



Written by

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# An advance party from the Judean Hills

TASTING ARTICLES ISRAEL

## SEAHORSE

- [Seahorse Wines, James 2014 Samson](#)

*100% 40-year-old dry-farmed Chenin Blanc. Fermented and aged in French oak barrels for nine months.*

Pale lemon straw colour. Very intense nose with a salty edge somehow. Big-boned fruit but with sufficient acidity. I'm not sure I have ever tasted a 15% Chenin before but this manages to be well balanced. Long and fresh with fruit reminiscent of slightly under ripe squashed greengages with a hint of Rose's lime juice. It would be dangerously easy to forget the alcohol level of this and glug it too fast. No sign of oak.

15%

Drink 2016-2019 **16.5**

- [Seahorse Wines, James 2013 Samson](#)

*100% 39-year-old Chenin Blanc dry-farmed. Fermented and aged in French oak barrels for nine months.*

Honeysuckle and a hint of popcorn on the nose. Salty start and then reasonably fresh and cool – though you know this was grown in a hot climate. Definitely ready to enjoy with just a slight chewiness on the end. This could be drunk as an aperitif.

13.5%

Drink 2015-2018 **16**

- [Seahorse Wines, James 2012 Samson](#)

*Unlike the burgundy-shaped bottles used for the 2013 and 2014 vintages of this wine, the 2012 comes in a bordeaux shape. 100% 39-year-old Chenin Blanc dry-farmed. Fermented and aged in French oak barrels for nine months.*

Quite a bit of evolution on the nose. Pungent and rewarding. But on the palate it seems just a little too sweet to be really really appetising. Good satin texture but a flavour profile that recalls Vouvray Demi-Sec, including a bit of a green streak on the end, just prior to a little alcoholic heat.

14.5%

Drink 2014-2018 **16**

- **Seahorse Wines, Antoine 2014 Judean Hills**

*Modestly described on the label as Tête de Cuvée. 56% Syrah, 21% Grenache, 13% Mourvèdre, 8% Counoise, 2% Cinsault aged in French oak barrels for 18 months. Unfiltered. Called Antoine after Antoine de St-Exupéry, author of Le Petit Prince.*

Bright ruby. Distinctly gamey nose – almost too much for me. Sweet start and a rather charred edge but some hollowness in the middle. Definitely needs food. Still quite a bit of tannin, and alcoholic heat, on the end.

14.5%

Drink 2018-2023 **16**

- **Seahorse Wines, Antoine 2013 Judean Hills**

*Modestly described on the label as Tête de Cuvée. 56% Syrah, 21% Grenache, 13% Mourvèdre, 8% Counoise, 2% Cinsault (exactly the same assemblage as the 2014) aged in French oak barrels for 18 months. Unfiltered.*

Nicely integrated nose with richness and interest. A pretty good version of Châteauneuf from the Judean Hills! Rather delicious. Salty and savoury on the end with resolved tannins and good acidity.

14.5%

Drink 2016-2022 **16.5**

- **Seahorse Wines, Lennon 2013 Judean Hills**

*A blend of 82% Zinfandel, 10% Petite Sirah, 8% Mourvèdre dedicated to John Lennon. Aged in American oak for 16 months.*

Light to medium blackish garnet. Very sweet nose redolent of very ripe berries. The palate is much lighter and fresher than the nose suggests. Complex, well-balanced wine that clearly comes from a warm climate but is far from heavy. Notable but not excessive and well-integrated acidity on the end. Recognisably Zinfandel. I wish we could have shown this at our Tribidrag conference in Croatia.

14.5%

Drink 2016-2021 **17**

- **Seahorse Wines, Pure Ku. Counoise 2013 Judean Hills**

*100% of this southern French variety aged in French oak barrels for 24 months.*

Fairly light garnet. Very pale rim. Light, fairly indistinct but definitely warm and sweet nose. A certain dustiness. Round and biscuity. Fairly gentle with a hint of gaminess. Good, well-integrated acidity. Very clean finish but far from concentrated or exceptionally flavourful.

13.5%

Drink 2015-2019 **16.5**

- **Seahorse Wines, Elul 2010 Judean Hills**

*Blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Petite Sirah, 15% Syrah aged in both American and French oak for 22 months.*

Still a pretty deep ruby. Quite lustrous. What a shame! There is clearly real quality here but also some spoiling TCA. I think a bottle with a perfect cork would probably score 17 and still be very vigorous but it's drying on the finish and there's a lack of fruit. Grrr corks...

14%

Drink 2016-2024 **17**