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## Sean Thackrey

By Stephen Tanzer

MAY/JUN 14

### 2012 Sean Thackrey Viognier Lyra Noble Vineyard Knights Valley

(\$36) Pale yellow-gold. Musky citrus oil, quinine, ginger and spearmint complicated by minerals on the nose. A bit more exotic on the palate but dry and taut as well, with complex flavors of stone fruits, minerals, licorice and lichee enlivened by notes of quinine and ginger. Very dry and smooth, with sneaky length. The wine's 14.9% alcohol is apparent in its richness but this extremely satisfying Old World-style viognier does not come across as hot. This was Sean Thackrey's first white wine (2010); he added La Pleiade to his line-up with the 2012 vintage.

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**92**
[Compare Price](#)

### 2012 Sean Thackrey La Pleiade

(\$24) Medium yellow. Slightly high-toned aromas of yellow apple, dried fruits, nuts and spices. Dry and chewy in the mouth, with a pronounced phenolic character to the flavors of pear skin, cyanic peach pit, green almond and bitter herbs. Suggests a good bit of skin contact. Not a fruity style but this distinctly idiosyncratic blend should be endlessly flexible with food. Hipster alert!

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**90**
[Compare Price](#)

### NV Sean Thackrey Pleiades XXIII Old Vines

(\$24) (13.9% alcohol; sangiovese, viognier, pinot noir and zinfandel, to name but a few varieties in this blend): Bright, pale red. Almost pinot-like perfume to the aromas of red berries, minerals, gingerbread cookie and rose petal. Sweet and round but exhilaratingly tangy too, offering enticing perfume to the flavors of cranberry, raspberry, blood orange and spicecake. Lovely balance and finesse here; complex in a subtle way.

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**92**

### 2010 Sean Thackrey Cassiopeia Pinot Noir Wentzel Vineyard Clone 115 Anderson Valley Mendocino County

(\$45) Slightly hazy pale-medium red. Pungent musky aromas of red cherry, redcurrant and Asian spices, lifted by a floral topnote. Sweet and silky on the palate, with a strong strawberry flavor complicated by notes of smoke, earth and leather and nicely framed by ripe acidity. Sexy, soil-driven wine with smooth tannins and a finishing note of medicinal red cherry.

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**90**

### 2010 Sean Thackrey Cassiopeia Pinot Noir Wentzel Vineyard Clone 114 Anderson Valley Mendocino County

(\$45) Pale, bright medium red. Tighter on the nose than the clone 115, but with lovely verve and lift to the aromas of red cherry, rose petal and orange zest. Juicy, spicy and nicely delineated, with good thickness cut by firm acidity. Shows a slightly darker, wilder fruit character than the clone 115, as well as a hint of game. Finishes firm and persistent.

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**91**

### 2010 Sean Thackrey Cassiopeia Pinot Noir Wentzel Vineyard Clone 667 Anderson Valley Mendocino County

(\$45) Medium red. Very closed nose hints at strawberry, mocha and earth. Quite locked-up and youthfully medicinal, with brooding flavors of darker fruits, cherry pit, cardamom and black peppercorn. More chewy and structured than perfumed but still finishes with supple, ripe tannins. My bottle turned hazier with 24 hours in the refrigerator.

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**90(+?)**

### 2010 Sean Thackrey Cassiopeia Pinot Noir Wentzel Vineyard Clone 777 Anderson Valley Mendocino County

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**92**

(\$45) Bright light-medium red. Very subtle, pure, high-pitched aromas of dark raspberry, flowers and blood orange convey a Chambolle-like delicacy. Intensely flavored and dense, with a captivating sugar/acid balance serving to intensify the wine's berry and floral flavors and keep it light on its feet. The firmly tannic, rising finish boasts terrific lingering sweetness. This was my favorite of Sean Thackrey's four clonal bottlings from the same vineyard. Note that the four wines are available only in six-packs that also include two bottles of the vineyard "blend."

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**2010 Sean Thackrey Cassiopeia Pinot Noir Wentzel Vineyard  
Anderson Valley Mendocino County**

**94**

(\$45) (the "blend"): Bright medium red. Raspberry, red cherry, cotton candy, wild *garrigue*, brown spices and blood orange on the fascinating, highly complex nose. Sweet, lush and seamless, with a round texture given shape and lift by ripe acidity. Offers an utterly seductive blend of red fruits, herbs, earth, leather and game, finishing with a saline quality and building sweetness. A more complete pinot noir than any of the single clonal bottlings in the series, which is as it should be. Became even richer and wilder with 24 hours in the recorked bottle. Really amazingly complex California pinot in a Burgundian style.

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**2008 Sean Thackrey Pinot Noir Andromeda Devil's Gulch Ranch  
Marin County**

**92**[Compare Price](#)

(\$45) Good bright medium red. Sexy, nuanced aromas of cherry, black raspberry, minerals, spices, underbrush and smoky oak, complicated by wild leather and game nuances and lifted by a floral component. Silky and supple on the palate, with flavors of dark raspberry, plum, smoky underbrush and game showing a lovely glyceric quality on the back half. Finishes suave, broad and quite long, with fine, dusty tannins and a surprisingly light touch. Downright Burgundian in its slightly funky blend of fruit, game and soil tones.

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**2000 Sean Thackrey Aquila Sangiovese Eaglepoint Ranch Mendocino**

**93**

(\$90) (a library release): Medium red. Inviting, highly nuanced nose combines dried cherry, leather, spices, tobacco, herbs and underbrush. High-toned and sweet, with an element of exotic flowers and a minty note lifting the intense flavors of red fruits, and leather. Still plenty of fruit remaining for a 14-year-old sangiovese: I'd like to taste this blind against some Brunellos of the same age. Finishes seamless and persistent, with mellow tannins. Fascinating wine.

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**2010 Sean Thackrey Petite Sirah Sirius Eaglepoint Ranch Mendocino  
County**

**92(+?)**[Compare Price](#)

(\$45) (15.1% alcohol): Deep, bright ruby. Lovely expressive aromas of black raspberry, violet, licorice and bitter chocolate. Concentrated, dense and sweet, with excellent inner-mouth energy and lift to the flavors of dark berries, dark chocolate and flint. Perhaps most impressive today on the very long, ripely tannic back end. Long on personality for the variety. Showed eucalyptus and licorice pastille notes after 72 hours in the recorked bottle without losing its verve.

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**2012 Sean Thackrey Syrah Orion Old Vines Rossi Vineyard**

**93(+?)**

(\$90) (14.8% alcohol; bottled just a week before I tasted it): Saturated bright ruby. Slightly roasted aromas of black raspberry and eucalyptus complicated by sexy white fruit notes of apricot, passion fruit and peach pit. Suave, elegant and quite penetrating, with harmonious acidity shaping and leavening the complex flavors of black raspberry, stone fruits and chocolate mint. This "heritage vineyard," from which Sean Thackrey has made this wine since 1992, was planted in 1905, and according to Thackrey, "no one knows what's in it." He added that at least 11 different varieties have been identified.

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**2011 Sean Thackrey Orion California Native Red Wine Rossi  
Vineyard St. Helena Napa Valley**

**92**[Compare Price](#)

(\$90) (15.5% alcohol): Deep, saturated ruby. Brooding, slightly roasted aromas of black fruits and exotic flowers convey a late-picked character. Sweet, sappy and densely packed, showing surprising energy following the nose, with very ripe black fruit, chocolate and mineral flavors offering good definition and lift. Finishes quite long, but with the chewiest, least refined tannins of the 2010-2012 trio, and the least sweetness on the back end.

**2010 Sean Thackrey Orion California Native Red Wine Rossi  
Vineyard St. Helena Napa Valley****96**

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(\$120) (15.2% alcohol): Saturated deep ruby color to the rim. Deep, superripe aromas of blackberry, tar, licorice pastille, spices and espresso. Superconcentrated and sweet, conveying an impression of solidity and powerful extract to the creamy yet bracing dark berry, black cherry, eucalyptus and spice flavors. There's a roasted quality that calls to mind an Henri Bonneau Chateauneuf. Incredible extraction of color suggests tiny berries and long maceration. Finishes with outstanding mounting length, great sweetness and firm but fully ripe tannins. This amazingly dense, thick wine makes the 2012 seems floral, spicy and pinot-like by comparison. A great vintage for this wine, with the tannic support and sheer extract to ensure a long and slow evolution in bottle. I raised my score a point after retasting this wine 24 hours later.

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