



CADARETTA, Columbia Valley 2010 SBS

The silliness of scoring wine by numbers hit me like a wet rag across the face the other day when I tried a terrific wine that some people will taste and immediately question my sanity. The wine is a 2010 white from Washington (top-rated in this week's Tasting Notes). After tasting it over a three-day period, I wondered how any score could possibly do justice to it. That's because there is initially very little to get excited about except its minerality, its structure, and its enormous potential.

Blends of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon as crisp as is this wine are so rare in today's world—a world in which lushness is rewarded. Yet **this wine has everything a great white should, from its grapefruit-y/steely austerity to its ultra-crisp finish.** This is no mainstream wine, and some may not understand it at all. For one thing, if served too cold, its charms are blunted into obscurity. Even at 60 degrees it would be a bit cool to show off its earthy charm. In the mid-palate there is just a trace of "fruit" with very subtle herb notes underneath. The finish shows off the amazing length of the wine based on acidity, and thus shows its future.

Its potential is indicated by a firstday taste, but by the second day the aftertaste is a tad broader and a bit more minerally. By the third day, the wine's 25% Semillon expands the finish. I hesitate to get too excited here. This wine has 14.1% alcohol, which is normally a killer for a white wine that I believe will age. But the other numbers are astounding: 9.6 grams per liter of acidity (nearly 1% acid!) and a very low pH of 3.04. These last two numbers would make for an utterly undrinkable wine were it not for the balancing alcohol!

This is a wine that would be demeaned by a score. You have to taste it to understand it. Sadly, the 450 cases produced are mainly aimed at restaurants, where aging is rarely a consideration. It is a special wine deserving of consumers who appreciate acid and it reflects the vision of Australian wine maker Larry Cherubino.

-DAN BERGER, JANUARY 5, 2012

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