

# Beau's Barrel Room

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## Hourglass Vineyards Blueline Estate New Releases

Monday, May 26, 2014

I recently had the pleasure of tasting through the **Hourglass** wines, specifically from their **Blueline** estate vineyard, in a virtual tasting along with a handful of other bloggers. Charles Communications organized the tasting, sending us four 375ml bottles from Hourglass Vineyards. We were joined by Proprietor Jeff Smith and Winemaker Tony Biagi. Tony took over in 2012, so we tasted the 2012 reds and 2013 sauvignon blanc. They discussed the wines, their philosophy, and some Napa Valley history.



### THE WINES WE TASTED WERE:

#### **2013 Hourglass Estate Sauvignon Blanc (SRP \$40)**

Big, rich on the palate, plenty of acid too. Feels like a big wine, but one that is balanced. Tropical and citrus with a touch of pear. Maybe a touch of wood too, showing up as some vanilla notes. Several tastes had me smacking my lips in anticipation of a bite of food. There is a touch of heat on the finish but honestly I was expecting more booziness based on the 14.2% abv so it was a very pleasant surprise. Suggested pairings would be fish tacos, grilled halibut, bbq chicken salad.

#### **2012 Hourglass Blueline Estate Merlot (SRP \$75)**

Showing tart red fruit, balsamic vinegar, oak, and plums. The VA is a bit distracting at this point, though I think there is enough fruit behind it to help. On the palate it shows very traditional Napa-merlot flavors, think blackberry, plum, buttressed by oak and nicely integrated tannin. I like the finish most of all, perhaps, because there's a dusty, spicy element that finishes very cleanly. 91% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Petit Verdot. 14.8% abv. Suggested pairings include hamburgers, ribs, and beef or lamb stew.

#### **2012 Hourglass Blueline Estate Malbec (SRP \$75)**

Think smokey, meaty, blackberry and blueberries. That's this wine on the nose. I like the odd note of grapefruit pith too. It's plenty ripe, showing black fruit, dusty soil, and grippy tannins along with chocolate and a burst of red fruit on the finish. This wine makes me want a fancy bacon cheeseburger, it's also something like 25% petit verdot, so you know it tugs at my heartstrings! 75% Malbec, 25% Petit Verdot. 14.2% abv. Suggested pairings include bone-in steak, lamb, pork ribs.

#### **2012 Hourglass Blueline Estate Cabernet Franc (SRP \$135)**

I thought of the word "big" right away. I like the richness on the nose, with aromas of violet, chocolate, coffee, blueberry, and cherry. Plenty of oak on the palate, which works with very ripe blue fruit, chocolate, black pepper, and firm tannins. Heat on the finish comes not as a surprise, and I think would be mitigated by food. This is lush, elegant, downright fancy wine. I would age this for years or serve it now after a long decant. If the malbec demands a fancy burger, this cabernet franc demands you serve it filet mignon. 83% Cabernet Franc, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Petit Verdot. 14.8% abv.

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Overall I liked tasting these wines because it gave me a bit of a glimpse into what is going on in Napa Valley right now. Each wine is unabashedly "Napa", meaning big flavor, structure, and ample concentration. That is not at all a knock though, because in the case of the malbec and cabernet franc, it works. I enjoyed the sauvignon blanc much more than I expected to, but just can't plop down \$40 a bottle. Again, no knock on quality, rather, I seek out different examples for my own cellar.

I want to address one thing, as sort of a disclaimer. I don't drink a lot of Napa Valley wines and can probably count on one hand how many producers I actively buy. For this tasting, I tried my very best to taste with context. That is to say that I tasted each wine with the understanding of where it was from, the style which Napa Valley tends to produce, and the vintage. For my friends who love high acid, low alcohol wines with less fruit and more tertiary flavors, these are not for you. For my friends who love rich, concentrated, bigger wines that still have good acid (and plenty of alcohol), I recommend the Hourglass Vineyards spring releases.

These wines were media samples for review purposes.

Beau Carufel