



4 Wines from Cameron Hughes

March 12th, 2007



I've written about how I hate Cameron Hughes because he took an idle daydream of mine and turned it into a business. Now, after tasting four new Cameron Hughes wines, I must admit that my distaste for the man is moving to the next level. Yep, I think I have a serious man crush on the guy. Don't worry, it's not a physical thing — you know, like the drooling, swooning effect George Bush and his flight suit had on so many reporters — Chris Matthews, for example — during happier days a few years and a few thousand lives ago. No, it's platonic. It's just that these wines are so damn good you absolutely must love the guy for selling them at these prices.

Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough (NZ) Lot #26

The first sniff is pure cat pee. Yeah, it's one of those. Grassy with a full jolt of tequila and grapefruit juice. It's steely and crisp on the palate but with a nice bit of creaminess to the texture. Loads of grapefruit rind on the long finish. This is a clean, well made wine, yet my least favorite of this bunch.

Price: \$11 (from Costco or the winery) **Score: 140%**

Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley Lot #28

This wine offers classic cabernet aromas of black cherry, currant, espresso, cinnamon, and chocolate, with a touch of sage. The mouth shows "Rutherford dust" type soft tannins. It's medium bodied, with a good, moderately chewy texture and excellent balance. You could quibble a bit with the way that it turns a little too dry on the finish, I suppose, but that finish is nice and long. Another strong wine.

Price: \$16 (from Costco or the winery) **Score: 170%**

Syrah, Sonoma County Lot #24

Here's a wine with dark inky color. The aromas are white pepper, plum, mocha, and tar. On the palate, the wine is tasty but not as brooding as the dark fruit flavors and color might suggest. The finish lingers on and on with favors of oak and blackberry syrup, braced with solid tannins. Truly wonderful stuff at this price.

Price: \$12 (from Costco or the winery) **Score: 185%**

Syrah, Russian River Lot #27

If I had not tasted #24 alongside it, I would think this was the best \$12 Syrah I had tasted on a good while. It's a close second. This wine shows riper on the nose, with some earthy, mushroomy aromas as well. The palate is forward and ripe with plums, blueberry and blackberry. There's nice balance of acidity and a little more viscosity than #24. Very soft tannins and a long finish. Great juice.

Price: \$12 (from Costco or the winery) **Score: 170%**

(disclosure — these wines were free samples provided by the winery)