



2012 Boxwood Estate Boxwood

The 2012 Boxwood is a blend of 56% Merlot, 33% Cabernet Sauvignon and 11% Petit Verdot, aged for 12 months in French oak (one-third each of new, second-use and third-use). Graceful and nicely crafted—something this winery seems to do well—this is elegant in the mid-palate, reasonably crisp, fresh and supported by ripe tannins. I rather liked this a lot. It is not a "wow" wine, but it has some potential to improve a bit over the next couple of years and it drinks beautifully. It won't be the one you ogle, but it will be one of the ones you finish.

Boxwood, located in Northern Virginia in the Middleburg AVA, is the winery created by John Kent Cooke, former owner of the Washington Redskins. It produces about 2,500 cases a year total. Its consultants are Lucie Morton and Stephane Derenoncourt. Middleburg is, by the way, Virginia's newest AVA (as of 2013), with the petition prepared by Boxwood's Executive Vice President, Rachel Martin (John and Rita Cooke's daughter). Most vines were planted in 2004. They make no whites at this time. The Boxwood Estate red is their Left Bank Bordeaux nod; the Topiary is their Right Bank nod. The Trellis is meant for earlier consumption, a fruitier, easier wine.

Importer(s):

Frederick Wildman...

- Mark Squires (June, 2015)

2012 Boxwood Estate Topiary

The 2012 Topiary is a 55/45 blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc, aged for 12 months in French oak (one-third each of new, second-use and third-use). It used whole berry fermentation and comes in at 13.5% alcohol. My least favorite of the three submitted this issue, this seems to lack the somewhat "tightly wound" feel of concentration that the others have. It is lighter-styled, but still pleasing and finishes well, with good balance and some herbal nuances. It becomes nicely fruity and flavorful as it airs out. It was my least favorite, but it is not really a slacker and I wound up leaning up on it as the fruit became more expressive. It is quite approachable now. Note: this was the first year that the new Middleburg AVA appeared on the label.

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2012 Boxwood Estate Trellis

The 2012 Trellis is a blend of 47% Merlot, 28% Cabernet Franc, 22% Cabernet Sauvignon and 3% Petit Verdot. It was aged for 12 months in French oak (one-third each of new, second-use and third-use). Elegant and beautifully crafted, this bargain-priced blend is sunny and graceful, with a nice finish that tightens a bit. The tannins are rather ripe, though, so don't be afraid of diving in. It is not made for extended aging, but it should hold well for a few years. In the short-term, this shows finesse and should exceed expectations. It is one of the best bargains submitted by Boxwood for this issue. It may eventually separate from its higher-priced siblings, this Trellis declining faster, but right now there isn't a lot to object to. The mid-palate lacks some concentration, to be sure, but that was true of most of Boxwood's 2012s. The fruit, on the other hand, is very expressive.

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- Mark Squires (June, 2015)

2014 Boxwood Estate Rose

The 2014 Rosé is a dry pink, a blend of 33% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Cabernet Franc, 8% Petit Verdot, 17.5% Merlot and 11.5% Malbec. It comes in at 14.1% alcohol. Smooth and slightly herbal, this doesn't have big power, but it maintains its freshness and seems substantial for the category. It should do reasonably well as a red wine substitute. There were just 276 cases produced.

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Importer(s):

Frederick Wildman & Sons, 307 E 53rd St, New York, NY 10022, (212) 355-0700, www.frederickwildman.com

- Mark Squires (June, 2015)

2010 Boxwood Estate Topiary

The 2010 Topiary adds a layer of depth to the 2007, its predecessor in this issue's mini-vertical. It was aged in 30% new oak and is a blend of 61% Cabernet Franc and 39% Merlot. Showing that nice, extra concentration in the mid-palate, it follows on with big fruit, intensity of flavor and controlled tannins to make a sexy, but still elegant whole. The fruit does seem gorgeous here, but note that tannins emerge a bit more forcefully with air, too. This should have plenty of life ahead.

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2010 Boxwood Estate Boxwood

The 2010 Boxwood is an estate red that proves one thing: Boxwood had a very fine 2010 vintage and offered terrific bargains in that year. This is a blend of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 43% Merlot and 7% Petit Verdot. Unlike some 2010s in Virginia, this is completely fresh and lively, not just ripe and big. It is surprisingly elegant, with delicious fruit, increasing power on the finish and plenty of focused precision. Not overly thick or obvious, it drinks beautifully and should keep doing so for about a decade.

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