



In Down the Aisle, the editors at *The Tasting Panel* rate retail beverages based on a combination of elements that can affect off-premise potential, including packaging, branding/credibility, value, and user friendliness.

“Talkies” are the little cards appended to retail shelves that educate the consumer through tasting notes and, sometimes, ratings. They are an invaluable tool when there isn’t a knowledgeable employee available and/or the customer is too intimidated to ask for help. For this reason, we are supplementing the traditional rating system with our “Talkie” rating system to assess retail wines/spirits/beers based on the aforementioned factors—and, of course, taste!

1 TALKIE 

Clear, legible label; solid branding. Good overall for retail.

2 TALKIES 

Eye-catching label and memorable branding. Very good for retail.

3 TALKIES 

Creatively inspiring in both packaging and branding. Great for retail.

4 TALKIES 

A near work of art and meaningful branding. Excellent for retail.

5 TALKIES 

A masterpiece in packaging and a new benchmark in branding. A must-have for retail.



Elementalist 2020 Pinot Grigio, California (\$17) Clocking in at 12% ABV, this mineral-driven Pinot Grigio blended with 17% French Colombard is reminiscent of the Northern Italian style. Lithe and lean notes of white pear, crushed stone, and vanilla are joined by melon and lime, which weave through fine acidity. **89**



FETZER VINEYARDS



Faustino Art Collection 2020 Viura-Chardonnay, Rioja, Spain (\$13) This Viura-dominant blend is surrounded by a perfume of pear blossom. It’s mineral-rich and clean, with a coating of white flower petals on the palate. Crisp pear and apricot persist through the finish. **90**



PACIFIC HIGHWAY WINES & SPIRITS



Tattoo Girl 2020 Riesling, Columbia Valley, Washington (\$13) Wahluke Slope and Snipes Mountain fruit (96% Riesling and 4% Chardonnay) make a magical connection in one of the best Washington State Rieslings we’ve tasted. Aromas of honeyed apple and lemon meringue give way to a luscious palate of peach nectar and magnolia blossom. Lithe viscosity is matched by fine acidity, and apricot and tangerine have staying power thanks to underlying minerality. **92**



WILLIAM WEAVER WINE



Da Luca NV Prosecco DOC, Veneto, Italy (\$13) Easygoing bubbles reveal peach tart, salted lemon, and keen minerality. **90**



ACCOLADE WINES



Three Pears 2020 Pinot Grigio, California (\$14) As predicted, aromas of sweet summer pear develop quickly on the nose, met by a whiff of magnolia blossom. The zippy, clean, and crisp mouthfeel travels along a path of more pear and stone fruit, with an added bonus of honeyed white flower petals. **90**



TRINCHERO FAMILY ESTATES



Mina Mesa 2018 Hazeline Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Paso Robles (\$15) “Hazeline” refers to the blanket of fog cooling the vines that produced this big, ripe red, which aged in French and American oak for 18 months to reveal distinct notes of cherry licorice, black tea, and plum brandy. The opulent, seamless texture moderates the wine’s boldness, and the sandalwood-and-clove finish is savory and refined, with a backdrop of spearmint. **91**



SCHEID FAMILY WINES



Ryder Estate 2019 Pinot Noir, Central Coast, California (\$15) From the Scheid family’s sustainably farmed estate vineyards, this bright ray of sunshine features high-toned notes of raspberry and Rainier cherry. Cedar and cocoa keep things intriguing on the finish. **90**



Down the AISLE



J. Lohr Estates 2019 South Ridge Syrah, Paso Robles (\$15) Winemaker Brenden Wood must truly love this variety. Taking fruit from three of Paso's sub-AVAs—the Estrella, Adelaida, and Creston districts—he has composed a generous and luxurious red that overdelivers for the price. The addition of Grenache Noir, Viognier, and Mourvèdre adds complex layers. A juicy wash of blueberry, plum, and espresso comes in on the seamless entry with a woody tea note. Cured meats and rhubarb enhance the finish. **92**



Butternut 2020 Rosé, Paso Robles (\$15) This clean and well-balanced blend of 81% Grenache, 14% Syrah, 1% Viognier, and 4% other varieties exudes fragrant notes of watermelon and peach that bring summertime to the senses. The slightly creamy palate shows a dusting of strawberry and cashew atop striking minerality. **89**



MILLER FAMILY WINE COMPANY



Osmosis 2021 Sauvignon Blanc, Mendoza, Argentina (\$15) The fruit was sourced from a family-owned, sustainably farmed estate situated at 3,440 feet above sea level in the foothills of the Andes. Boasting only 9% ABV and zero sugar, this is a clean, lighthearted, "better-for-you" wine with aromas of grapefruit and papaya. White pear, wet rock, and honeysuckle add character. **90**

VINO DEL SOL



Sean Minor 2019 Sauvignon Blanc, California (\$16) Grapefruit peel and kiwi intertwine with oregano and tarragon on the juicy, crisp entry. Fresh with racy acidity, the wine has a finish of salted cashew, summer peach, and bright pear, and its clean lines are as distinct as the modern label. **90**



Bonterra 2020 Rosé, California (\$16) This organic blend of 48% Grenache, 11% Nebbiolo, 10% Malbec, 8% Mourvèdre, 9% Zinfandel, 8% Carignan, 4% Sangiovese, and 1% other reds is packed full of flavor: A burst of raspberry, watermelon, and salty wet stone brings forth a juicy, mouth-puckering finish. With great acidity, it's a treat that makes for easy sipping. **91**



FETZER VINEYARDS



Guinigi 2020 Prosecco DOC Rosé Spumante Brut, Treviso, Veneto, Italy (\$17) Persistent bubbles burst with flavors of fresh peach, red berries, and rose petals in this blend of Glera and Pinot Noir. Sweetened by a delicate kiss of strawberry, minerality lingers on the palate. **91**



3 BADGE ENOLOGY



Andover Estate 2019 Pinot Noir, Arroyo Seco, Monterey (\$17) This silky expression from the Scheid family's estate-grown label brings in energetic aromas of cherry and tilled soil as well as balanced acidity. Sweet tobacco carries notes of wild strawberry and a touch of toastiness. **90**



Dixie & Bass 2020 Sauvignon Blanc, Horse Heaven Hills, Washington (\$19) Starting with a nosing of lemon meringue, this cheerful, stainless steel-aged white is lithe and ethereal. Basil, grassy tones, and a dappling of papaya lift the palate on a stream of cooling citrus. **90**



Nino Negri 2016 Quadrio Valtellina Superiore DOCG, Lombardy, Italy (\$20)

Quadrio, made from 90% Nebbiolo (locally known as Chiavennasca) and 10% Merlot, is named after the Castello Quadrio in Chiuro, which was built in the 15th century and houses the Nino Negro winery. It's armed with a bottle necker that's the first of its kind: A QR code guides viewers through an augmented reality experience that includes a tour of the winery. Aged for 20 months in Slavonian oak, it opens up with a spark of red cherry, tomato leaf, oregano, and rose petals. High-toned acidity and a dry palate make for great food pairings, which the QR code also provides education on. **92**

FREDERICK WILDMAN & SONS

 *Down the* **AISLE**



Frey Vineyards 2018 Biodynamic Petite Sirah, Mendocino (\$20) This variety can be over the top, but at 13.3% ABV, it produces a balanced, if not big, red. Ripe plum and mocha scent the glass as dark cocoa-powdered tannins and ripe black fruit converge with earth and soy sauce. Seasoned with a touch of mountain sage, this is a great value with tons of personality. **91**



Agricola Punica 2020 Samas Isola dei Nuraghi ICT, Sardinia, Italy (\$22) This tropical adventure of 80% Vermentino and 20% Chardonnay offers aromas and flavors of kiwi and pineapple that meander with wet stone and searing acidity. Cashew, key lime, and grapefruit peel add to the texture and flavor profile. **93**



KOBRAND



Skyside 2018 Red Blend, North Coast (\$20) This blend of 43% Merlot, 39% Syrah, 14% Cabernet Sauvignon, and some Petite Sirah and Malbec is sourced from Mendocino, Sonoma, Lake, Solano, and Napa counties. Spiced red fruit develops well across the palate as frisky notes of plum pudding, cocoa, heather, and sweet tobacco combine with rounded tannins and balanced acidity. **90**



Faire La Fête Crémant de Limoux Brut Rosé, Languedoc-Roussillon, France (\$23) Flavors of Rainier cherry and grapefruit peel open up with verve in this blend of 65% Chardonnay, 20% Chenin Blanc, and 15% Pinot Noir. Rose petals, brioche, and stark minerality strike a balance with fine acidity. **92**



FIRST GROWTH BRANDS



Post Summit 2019 Chardonnay, Arroyo Seco, Monterey County (\$25) This wine is named for Monterey County's Post Summit, which, at over 3,500 feet high, features a view of the Pacific Coast. Blended with 4% Viognier and aged 12 months in barrel, it exudes stunning aromas of honeyed papaya, pea tendrils, and thyme that sing on the nose. Arriving on a lovely wave of vanilla cream, basil, and tangerine, notes of wet stone envelop the mouth along with a generous, honeysuckle-tinged sweetness. The salty frame leaves the palate begging for that next sip. **92**



ASV WINES



Craggy Range 2020 Chardonnay, Kidnappers Vineyard, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand (\$23) The glass is filled with sunshine: fresh-squeezed lemon, tangerine sorbet, and an inner brightness. Honeyed stone fruit, clean lines, and superb acidity make this a sublime, food-friendly sipper. **92**



KOBRAND



Double Canyon 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon, Horse Heaven Hills, Washington (\$25) Bold and rustic, with notes of tobacco, leather, and graphite. Blackberry and black plum ride in on a line of mocha espresso before structured tannins and a dry, dusty mouthfeel leave a lasting impression on the finish. **92**

CRIMSON WINE GROUP



Sculterra Winery 2020 Héroé Viognier, Paso Robles (\$25) The name Héroé is a salute to the hard-working team who hand-harvests the two vineyards that contribute to this perfectly balanced white. Following delicate scents of white flowers, pear, and lime, the palate shows some creamy aspects as it releases more aromatics. Flavors of white melon, peach, and honeysuckle pour out before a finish of salty minerality. **92**



Pike Road Wines 2019 Chardonnay, Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$20) Sourced from four vineyards in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA, this Chardonnay from the sister label of Elk Cove possesses keen acidity and an angular body; our definition of modern. It's a ray of sunshine that shows fresh-squeezed lemon, tart pineapple, and wet stone, which keep it dynamic while adding textural dimension. **91** 