

Stolpman Vineyards

2010 Vintage Reviewed by Stephen Tanzer

2010 Stolpman Vineyards Angeli Red Wine Santa Ynez Valley

(a selection of the best 300-liter barrels): Bright ruby-red. Kaleidoscopic nose offers scents of dark berries, smoked duck, mocha, brown spices, brown sugar and espresso; for the second consecutive vintage I was reminded of Guigal's La Landonne. Lush, fat, seamless and very deep, with harmonious ripe acidity framing the pliant dark berry and spice flavors. The powerful, extremely long, fruit-driven finish coats the palate with dusty tannins and a note of violet face powder. Wonderfully harmonious and vibrant wine, and distinctly lower in alcohol at 14.1% than the outstanding 2009 (15.3%). (ST) **95**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards Syrah Originals Estate Santa Ynez Valley

(from the estate's oldest vines): Bright red-ruby. Blackberry, licorice, wild herb and violet aromas are complemented by strong mineral notes of flint and crushed rock, with a faint meaty quality emerging with air. Dense on entry, then tightly coiled and powerful in the mid-palate, displaying superb definition and lift to its dark berry, floral, black pepper and mineral flavors. Taut in an almost Hermitage way, although this wine suggests limestone in the soil rather than granite. The very long, rising, slow-to-unfold finish suggests that this extremely primary syrah should expand with bottle age and develop gracefully. Tannins are extremely fine-grained, with the slowly building finish leaving the mouth perfumed. This wine impressed me when I first tried it several months ago, and it was even tighter then. (ST) **93**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards Syrah Hilltops Estate Grown Santa Ynez Valley

(from "low-yielding ridgeline blocks"; 14.9% alcohol, vs. 14.1% for the Originals): Full ruby-red. Blackberry, bitter chocolate, licorice, crushed stone and mint on the nose, along with a smoky, peppery minerality. Dense and vibrant, with black raspberry, smoke and violet flavors carried by a firm spine of minerals and acidity. Perhaps a bit thicker and richer than the Originals--and sweeter too--but less expressive today. The very fresh, long finish features strong blackberry and bitter chocolate notes and serious but sweet tannins. Needs patience. (ST) **92**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards La Croce Red Wine Santa Ynez Valley

(a 50/50 blend of syrah and sangiovese, co-fermented): Full red-ruby. Rather subdued aromas of medicinal black cherry and chocolatey oak. Plush but distinctly dry, offering concentrated flavors of dark berries and mint. Finishes with substantial building tannins that reach the front teeth. Comes across as austere following the Stolpman syrah bottlings. (ST) **91**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards Syrah Estate Grown Santa Ynez Valley

(a blend of this winery's syrah blocks; includes 3% viognier): Good dark red. Aromas of blueberry, crushed black raspberry, brown spices, smoked meat, mocha and cocoa; smells like a northern Rhone wine from granite soil. Firm and energetic in the mouth, offering a nice balance of fresh dark fruits and smoky minerality. Bright acidity and a note of black pepper give the palate a zesty quality. Finishes lightly saline, juicy and persistent, with spicy tannins. (ST) **91**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards L'Avion Santa Ynez Valley

(fermented in new 500-liter barrels; aged on its lees for 15 months and bottled without fining or filtration): Full bright yellow. Captivating aromas of orange zest, peach flesh, honey, spices, wild mint and lichee. Round, opulent and dry, with fruit syrup flavors complicated by a

saline nuance and framed by a firm spine of acidity. No easy sweetness here! This dense, salty wine finishes very dry and uncompromising, with light tannins and hints of apricot, olive and resin. (ST) **91**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards La Cuadrilla Santa Ynez Valley

(42% syrah, 34% grenache, 22% petite sirah and 2% viognier): Good dark red. Cherry liqueur, raspberry, licorice, peppery spices and menthol on the expressive nose. Juicy and downright gulpable, with light spicy lift and a hint of exotic orange zest lifting the black and red fruit flavors. Tastes lighter than its 14.4% would suggest. The dry, intense finish features fine, light tannins and a distinctly savory quality to the cherry and dark berry flavors. (ST) **90**

2010 Stolpman Vineyards Golden Point White Wine Santa Ynez Valley

(a blend of 64% roussanne, 21% chardonnay and 15% sauvignon blanc): Light-medium yellow-gold. Aromas of peach, apricot, honey, lichee and wild herbs, lifted by a mineral note, with smoky and nutty nuances emerging with air. Fat, pliant and almost shockingly dry, in a distinctly Old World style, with chewy flavors of cyanic peach pit, nut butter, anise and mint. Austere for all its opulence. Finishes saline, fresh and persistent, with very good lift. This is unusually demanding for a \$20 white wine from the New World! (ST) **89**