

**2013 Lieb Cellars Sparkling Rose Reserve**

The 2013 Sparkling Rosé Reserve is a blend of approximately two-thirds Chardonnay and one-third Pinot Noir, with 8.67 grams per liter of residual sugar and 13.2% alcohol. It spent an average of 16 months on the lees. A bit mouthpuckering on opening, the acidity brings this home, leaving your palate refreshed as well as engulfed with fruit. As it airs, it develops a bit more character and flavor, showing some dried cherry nuances. A fine matchup for cheeses, this has enough acidity to cut through the fat. It is very impressive in its way, but it may not always seem like a standalone sipper. It will likely do better with some appetizers. I liked it a lot. Compared to its white sparkling sibling this issue, this has less complexity, but just as much (or more) power. They are both very nice, but the youthful exuberance here is particularly enticing.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Lieb Cellars Cabernet Franc Reserve**

The 2013 Cabernet Franc Reserve is actually a blend with 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Malbec, 4% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot, aged for 16 months in mostly used Hungarian oak. Showing a touch of funk up front, this is elegant in the mid-palate with some serious tannic pop on the finish. Give it a year in the cellar if you can; it will show better this time next year. It always retains its mid-palate elegance, but it becomes quite gripping on the finish as the tannins emerge. I have to admit that I didn't much like this early on, but with air and time, it expanded and showed off its fine structure and its fresh feel. Pointed and focused, it finished well. That said, it is just a bit on the funky side. Cab Franc purists won't mind. Apart from some herbaceousness, it might also have a touch of reduction that may blow off. As it evolves and integrates its parts, it should come together rather well. In many respects, this is a beauty. Hopefully, it will fulfill its promise and potential in the cellar. I'm leaning up just now.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**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 French oak (30% new, the remainder neutral). It comes in at 13.9% alcohol. Revisited this issue for a checkup, this is a bit more expressive now, but that power on the finish isn't going away any time soon. Tight and a bit astringent on opening, it preferably needs a couple of years in the cellar for best results. Yet, it is still a very graceful wine overall, the mid-palate elegantly crafted, the finish acquiring a bright and lively feel to it. A wonderful food wine, this combines crispness and structure, but there is nice fruit there, too. You can approach it now, if you must, but it will be better in a year or two.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept getting better. These are refined and civilized, but also age-worthy and likely to develop complexity in the future. It's an impressive group.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

### 2013 Paumanok Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon

The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon in fact has 16% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot. It was aged for 12 months in French oak (only 16% new, the rest neutral). Along the lines of the winery's lovely White Label Merlot reviewed this issue, this White Label (the "regular" bottling, in other words) is quite excellent in this vintage. Your tastes will determine which of the two you like better. The Merlot is more restrained and has a bit more of what I might call a brooding feel to it. This is richer in flavor with a sweet edge, perhaps a bit of oak showing through as well as the fruit. Of the two, it will be the "wow" wine. It has about the same intensity level; they both have excellent structure for the level. It doesn't have the lushness or the sense of coating the palate as the Merlot does. The Merlot would also get the nod for complexity while this seems to be a bit sexier. They are both pretty fine this year and they may swap roles as they evolve. At the moment, I'd lean to the Merlot, but it isn't a clear cut decision.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept getting better. These are refined and civilized, but also age-worthy and likely to develop ...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

### 2013 Paumanok Vineyards Merlot

The 2013 Merlot was aged for 12 months in neutral French oak. It comes in at 13% alcohol. This is quite a mouthful for the White Label Merlot (the "regular" bottling). Chock full of sappy fruit, it takes over the palate rather nicely, but it is also elegant and restrained with a bright feel to it. Showing moderate tannins, it has a fair bit of intensity for the regular Merlot, but nothing that a bit of air or a year of cellaring won't moderate. Classic in flavor, its juicy finish makes it rather delicious in its serious and structured way. This may yet improve with cellaring, but despite the feeling of fullness, I'm not quite positive it will reward long aging as sometimes tannins and the mid-palate can drop off fast. That said, it certainly overachieves at the moment. I suspect when all is said and done, this will be a White Label bottling that earns the winery even more status. It's a nice value.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept getting better. These are refined and civilized, but also age-worthy and likely to develop ...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

### 2013 Paumanok Vineyards Merlot Grand Vintage

The 2013 Merlot Grand Vintage was aged for 15 months in French oak (only 30% new, the rest neutral). If you wonder what you get by trading up from the regular Merlot reviewed this issue, start with the lush, more concentrated feel. It is also better balanced. The fruit doesn't fade as quickly and counters its tannins well. Sappy and fresh, this is a surprisingly sexy young Merlot with gorgeous fruit and a very graceful demeanor on opening. Yet, as I played with this at home, it kept getting better, more serious, more structured and more interesting over a couple of hours. For all of its early sex appeal, it is a wine with some understatement; it never once seemed bombastic or obvious. Yet, it always remained fresh, gripping and full of flavor. I liked it more and more as time went on. It seemed surprisingly approachable on opening, but note also that it became far more intense and interesting some two hours later. Drink it now if you must, but it will become more complex and interesting with time. If you have some patience and a cellar, come back in three to five years, perhaps. We'll see where we are then.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of eleg...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Paumanok Vineyards  
Assemblage**

The 2013 Assemblage is a blend of 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 36% Merlot and 18% Petit Verdot, about two-thirds of which was aged in new French oak; the rest in neutral oak. It comes in at 13.9% alcohol. Showing its oak a bit up front, this is still beautifully crafted with the same graceful and accessible feel as the winery's upper level Merlot and Cabernet this issue. Here, however, the grape blend does add a bit more complexity at the outset, once the oak blows off. It feels full in the mouth, but it doesn't quite have the personality of the pure Cabernet bottlings. The texture is also not, perhaps, quite as sensual, but it is still bursting with controlled flavors, a touch of herbs, a touch of cassis and a hint of vanilla--molding themselves into a more interesting whole. There's not much to argue about here. Which of the three upper level reds you like best will be a matter of taste--and when, in their evolution, you twist off the screwcap.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept getting better. These are refined and civilized...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Martha Clara Vineyards  
Malbec Estate Reserve**

The 2013 Malbec Estate Reserve also has 5% Merlot. It was aged for 14 months in a mixture of French (85%), American (5%) and Hungarian (10%) oak. Approximately a third of the juice was in an equal mixture of new and second use oak; the balance three years old and older. Sourced from vines planted in the 1990s, this is was just bottled in June 2015 and will be released in the spring of 2016. In its youth, this seems like one of the more interesting Long Island Malbecs that I've seen. It still maintains a little bit of that typical funk and in Long Island style, it tends to be a bit lean, crisp and structured rather than fat and fruity. That said, this is a fairly complete wine, far more so than most, with the acidity and aromatics rather well controlled. At least at this preview time, it has fine focus, a beautiful finish and a mid-palate that can balance the controlled power. It looks like a very nice achievement. It will be interesting to see where this goes and if it fulfills its promise.

Martha Clara's "Island Series" is the entry-level. It is so-called because of the red graphic image on the label. Don't look for the words!

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Martha Clara Vineyards  
Merlot Estate Reserve**

The 2013 Merlot Estate Reserve was aged for 14 months in a mixture of French (85%), American (5%) and Hungarian (10%) oak. Approximately 35% of the juice was in a mixture of new (20%) and second use (15%) oak; the balance, three years old and older. This will hit the market in the winter of 2016. Just bottled in June 2015, I gave it a workout after several hours. This seems like a beauty and it is probably my favorite of Martha Clara's group this issue. It is certainly the one that will easily meet all expectations with no caveats. Tightly wound, not overly fleshy but substantial enough, this is a focused Merlot with sensual texture, fine flavor, penetration on the finish and a backbone. As it aired out, it became admirably delicious. Silky and lingering on the finish, this understated, rather crisp Merlot may get better yet with a bit of cellaring.

Martha Clara's "Island Series" is the entry-level. It is so-called because of the red graphic image on the label. Don't look for the words!

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Raphael Cabernet Franc  
Reserve**

The 2013 Cabernet Franc Reserve also has 10% Merlot. It was aged for 18 months in French oak (50% new) and comes in at 13.6% alcohol. Very gracefully constructed, this has an elegant mid-palate showing fine finesse, a typical bit of green on the nose and the palate, and a wonderfully delicious and juicy finish. I wasn't fond of the first taste here, but it evolved nicely in its refined fashion. After about 90 minutes of air, it became completely enticing. It is a bit tight just now, but happily it is not yet released. It should be approachable around release time and more expressive in another year or so. The mid-palate is a bit on the modest side, but at least for now and the mid-term, it is worth leaning up on this. It's the perfect food wine. There were 154 cases produced, sourced from vines planted in 1997, with lower yields than the regular Cabernet Franc.

This issue includes a lot of Raphael's upcoming 2013 releases. These were tasted generally some six to eight weeks after bottling, which can be a scary time. I generally gave them a good workout and they seemed to show well. They are not likely to be released until various points in 2016. Consider this a preview of upcoming attractions.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Anthony Nappa Reserve  
Merlot**

The 2013 Reserve Merlot was aged for 18 months in French oak (50% new). It comes in at 14.4% alcohol, on the big side for Long Island, but it doesn't seem anywhere near that big. In fact, consistent with the general style of these releases, this is a refined wine that seems to have impeccable balance. Easy to drink young, it has moderate tannins and just enough concentration to feel reasonably substantial. It is very pleasing for early consumption, but its graceful demeanor combines well with its appealing mouthfeel. There is a trace of an aggressive aromatic after it is open for some time--I suspected just a hint of reduction. Just bottled at the end of May 2015, this should improve steadily over the next year or so. That should blow off. We'll see where it goes in time, but don't hesitate to dive in as it is surprisingly approachable and still completely seductive. NOTE: the label is artistic and cute, but not overly clear. All you'll see is a bird outlined in red on a black field. Hence, it used to be known as "Blackbird," but that no longer appears due to some intellectual property issues. The current name is on the back label. There were just 77 cases produced.

Bottled in the spring, these are now in the marketplace, I'm t...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Paumanok Vineyards  
Cabernet Sauvignon Tuthills Lane  
Vineyard**

The 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Tuthills Lane Vineyard was aged for 16 months in French oak (50% new, the remainder neutral). It comes in at 13.9% alcohol. Simply gorgeous, this has sensual texture and rich fruit--in a subtle way, if I can put it that way--and an impeccably balanced demeanor. Graceful, without a hair out of place, it is drinking fairly well now, at least after a couple of hours of air. It does tighten a bit on the finish. More importantly, it is unevolved in its primary fruit impression. It tastes great, missing just one thing: that complexity that only comes with age. It takes the regular Cabernet, adds texture and seems more serious and age-worthy. Overall, you could drink this today and it would still be amazing--but don't. I held it open for over two hours and it just kept getting better. As graceful and approachable as it seemed on opening, it never faded, thinned or retreated even a little bit. About five years in the cellar should help it a lot. At that point, a lot of the relatively few rough edges will be rounded off and it will start showing a little complexity. If you want to see how you combine structure, sex appeal and elegance into a beautifully balanced whole, start here.

The big 2013s are rolling in...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

### 2013 Raphael Malbec Reserve

The 2013 Malbec Reserve also has 3% Merlot. It was aged in French oak for 18 months (one-third new). It comes in at 13.4% alcohol. Malbec is becoming popular on Long Island--perhaps because, as winemaker Anthony Nappa said, it's "often the first red grapes we harvest." Early ripening can avoid some problems. Overall, I'd have to say I have not been overly impressed with Long Island Malbec as of yet, as they rarely show enough concentration and many show far too much acidity and/or funk. This has echoes of those issues, but I ultimately liked it a lot. It takes the somewhat rustic Long Island style and makes it sing. Now, to govern your expectations, note that it's not big, thick, super-ripe Malbec. This is Old World style, if I may put it that way. It makes it bones with acidity, complexity and structure. It opens very funky, with some mushroom, roasted eggplant and earth. It is wonderfully bright and crisp, leading to a remarkably juicy finish that allows the fruit to dance and dribble over the palate. The acidity gives this a certain exciting aspect. If you're not an acidity fan, avoid it. The finish lingers nicely and it certainly has a real backbone, too. This needs a little settle-down time. It is not the fleshiest wine, but ...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

### 2013 Raphael Primo Reserve

The 2013 Primo Reserve is a blend of 54% Merlot, 27% Malbec, 16% Petit Verdot and 3% combined of the Cabernets (Sauvignon and Franc). It was aged for 18 months in French oak (45% new) and comes in at 13.8% alcohol. This brand represents the winery's premium reserve, a blend of the best wines produced only in the best years. It is easy to see why this year. It is the most full-bodied in mouthfeel, the lushest and the most palate-coating this issue. This looks like a fine achievement by Raphael, a touch earthy with more complexity to come in its future. Beautifully balanced and structured, it is fresh, crisp and tasty. To be sure, like all of the others this issue, it is very tight and not completely expressive yet. A few hours of air helped. Some cellaring would help more. As yet unreleased, this should eventually become a beauty. Only bottled about eight weeks before it was tasted, this should improve steadily over the next few years, at the least, and hold well for a decade or so thereafter. It might yet be entitled to an uptick.

This issue includes a lot of Raphael's upcoming 2013 releases. These were tasted generally some six to eight weeks after bottling, which can be a scary time. I generally gave them a good workout and t...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

### 2010 Onabay Vineyards Night Heron Cabernet Franc

The 2010 Night Heron Cabernet Franc also has tiny bits (1% each) of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon. It was aged for 16 months in French oak (25% new; the rest second and third use). This is beautiful at this point in its evolution. Velvety in texture, it is elegant and impeccably balanced on opening. It has mild tannins and brightness around the edges of the finish. The green nuances often typical of Cab Franc are well controlled, with just some hints of classic olive notes and just a bit of bell pepper as it airs out in the background, but it continues to evolve nicely. With air, it actually fleshes out a bit and acquires more intensity, but the 2012 (also reviewed) is certainly livelier right now, if not as seductive. A wonderful food wine as well as pretty nice on its own, this is developing beautifully. It should last well the rest of the decade at least. After that, take it in stages and reevaluate.

Importer(s):

Skurnik Wines, Inc., 48 West 25th Street  
ninth floor New York NY 10010, (516)  
677-9300, [www.skurnikwines.com](http://www.skurnikwines.com)

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Paumanok Vineyards  
Cabernet Franc "Grand Vintage"**

The 2013 Cabernet Franc "Grand Vintage" also has 4% Petit Verdot blended in. It was aged for 14 months in French oak (10% new, the rest neutral). It comes in at 13.5% alcohol. This takes the "regular" Cabernet Franc reviewed this issue and adds power, concentration and character. Gripping on the finish, it remains elegant in the mid-palate. It never feels bombastic. It just projects "serious" all the while, however, with the olive traces typical of the grape. They are rather controlled, though, without a lot of bell pepper or seriously vegetal aromatics. The texture is silky, and the finish is juicy and simply delicious. In a relatively subtle way, this has a certain, hedonistic edge to which the regular Cabernet Franc cannot aspire. The fruit is increasingly scrumptious as it airs out and evolves. (Forgive the technical jargon.) Overall, this is a beauty that just screams "France"--graceful, yet focused and age-worthy. It goes onto my short list of favorite Long Island Cabernet Francs.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept g...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Raphael Merlot First Label**

The 2013 Merlot First Label, the winery's Reserve, also has 2% Malbec and 2% Petit Verdot. It was aged for 18 months in French oak (45% new) and comes in at 13.9% alcohol. In most respects, this is the winery's lushest and most caressing red on opening this issue, but it doesn't stay that way with aeration. Elegant in the mid-palate, it acquires power and focus as it airs out. There are also hints of complexity to come, with some whiffs of oak, game and herbs mingling with the lifted fruit. After a couple of hours, it tightens noticeably. The texture is caressing, though, and the intensity on the finish is notable. There isn't a lot of fleshiness or richness. It leans more to French style. This will reward aging and gain complexity with some time. Give it a couple of years if you can, after release. There were 419 cases produced from vines planted in 1998.

This issue includes a lot of Raphael's upcoming 2013 releases. These were tasted generally some six to eight weeks after bottling, which can be a scary time. I generally gave them a good workout and they seemed to show well. They are not likely to be released until various points in 2016. Consider this a preview of upcoming attractions.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2014 Paumanok Vineyards Chenin  
Blanc "Minimalist"**

The 2014 Chenin Blanc "Minimalist" is dry (three grams per liter of residual sugar) and unoaked, and aged sur lie in stainless steel barrels the "same exact shape as an oak barrel," Kareem Massoud told me. "So the ratio of lees to wine is the same as it would be in an oak barrel." It comes in at 11.5% alcohol. Piercing, acidic, dry and completely refreshing, this is a terrific Chenin with structure, some body and quite a bit of aggression in its youth. It finishes with considerable tension and then a juicy rush as it warms, showing more fruit to balance the acidity and power than it initially seemed to have. There is a touch of lanolin on the finish and perhaps just a hint of reduction, but the rest is wonderful. It does not always seem to be the most classic Chenin in flavor profile, but it would be churlish not to lean up. Note: What does the winery mean by "minimalist?" Kareem Massoud said, "the fruit came from our vineyard planted in 1982. Select clusters of unblemished Chenin Blanc that had attained total ripeness were carefully hand-harvested and whole cluster pressed. The juice was transferred into stainless steel barrels where alcoholic fermentation spontaneously occurred. The only addition was a judicious amount of sulfite..."

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2010 Paumanok Vineyards Blanc  
de Blancs**

The 2010 Blanc de Blancs is a dry Chardonnay that comes in at just 12% alcohol. This was on the lees for 37 months before being disgorged in September 2014. Showing fine concentration and a lush feel sliced with acidity and intensity on the finish, this clean and fresh sparkler doesn't display quite as much complexity as some, but its juicy finish is both refreshing and delicious. It is remarkably graceful, while remaining crisp and subtly powerful. Walking down the middle of the road between intense and harmonious, it drinks beautifully now and should continue to do so for some years. This is a sparkler that should be pleasing to both geeks and novices. There's not a hair out of place; it lingers on the finish and it shows more tension with air and warmth. It tastes great and it is also interesting. You can't go wrong here.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept getting better. These are refined and civilized, but also age-worthy and likely to develop complexity in the future. It's an impressive group.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Williamsburg Winery Adagio**

The 2013 Adagio is 73% Petit Verdot, 14% Merlot and 13% Cabernet Franc, bottled in April 2015. This is the seventh release of this bottling, whose blend changes depending on which grapes are successful. Just released as of this publication, it was aged for 16 months in new French oak. It comes in at 12.8% alcohol and with four grams per liter of residual sugar--right about where the line for "fully dry" is typically drawn. Despite that, it seems rather stern and dry on opening. It took quite awhile for this to air out and become impressive, but it eventually did, making me remember again why I liked it so much when I had a quick preview in May. The wine itself has this ethereal feel at first, then tightens as it shows off its fine structure. The flavor profile also improved with air. This is a difficult grape blend. It shows some herbaceous touches and a bit of smoke that I thought might be just a bit reductive. I was not so thrilled, actually. I let this sit on the table for about six hours and that made a world of difference. The wine pulled itself together, showing sensual texture and beautiful, sappy fruit. The smoke and herbs blew off, too. Overall, it began to show beautifully, but it does need a year (at the least) in the ...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2007 Mattebella Old World Blend**

The 2007 Old World Blend is mostly Merlot with 12% Cabernet Franc, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon and 2% Petit Verdot. The oldest of the oldies from the winery this issue, this is showing well. This is a fine example of how quick tastes can fool you sometimes. The initial impression was "overoaked, elegant mid-palate, not enough concentration, pleasant enough." An hour of aeration changed all of that dramatically. It evolved beautifully in the glass and seemed quite elegant always, but it gained weight as it sat. Fresh fruit and the graceful mid-palate made it enticing early on, but it sealed the deal with the classic, complex flavors of gradually maturing fruit as it sat in the glass. The oak still popped its head up here and there, but it was largely pulled in. The tannins are moderate at this point, but still there, enough to give the wine some vibrancy and support. The first sip I had was just a bit thin, if rather refined. The last seemed to fill the mouth rather respectably an hour later. It improved steadily. This still youthful and graceful red emphasizes its finesse and flavor, rather than its size and thickness. This should continue to hold nicely for several years, but exercise some caution. There wasn't exactly much track reco...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2011 Matthebella Old World Blend**

The 2011 Old World Blend is mostly Merlot, with less than 10% combined of the Cabernets and Petit Verdot. It was aged in French oak for 18 months (only 10% new, the rest two- and three-years-old). It comes in at 13.2% alcohol. This is the new release (set for November 2015). From a trickier vintage than its predecessor, this shows surprisingly well. It lacks some concentration compared to years like 2010, but it has respectable ripeness, complex flavors, much more elegance and a very tasty finish. It is simply seductive. With 75 minutes of air, it developed those classic and mature flavors of older (and old-style) Bordeaux, plus a hint of game. The tannins are there, but somewhat more moderate than we see on some of the others. If there is something here that makes you say "tougher vintage," it is only that this is a bit more accessible than most of the others. It is maturing fast. It still does everything else brilliantly and it is remarkable at the moment, approaching the 2007 in complexity, while displaying finesse and grace. I'm not quite certain it will stay at peak as long or age as well as in some other years, but let's take that in stages and see where we are when we get there. In the meanwhile, it's lovely and one of the ...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2010 Matthebella Old World Blend**

The 2010 Old World Blend is 88% Merlot with 8% Cabernet Franc, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Petit Verdot. It was aged for 21 months in French oak (40% new, 60% two- and three-year-old barrels). Likely my favorite of the vertical this issue, this shows good depth, fine structure and fine texture. Laced with a hint of herbs and oak mingling together, it is a lovely young Merlot with a serious feel to it. Of all the wines here, this was the one that seemed to be the warmest in feel, with bigger fruit and more obvious ripeness. It also has some very serious power. For all of the warmth, at least relative to the others, it only comes in at 13.2% alcohol. It is still a very restrained wine, a variation on the style, not a radical departure from it. This has the potential to be the winery's best, combining the winery's normal attention to structure and age-worthiness with that intensely flavorful fruit. Sitting in a glass for some 60 minutes just made it tighter and more powerful. At a 90 minute interval, it started to seem very impressive. It's easily the biggest wine here in most respects and not always helped at the moment by its relative youth (this winery is making them to age). After playing with this for extended amounts of time, ...

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2012 Onabay Vineyards Night  
Heron Cabernet Franc**

The 2012 Night Heron Cabernet Franc also has 3% Cabernet Sauvignon and 1% Petit Verdot. It was aged for 17 months in French oak (40% new, the rest two to three years old) and comes in at 13.8% alcohol. It is revisited this issue for a checkup. It seems a bit more evolved and expressive in a relatively short time, plus more complex. At my last tasting, the Cab Franc character did not start strong, but as noted then, some herbaceous hints began to pop up in time. This is closer to the 2010 now as the fruit's character continues to emerge and becomes more obvious from the get-go. The herbaceous hints are well controlled, though, and the little touches of olive in the background merely announce the grape. Overall, this is still showing beautifully, combining the vigor of the 2013 Cot-Fermented reviewed this issue with the character of the 2010 Night Heron. It has become impressive enough that I'm looking forward to seeing the 2013. Note, too, that it still has some capacity to improve--it kept getting better for the hour or so that I had it in a glass.

Importer(s):

Skurnik Wines, Inc., 48 West 25th Street  
ninth floor New York NY 10010, (516)  
677-9300, [www.skurnikwines.com](http://www.skurnikwines.com)

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Raphael Petit Verdot  
Reserve**

The 2013 Petit Verdot Reserve also has 10% Merlot blended in. It was aged for 18 months in French oak (35% new) and comes in at 13.9% alcohol. Poured next to the winery's Cab Franc Reserve, they seemed very different in some respects, this seeming fuller in the mid-palate and more expansive early on. It has a more immediately expressive finish, but not quite the same, tightly wound feel as the Cab Franc. Overall, it fleshes out in the glass and shows some definition and focus on the finish. It is very elegant. It looks like a slowly developing beauty, but give it some rest once it is released next year. It may not be the best ager in the bunch after that, but for the mid-term it is beautiful. There were 162 cases produced.

This issue includes a lot of Raphael's upcoming 2013 releases. These were tasted generally some six to eight weeks after bottling, which can be a scary time. I generally gave them a good workout and they seemed to show well. They are not likely to be released until various points in 2016. Consider this a preview of upcoming attractions.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)

**2013 Paumanok Vineyards Petit  
Verdot "Apollo Drive Vineyard -  
Limited Edition"**

The 2013 Petit Verdot "Apollo Drive Vineyard - Limited Edition" was aged for 16 months in French oak (30% new, the rest neutral). It comes in at 13.9% alcohol. Like all of Paumanok's offerings this issue, this is most impressive for its balance, its feeling of "suave" and "elegant." Gorgeously constructed and not at all brooding, stern and impenetrable--the way all too many Petit Verdots turn out--this has fine structure, plenty of power on the finish and a tinge of oak in its youth. Yet, more than any one element, what stands out is its graceful mid-palate and its impeccable balance (a repeated theme with these offerings). Seductive, inviting and completely ingratiating, this is a big winner.

The big 2013s are rolling in now from Paumanok and others. Paumanok's output is distinguished by its combination of elegance and staying power. The wines don't seem forbidding on first taste, yet when I held them open for some hours, they kept getting better. These are refined and civilized, but also age-worthy and likely to develop complexity in the future. It's an impressive group.

- Mark Squires (October, 2015)