

2012 Paumanok Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon

The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon also has 6% Merlot blended in. It was aged for 10 months in neutral French oak (but for 10% of the juice that saw new French and Hungarian oak). More flavorful, but less nuanced than its 2012 Merlot sibling reviewed this issue, this ends with some tannic pop, a touch of astringency in its youth. Not particularly concentrated, it has a reasonable amount of flesh to balance out the tannins and a bright feel on the finish, but it lacks the precision and focus of the 2012 Merlot. It's still pretty nice—and quite serious for the price. This could use 6-12 months of cellaring, but if you must plunge in, give it just a little air and it will be fine.

One of the long-time stalwarts on the Long Island, owned and worked by the Massoud family with Charles and son Kareem handling the winemaking, this is by consensus als...

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2012 Paumanok Vineyards Merlot

The 2012 Merlot also has 7% Petit Verdot. It was aged in neutral French oak barrels for 15 months. Among Paumanok's 2012 reds in this issue, this is probably the most successful. Adding a layer of depth, more intensity on the finish and more interesting texture to the Cabernet Franc, for example, it comes together quite well. It's a bit lean, not anywhere near as concentrated as some of the upper-level entrants from other years, of course. Still, it has some nuanced complexity on the finish, serious structure and the promise that it can develop in the cellar for another couple of years. It's a pretty nice value. A bit tight just now, it could use a year or so of cellaring to settle down, but it is approachable if you must dive in.

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2010 Paumanok Vineyards Assemblage

The 2010 Assemblage is a blend of 35% Merlot, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Petit Verdot and 11% Cabernet Franc; aged for 16 months in French oak (30% new, the rest neutral). Rather sedate compared to some of the other Big Boys from Paumanok, this is elegant in most respects, while still retaining grip on the finish. It adds nuances and complexities of the type that Bordeaux often develops. Overall, it grows on you as it sits, showing persistence on that finish and drinking rather beautifully. Tasting it after some of the 2010 Cabernets and Merlots was probably a bad idea, because this tends to elegant and some of those were more powerful. Yet, with time, this showed beautifully and asserted itself. It can be approached now, but another year or two of cellaring would most assuredly help.

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2014 Paumanok Vineyards Festival Chardonnay

The 2014 Festival Chardonnay is unoaked and comes in at 12% alcohol. This is a straightforward white in some respects. It's not big, deep or powerful. It is very well done in its style, though. Doing pretty much everything else very well, it is a nice value. Fresh, clean and a little steely, it projects nice fruit on the crisp and juicy finish as it airs out and warms up. Its ability to balance fruit and acidity is excellent. Just drink it young and fresh, because "fresh" will be what it does best at its peak, no matter how long it theoretically lasts. It should be a big hit this summer.

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2010 Paumanok Vineyards 30th Anniversary Special Edition

The 2010 30th Anniversary Special Edition is a blend of the "best lots" of 70% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Petit Verdot aged in a mixture of new (60%) and neutral (40%) French oak. It comes in at 13.9% alcohol. A ringer for Right Bank Bordeaux, this is quite clearly a winner, although not necessarily head and shoulders above Paumanok's other 2010 high-end output reviewed this issue. That's only because that other output was rather wonderful from top to bottom and often brilliant. That said, this is pretty fine, wonderfully elegant, impeccably balanced and remarkably complex at its young age (there is that advantage to blends). The backbone is real here, but fairly well controlled. It is rather delicious in a nuanced way, too. It is never sweet and jammy. The sappy fruit is pure, but amply supported by the stru...

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2010 Paumanok Vineyards Riesling Late Harvest

The 2012 Riesling Late Harvest comes in at 154 grams per liter of residual sugar and 9% alcohol. Now that you are in the land of late-harvest Riesling, this is where you'll start saying "Apricots, Peaches and Pineapple, oh my!" As rich as it sometimes seems, what actually makes this interesting rather than scary is the zest and acidity. It is most certainly sweet, but it doesn't seem anywhere near as sweet as statistics might suggest. It adds a bit of bite and tension as it airs on the lingering and completely delicious finish. That drier and fresher character was underscored emphatically the next day, when the sugar was just a bit more subdued, the flavors intense and the demeanor bright and sunny. This should satisfy lots of desires over the next few years (or, noting that these tend to age well, the next couple of decades or so.) We'll...

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2007 Paumanok Vineyards Merlot Tuthill's Lane

The 2007 Merlot Tuthill's Lane was the debut vintage, sourced from a block planted in 1986 and aged for 18 months in French oak (79% new; 21% one- and two-year-old French oak). It comes in at 13.5% alcohol. Paumanok picked a good year to start with this bottling, as 2007 was a very fine year in general. Here, it makes a wonderful Merlot. Full-bodied and caressing on the palate, this shows very fine depth, but it retains its elegance all the while. Nearing age 8, it remains young and vibrant, showing beautiful mid-palate solidity and impeccable freshness. It is just now giving hints of developing more complexity—and it will continue to evolve in the cellar. Structured, balanced, fresh and intriguing, this is a beauty. Although this is a library wine, I am advised it is still available, both in 750ml and magnums.

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2014 Paumanok Vineyards Chenin Blanc

The 2014 Chenin Blanc is unoaked and has 12 grams per liter of residual sugar. It comes in at 11% alcohol. Said winemaker Kareem Massoud: "The 2014 vintage is the first to include fruit from a new clone (982) of Chenin that we planted in 2012. The remainder comes from fruit sourced from our original Chenin vineyard planted in 1982, another block planted in 2000 and from our Sound Avenue block, planted in 2005." First, this doesn't seem anywhere near as sweet as the statistics would suggest. In fact, the acidity cuts through everything and is easily the most dominant feature of the wine. Without the sugar, this would likely be shrill or bitter instead of generally dry or dry-ish. It is very impressive in most respects, crisp and juicy, tense on the finish and completely invigorating. It simply grips the palate. The acidity makes this a su...

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**2010 Paumanok Vineyards Petit Verdot
"Apollo Drive Vineyard - Limited Edition"**

The 2010 Petit Verdot "Apollo Drive Vineyard - Limited Edition" was aged for 16 months in one-third new French oak, the rest neutral. It comes in at 13.9% alcohol. This is a big mouthful. Powerful and gripping on the finish, it sports a serious backbone. Reasonably concentrated in the mid-palate, but never close to jammy, it is focused and quite bright, with the green nuances this grape can sometimes acquire well under control. Overall, this is a beauty that may yet be entitled to an uptick. It should continue to improve over the next few years and it will likely hold well.

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**2013 Paumanok Vineyards Chardonnay
Barrel Fermented**

The 2013 Chardonnay Barrel Fermented was aged for eight months in French oak (85% neutral; 15% new). It comes in at 12.5% alcohol. This may not be the best Chardonnay of the three submitted by the winery this issue, but it is the best value. A hypothetical blend of the other two (the Festival Chardonnay and the Minimalist), this shows modest oak impact, but impresses most with its fine acidity cutting through the oak nuance. Mouthwatering on the finish, it is invigorating as well as tasty, with a crisp finish. The styles of the three Chardonnays are very different. Buy the Festival for purity, as it is clean and fresh; the Minimalist, for caressing texture and its lush and sexy demeanor; this, because it has a little of everything at a very nice price point.

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**2010 Paumanok Vineyards Merlot Tuthills
Lane**

The 2010 Merlot Tuthills Lane was aged in 55% new French oak and 45% neutral French oak and comes in at 13.9% alcohol. The first taste and first thought summed this up—"just gorgeous." Powerful, concentrated and focused, this gripping Merlot takes no prisoners in terms of structure, yet it is in perfect balance with the ripe fruit, too. The fruit is flavorful and nuanced, showing classic Bordeaux-like notes (although, in its youth, also a bit of oak). It is pretty delicious even now, but it will continue to improve in the cellar and it should have a long life ahead. It will acquire more complexity in time and pull in the last bits of oak. Retasted the next day, it was not quite the "wow" wine on first impression, having calmed down, but it showed more complexity and refinement, was more Bordeaux-like than ever and seemed even fresher. Whi...

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**2010 Paumanok Vineyards Cabernet
Sauvignon Tuthills Lane Vineyard**

The 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon "Tuthills Lane Vineyard" also has 5% Merlot blended in. It was aged in 95% new French oak, the rest neutral; and comes in at 13.9% alcohol. In most places in the world, it is the Cabernet that is bigger, deeper and more powerful. On Long Island, that description usually goes to the Merlot when the two are paired. That said, this is a pretty intense wine, with a rather concentrated mid-palate, intense flavor and a fine finish. It could use a little more cellaring, but it may be surprisingly approachable, too. It continued to evolve beautifully with extended aeration. It should also hold well. Putting on my bargain hunter hat, I would have to add that the winery's 2010 Cabernet Grand Vintage, also reviewed this issue, is as good or better and not quite as pricey. Either or both may be entitled to upticks as they...

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2012 Paumanok Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc Late Harvest

The 2012 Sauvignon Blanc Late Harvest was aged for five months in a mixture of 50% new French oak and 50% new Hungarian oak. It has 147 grams per liter of residual sugar and 10% alcohol. Despite the exuberance of this grape, this bottling has a different and more brooding style than the winery's Late Harvest Riesling, also reviewed this issue. It feels fuller in body, but less zesty; darker in flavor and not quite as sweet. The price references a 375ml bottle, from which this was tasted.

One of the long-time stalwarts on the Long Island, owned and worked by the Massoud family with Charles and son Kareem handling the winemaking, this is by consensus also one of Long Island's very best ambassadors and greatest estates, making fine and ageworthy wines. Kareem at this point handles the day-to-day winemaking.

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2010 Paumanok Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vintage

The 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon "Grand Vintage" also has 12% Merlot and 1% Petit Verdot. It was aged in French oak (only 12% new, the rest neutral) and comes in at 13.9% alcohol. This is super, a wine that well merits its "Grand Vintage" designation. Concentrated, powerful and brilliantly structured, this has all the elements to age well and develop more complexity in time. You will be well advised to put it away for a few years, but decanting for 90 minutes will help if you must dive in. It came into balance well eventually. It seems quite gorgeous, filling the mouth and coating the palate. It needs to develop some refinement; in time is likely will.

NOTE: Why a "Grand Vintage" and also a single-vineyard "Tuthills?" Here is Kareem Massoud's response to my question: "Grand Vintage (GV) is simply Paumanok's way of declaring the vintage. We ...

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2013 Paumanok Vineyards Riesling Semi-Dry

The 2013 Riesling Semi-Dry has 30 grams per liter of residual sugar and 10% alcohol. A bit sweet on the end on opening, this tilts a bit at that point to the sugary side of the scale, but it does have balancing acidity and a fresh feel. You can feel it on Day 1. On Day 2, it pulled everything together and seemed far drier and crisper, now emphasizing its acidity. It is pretty delicious overall and it coats the palate with juicy fruit. It's going to be hard to resist any time, but its sunny demeanor and dance-on-the-tongue personality should make it a big hit in warm weather. As it aired out and warmed up on Day 2, I was pleased to see some needed tension show up on the finish. It doesn't exactly have that fabled minerality Riesling lovers like to talk about, but it is worth leaning up and it may be one of the nicest \$20 bottles you buy t...

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2014 Paumanok Vineyards Sauvignon Blanc

The 2014 Sauvignon Blanc is dry and comes in at 12.0% alcohol. Vintage 2014 seems to have been a fine vintage for Sauvignon Blanc on Long Island. It's no different here; in fact, it's better than most. Fragrant but controlled, this is classic Sauvignon, but its focus is the most impressive aspect of this wine. Tightly-wound, it finishes crisply and with fine tension. It is beautifully done, a bit mouthwatering, lingering and very tasty. There are several contenders for "best of breed" in this issue's report, but this certainly has to be one of the efforts on my very short list. It's pretty terrific.

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2013 Paumanok Vineyards Minimalist Chardonnay

The 2013 Minimalist Chardonnay was aged for 12 months in new French oak and comes in at 13.5% alcohol. If you're wondering what "Minimalist" means, here is the winery's vision on it: "produced using minimalist winemaking techniques. Select clusters of unblemished Chardonnay that had attained total ripeness were carefully hand-harvested and whole-cluster pressed. The juice was transferred into new French oak puncheons where alcoholic and malolactic fermentations spontaneously occurred. This wine was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. The only addition was a judicious amount of sulfites. The fruit came from our Chardonnay block planted in 1983." Beautifully focused, this graceful Chardonnay has the most oak impact on paper of the three Chardonnays submitted by the winery this issue, but it also handles it very well, even at this young age. It...

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1995 Paumanok Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vintage

The Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Vintage is stunning. It is on my short list for the best Cab-based wine I saw on Long Island for this report. (There were a few other contenders, to be sure.) Wonderfully complex and interesting with a medley of the flavors mature Cabernet delivers, this is holding brilliantly. Yes, it is mature; there is some tobacco and earth. Yet, it is also quite vibrant and lively, still intense and gripping on the finish. It can easily last another decade. I like to be conservative, though—beyond that, let's see where we are when we get there. This is a library wine. As always, availability and pricing may vary on such things.

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2012 Paumanok Vineyards Cabernet Franc

The 2012 Cabernet Franc also has 10% Merlot blended in. It was aged for 10 months in neutral French oak and comes in at 12.5% alcohol. A bit creamy on opening, it evolves into a pleasing whole. Elegant in the mid-palate and approachable now, this is a tasty house pour with a touch of green and a little smoky nuance on the finish. Nice acidity gives it a fresh feel. It will hold decently, but it is probably meant for the short- and mid-term for best results.

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Paumanok leaves no room for guessing. They

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2014 Paumanok Vineyards Dry Riesling

The 2014 Dry Riesling was bottled at the end of January, 2015 with about 5 grams per liter residual sugar, which basically just makes it perceptibly dry. It comes in at 11% alcohol. Crisp and clean, this is indeed a dry Riesling (without that 5 grams per liter of residual sugar, this might be teeth cleaning) with a fresh and stony feel to it. It has bite and tension, plus a nuanced minerality. The fruit is not overly fruity and there are some hints of austerity. It should drink well for most of the next decade or so. Beyond that, we'll see where we are when we get there.

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2007 Paumanok Vineyards Assemblage

The 2007 Assemblage is a blend of 69% Merlot, 22% Petit Verdot and 9% Cabernet Franc, aged in French oak (half new, half used). It comes in at 13.5% alcohol. Another example of this fine vintage at Paumanok (as well as on Long Island), this is tight and powerful, ending with some sharpness and a rough edge at the moment. Completely unevolved, this has gorgeous flavors, but its power makes it a bit hard to deal with. Put this in the cellar for another couple of years at least—and I suspect it will not hit something like peak until around 2020. Eventually, it is going to come around because it has the mid-palate concentration to balance the power out and the fine intensity of flavor coming from ripe, fine fruit. It has some questions to answer in the cellar, but I'm leaning up on this beast for the moment.

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