

The logo for Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar is displayed within a dark red rectangular box. The text "Stephen Tanzer's" is written in a white, elegant script font, while "INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR" is in a white, all-caps, sans-serif font below it.

Stephen Tanzer's INTERNATIONAL WINE CELLAR

Review dated May 16, 2013

Kapcsandy Family Winery

I had another Petrus moment at Kapcsandy this year: the winery's stunning 2010 Roberta's Reserve is about as good as merlot gets, including on the Pomerol plateau. (And it's clear that Lou Kapcsandy is gunning for Petrus.) The wine has structure of steel plus uncanny depth and complexity, and may well have an aging curve like a great Pomerol from a great vintage. The estate was extremely severe with its selection in 2010, as fully two-thirds of its total production went into its entry-level Endre blend. Kapcsandy told me that the 2011 growing season brought a trifecta of lower alcohol, ripe fruit and buoyant acidity. "The raw materials were a bit riper and fruitier, and the berries were slightly larger, with bigger seeds and slightly thinner skins," said Louis Jr. "We had to let the cabernet sauvignon hang, and we ended up making more passes through the vines than they do at Chateau Yquem."

Roberta's Reserve State Lane Vineyard Yountville 2010

(95% merlot with 5% cabernet franc): Good medium ruby. High-pitched aromas of blackberry, blueberry, minerals and licorice. Wonderfully intense but youthfully imploded on the palate, offering electric flavors of black fruits, cocoa powder, bitter chocolate and minerals. Utterly seamless considering that it's so backward today. Finishes with noble tannins, great class and energy and endless lingering perfume. This gained steadily in complexity during the 45 minutes or so I was able to follow it, but its steely structure suggests it will evolve gracefully for two or three decades. It's perhaps the single greatest merlot-based wine I have ever tasted from California. (Winemaker Denis Malbec, who literally grew up at Chateau Latour, also makes the great merlot-based Rive Droite bottling at Blankiet, which means that he is responsible for California's two greatest merlots, in the opinion of this taster.) **98(+?)**

Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vin State Line Vineyard Yountville 2010

(13.6% alcohol; includes 4% merlot and 1% petit verdot): Full ruby. Deep aromas of cassis, blackberry, licorice, bitter chocolate and crushed rock, with a sexy suggestion of candied fruit. Then amazingly precise and pure on the palate, with outstanding mineral cut and inner-mouth perfume to the flavors of black fruits, graphite, cedar and lavender. Best today on the expanding, slowly mounting finish, shaped by noble tannins and redolent of captivating mineral and violet perfume. This, too, should improve in bottle for decades. If the Roberta's Blend resembles a top vintage of Petrus, this one is Latour-like--and I don't make those comparisons lightly. **97(+?)**

Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vin State Lane Vineyard Yountville 2011

Good deep red. Knockout nose combines black raspberry, pungent minerality, wild herbs, mint, espresso, bitter chocolate and crushed rock. Silky and seamless but tightly wound and light on its feet, with the strong crushed rock character anchoring the palate. Very backward today but already conveys a strong impression of *terroir*. Finishes with suave, building tannins and outstanding persistence. Promises to be one of the monuments of this tricky vintage. (Incidentally, I tasted early barrel samples of the 2012, as well as the Roberta's from the same year, and both offered extraordinary purity of flavor and finesse. The merlot is preliminarily in the 96-99 range and the Grand Vin not far behind it.) **95-98**

Estate Cuvee State Lane Vineyard Yountville 2010

(13.5% alcohol; 100% cabernet sauvignon): Sexy, cool nose offers black fruits, graphite minerality, espresso and bitter chocolate; an essence of cabernet sauvignon. Wonderfully perfumed and pure in the mouth, with sharply defined flavors of blueberry, cassis, bitter chocolate and licorice pastille. Finishes with substantial but very suave tannins and terrific length. Like a hypothetical blend of St. Julien and Margaux. **94**

Rapsozdia State Lane Vineyard Yountville Napa Valley 2010

(a 50/50 blend of cabernet franc and merlot; from fruit that used to go into the Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vin and Roberta's Reserve): Good full red-ruby. Captivating violet perfume lifts the aromas of blackberry, bitter chocolate and dusty spices. Intensely flavored but light on its feet, with superb precision and character to the black fruit, bitter chocolate and violet flavors. Finishes with very suave tannins and outstanding length. A beauty--and more generous than the Endre. **93**

Roberta's Reserve State Lane Vineyard Yountville 2011

(14.1% alcohol; a 96/4 blend of merlot and cabernet franc): Good medium red. Aromas of cassis, licorice, lead pencil and tobacco are complicated by a soil quality and lifted by a strong violet component. Very young but already wonderfully silky and expansive, with dark fruit and licorice flavors complicated by mocha and a nutty nuance. Less complex than the 2010 but the expanding, rising finish and serious but fine-grained tannins suggest that this wine has all the makings for a positive evolution in bottle. But will it show the energy, the sheer *eclat* of the supernal 2010? The Kapcsandys started picking merlot in the middle of September in 2011, long before rains became an issue. **93-96**

Grand Vin Rosé Yountville 2011

(70% cabernet sauvignon and 30% merlot; fermented in stainless steel, then aged for 16 months in once-used French oak barrels): Sexy aromas of medicinal herbs, rose petal and caramel. Offers a silky mouthfeel and a touch of sweetness to its strawberry and cranberry flavors. This very substantial and rather wild rose would be a perfect match for grilled salmon. Outstanding. **92**

Endre Red Wine State Lane Vineyard Yountville Napa Valley 2010

(this *cuvée* represents 68% of the estate's production due to severe selection in 2010; includes a good bit of press wine): Aromas of currant and smoked meat lifted by a floral element. At once sweet and juicy, with harmonious acidity giving cut and lift to the complex flavors of currant, raspberry, licorice, tobacco and tea leaf. Surprisingly open at this stage, and long on the aftertaste. **91**

Rapsozdia State Lane Vineyard Yountville Napa Valley 2011

(62% cabernet franc and 38% merlot): Bright medium-deep red. Lovely perfumed nose melds crushed cassis, blackberry, violet, licorice and wild herbs. Wonderfully silky and juicy but not quite as dense as the Estate Cuvée. Dark berry and licorice pastille flavors extend well on the finish, but the tannins will require time to knit with the wine's flesh. **91-94**

Estate Cuvée State Lane Vineyard Yountville 2011

(13.8% alcohol; 56% merlot, 36% cabernet sauvignon, 5% petit verdot and 3% cabernet franc): Good full, deep red. Highly perfumed aromas of black fruits and licorice, with a hint of candied berries. Silky but youthfully restrained, with classically dry flavors of black fruits, licorice and graphite. Best today on the very long, firmly tannic back end, which promises a slow and graceful evolution in bottle. **91-94**

Rosé State Lane Vineyard Yountville 2011

(53% merlot, 39% cabernet sauvignon and 4% each petit verdot and cabernet franc; done mostly in stainless steel; full malo): Musky aromas of orange, herbs and lees. Vinous and concentrated, showing a distinctly wild character to its saline strawberry and herb flavors. Really broadens out impressively toward the back. This one caught my attention. **90**

Endre Red Wine State Lane Vineyard Yountville Napa Valley 2011

(there will be just 200 cases of this wine in 2011, vs. 2,400 in 2010, as most of Endre will now go into the Estate Cuvée, which will become a Bordeaux blend, rather than 100% cabernet sauvignon; this is from young regrafted vines and press wine): Good red-ruby. Very ripe aromas of black raspberry, violet, lilac and game. Sweet and lush but with modest depth to its flavors of dark berries, graphite, leather and tobacco. The tannins kick in early, giving the finish a slightly dusty quality. **89-91**