

Kapcsandy Family Winery

MAY 12

By Stephen Tanzer

The key to the quality of the Kapcsandys' outstanding vineyard on the Yountville Crossroad (formerly the State Lane Vineyard, the source of many outstanding cabernets from Beringer over the years) may be the long hangtime between *veraison* and harvest. Particularly in recent cooler years, the tannins are able to ripen slowly and thoroughly before grape sugars go too high (most of the 2010s and 2009s are under 14% alcohol, according to Lou Kapcsandy). The soil is mostly gravel over clay, and cooling breezes from San Pablo Bay to the south consistently bring down temperatures in late afternoon. The vines are also planted along a north-south axis, which protects the grapes from the hottest afternoon sun. The result is more hang time, less dehydration of the grapes, and dense, full wines with strong minerality and floral lift. During my most recent tasting here, it crossed my mind that the Roberta's Reserve bottling has quickly risen to the top of the merlot heap in California. But don't expect a chocolatey, oaky confection; in its intensity, structure and mineral grip, it's more like Petrus.

2010 Kapcsandy Family Winery Endre Red Wine Napa

91-93

(53% cabernet sauvignon, 43% merlot and 3% petit verdot): Good deep medium ruby. Blackberry, violet, licorice, bitter chocolate and graphite minerality on the nose. Suave and sweet but gripping too, with lovely purity to the velvety red and dark berry flavors. Finishes youthful and long. This was to have been bottled two weeks after my visit.

2010 Kapcsandy Family Winery Estate Cuvee State Lane Vineyard Yountville

92-95

(100% cabernet sauvignon for the second year in a row; harvested between October 19 and November 2): Good medium ruby. Vibrant, pure aromas of blackberry, violet, licorice and cocoa powder; smells more serious than the Endre. Then penetrating and youthfully medicinal in the mouth, with mineral-driven flavors of dark berries, violet and menthol. Terrific intensity and grip here, not to mention length. A very dark-fruit style for this winery: think Leoville-Las Cases. A mere 13.5% alcohol.

2010 Kapcsandy Family Winery Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vin State Line Vineyard Yountville

94-97

(blended with 4% merlot and 1% petit verdot; 13.6% alcohol): Bright full ruby. Aromas of blueberry, licorice pastille and menthol, with enticing spicy lift. Fully ripe, dense and impressively fine-grained: this is more Latour than Las Cases. Deep, glossy blue fruit, molten chocolate and violet flavors are firm by pungent minerality on the extremely long, building finish. Tannins are chewy but suave. Outstanding potential here. The Kapcsandy 2010s spent 35 to 40 days on their skins, including a cold soak lasting 4 to 7 days, and did their malolactic fermentations in barrel.

2010 Kapcsandy Family Winery Roberta's Reserve State Lane Vineyard Yountville

95-98

(\$300) (merlot with 5% cabernet franc; the highest in alcohol of these 2010s at 14.5% but also the highest in acidity): Medium ruby. Knockout perfume of blackberry, cassis, bitter chocolate, licorice pastille, menthol, cedar and cocoa powder. Wonderfully sweet, lush and sappy; a fruit bomb in the middle palate but strong finishing minerality and serious, noble tannins give this extremely young wine a great future. Great building length.

2009 Kapcsandy Family Winery Endre Red Wine Napa

90

(\$80) (51% cabernet sauvignon, 40% merlot, 6% cabernet franc and 3% petit verdot): Good deep ruby-red. Superripe, full-blown aromas of *kirsch*, blackberry liqueur, dark cherry, leather and game, plus an exotic whiff of pineapple. Fat, sweet and wild, with the blackberry and leather elements following through on the palate. A very ripe, smooth wine but can't match the 2010 for energy.

2009 Kapcsandy Family Winery Estate Cuvee State Lane Vineyard Yountville

90(+)?

(\$150) (100% cabernet sauvignon): Good bright ruby-red. Wild aromas and flavors of cassis, violet, leather and black olive, plus a whiff of adhesive tape. Concentrated and liqueur-like, with black fruit and floral flavors complicated by exotic spices and licorice. Today the wine's somewhat dusty tannins cut off the fruit. Normally I would say that this wine needs only time in the bottle to harmonize but I was concerned by the rather *sauvage* character I found in three different bottles.

2009 Kapcsandy Family Winery Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vin State Line Vineyard Yountville

95

(includes 3% merlot and 1% cabernet franc): Good bright medium ruby. Spectacular nose offers crushed blackberry, cassis, licorice, violet and minerals complicated by leather and game. Lush, silky and deep, with enticing floral lift for the vintage. Big, powerful but very fine tannins are thoroughly coated by fruit on the extremely long finish. Conveys a somewhat higher-pH mouth feel than the more gripping 2010 version but this vintage may have even riper tannins.

2009 Kapcsandy Family Winery Roberta's Reserve State Lane Vineyard Yountville

96

(\$325) (merlot with 4% cabernet franc): Good medium ruby. Captivating high-pitched perfume of blackberry, licorice, violet and pungent flinty minerality. Utterly seamless in texture, with great purity and lift to its sappy dark fruit flavors. Finishes with great palate-staining length and perfume. Really remarkably structured, fine-grained merlot with outstanding potential.