempranillo, Ribera del Duero, Spain (\$15) Dusky and delicious, with juicy plum and berry fruit; racy and fresh with a long finish; an organic “natural” wine from Bodegas Matarromera. NATURAL MERCHANTS





89 Layer Cake 2015 Sea of Stones, Mendoza, Argentina (\$16) Dark, smooth and concentrated with rich, ripe plum, cassis and blackberry; intense and deep with a lingering finish; a Jason Woodbridge import.

ONE TRUE VINE



93 Boondocks American Whiskey 95 Proof, USA (\$40) Royal Wine Corp. re-enters the spirits game with this smooth, ripe and floral entry. Lush, warm flavors of soft spice and leather; creamy and mellow with sweet oak and a long finish. There's also a 127-proof cask-strength version.

ROYAL WINE CORP.



92 Savile Premium Rumini, USA (\$28/1 liter) Made with white rum. Juicy, tropical nose; mouthfilling yet tangy with natural flavors of bright passion fruit, sweet orange and citrus; smooth, balanced and superb. The one-liter bottle contains eight drinks (\$3.50/per cocktail).

DTRS ENTERPRISES

SPIRITS

92 Oakheart Genuine Spiced Rum, Puerto Rico (\$15) Silky and seductive with off-dry flavors of spice, smoke and toasty oak; rich, complex and mellow with a long, rich finish; serious and delicious.

BACARDI



93 B Distilled Spirits Specialty, 100% Real Beet, USA (\$30) Clear in color; earthy nose; lovely, elegant sweet beet flavors; an eau-de-vie made from beets that is luscious on its own and would be exciting in a cocktail.

BOARDROOM SPIRITS

93 Flores Žuta Osa Superior, Serbia (\$35) Žuta Osa ("Yellow Wasp") is a traditional plum brandy—slivovitz—from Serbia; toasty plum and vanilla flavors; it is dry, complex and charming; mellow, earthy and long.

BOZIC'S IMPORTS & WHOLESALE



92 Revel Stoke Root Beer Flavored Whisky, USA (\$14) Deep mahogany color; sweet root beer nose; smooth and spicy with authentic root beer flavor and lush texture; creamy with amaro-like style; rich, balanced finish.

PHILLIPS DISTILLING

93 The Macallan Oak Cask No. 2 Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Scotland (\$100) Medium amber color; softly toasty nose; smooth and mellow with sweet oak, dried pear and elegant spice; light in weight but deep in flavor; long and balanced.

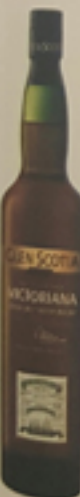
EDRINGTON AMERICAS



93 Long Road Distillers Aquavit, USA (\$35) From 100% red winter wheat. Soft caraway nose; silky and smooth with lush texture and lovely flavors of caraway and vanilla; made from red winter wheat; clean and mellow with long, graceful flavors; made in Michigan.

94 Glen Scotia Exceptionally Rare Victoriana Campbeltown Single Malt Scotch Whisky, Scotland (\$91) Intense, rich, toasty malt; deep, mellow and long with layers of dried fruits, treacle and spice; bursting with flavor; complex and balanced; an impressive statement from Campbeltown.

A HARDY USA



94 Cráneo Organic Mezcal Artesanal, Mexico (\$58) A new organic mezcal from the creator of 123 Organic Tequila; smoky, silky and balanced with citrus, spice and green banana; creamy texture and rich flavors.

An excellent addition to this very hot category.

123 SPIRITS



93 Magnum Highland Cream Liqueur, Scotland (\$25) A lovely liqueur based on Dutch cream laced with BenRiach Speyside single malt; luscious flavors with a bright kick of whisky; dense and quite charming. The milk can packaging is unique too.

MAGNUM IMPORTS

92 Laughing Glass All Natural Pomegranate Low Calorie Margarita, USA (\$19) Pink color; bright fruit nose; juicy and fresh with vibrant pomegranate and citrus; made with all-natural ingredients and blanco tequila; fresh and tangy—and it's low-calorie.

MOMS ON THE ROCKS

