



MY WINE REVIEWS IN 2011: AN ANALYSIS

December 28, 2011 | Steve Heimoff

I reviewed about 4,800 wines in 2011, which works out to 13.1 per day, although I didn't taste every single day. The top varietals tasted, by quantity, are listed below. (My top-scoring wines from each category follow in brackets):

1,003 Pinot Noirs [Williams Selyem 2009 Precious Mountain]
885 Cabernet Sauvignons [Venge 2008 Family Reserve]
767 Chardonnays [Foxen 2010 Block UU Bien Nacido Vineyard]
354 Zinfandels [Seghesio 2009 Cortina]
295 Sauvignon Blancs [Trione 2010 River Road Ranch]
295 Syrahs [Qupe 2006 Bien Nacido Vineyard 25th Anniversary X-Block The Good Nacido]
236 Merlots [Rutherford Hill 2007 Reserve]
177 Meritage-style [Von Strasser Reserve]
118 sparkling wines [Schramsberg 2004 J. Schram Rosé]
118 Petite Sirahs [Envy 2008 Nord Vineyard]
59 Cabernet Francs [Merryvale 2008]
59 Rhône red blends [Sanguis 2008 Endangered Species]

“... Other than that, not too many surprises. Napa Valley dominates the above list, followed by Sonoma County and **Santa Barbara County**. I think we can safely say that, in terms of sheer numbers, those three areas are where the action is, although a great wine can show up anywhere. I was a little surprised, in a pleasant way, that my top Chardonnay was from **Foxen**. If you'd asked me, before I looked it up, I wouldn't have guessed Foxen. Maybe something from Stonestreet, Williams Selyem, Hanzell, Lynmar, but not Foxen. However, in retrospect I shouldn't have been surprised, because when I looked up all my Foxen Chardonnay reviews over the years, the scores run quite high. Still, something magical happened with that **2010 UU Block Chardonnay**, and I'm guessing it was the vintage. I've tasted about 235 2010 Chardonnays so far, and excluding the cheapies, the scores are impressive, with about 12% scoring 90 or higher. But there are many more 2010 Chardonnays to come in, and they'll be the better ones, too, because the cheapies were mostly rushed out the door in 2011.”