



MARTINEZ  
FINE WINE

## NOBLE ROT

The newsletter of  
Martinez Fine Wine.  
August/September 2000



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INSIDE: Browse our web site... Horsforth Americas tasting... Loads (and loads!) of new wines... New ales... Alsatian food and wine evening... Wines for cellaring tasting... Rare South African wines... Cigar litigation(!)...



### [www.martinez.co.uk](http://www.martinez.co.uk) **Martinez on the web!**

We may have had a pop at the internet in a recent Noble Rot, but we do realise its significance, and we want to play our part. So we are very pleased to announce that our revamped web site is now up and running at the above address. At the moment its an up to date list of what we stock, but soon you will be able to order wine from Martinez on the web. We did actually have a web site in the past, but felt it was a little clumsy, and needed a fresh new look. So we've teamed up with someone who really knows how to make these things look good, and we're are delighted with the results. Those of you who have joined the internet revolution are just a few clicks away, and those who haven't now have the best possible reason to grab yourselves some hardware and start surfing... Happy browsing!



### **Alsace Food And Wine Evening in Harrogate**



No you're not suffering from Déjà Vu and we know we did one last year, but due to the huge demand from those who attended and many calls of 'when are you going to do another' from those that couldn't, we have arranged another Alsatian food and wine evening. Domaine Schlumberger's Jean Marie Winter will host the evening, which will take place in Harrogate on **Monday November 6th**. The location is still to be confirmed, and the cost is £30 per head, payable at the time of booking. Bearing in mind that we couldn't satisfy the demand for tickets last time, we advise those interested parties to book early to avoid disappointment. Please contact Phil Ball on 01423-501783 to check availability.

## On the shelf...

Now that summer seems to have decided to show itself we have a few rather suitable wines that we think will complement the warmer weather. Particular attention is paid to Southern France and its superb 1998 vintage. Some of our old favourites are back again, albeit in rather smaller quantities. This is either due to much reduced production or the unfortunate hike in prices. Because of the large number of new wines we've divided it into countries. Now read on...



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### AUSTRALIA

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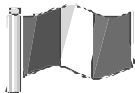


Kicking off proceedings is **McWilliams Inheritance Colombar/Chardonnay 1999 (£4.99)**. This is a familiar name, but a new wine to us. It's got the attractive floral aspect of the Colombar grape, but with some nice texture and tropical fruit provided by the Chardonnay. Its not too full-bodied, and has the right balance to make it taste great when it's sunny. We also have **McWilliams Inheritance Shiraz/Cabernet 1999 (£4.99)**, which is brimming with fruit and is surprisingly smooth and easy-going. **Bremerton Estate's Verdelho 1999 (£7.99)** is a delightfully fresh wine, with a crisp citrus-driven flavour, and a hint of honey on the finish. It's a real crowd pleaser, and tastes great right now, but will slowly fatten up into a rich and fuller bodied wine with age. **Cape Mentelle** is a name dear to many of us. Their superb **Semillon/Sauvignon 1999 (£9.75)** is as good as ever, with up-front fruit and a great zesty feel. Its just right for those light summer dishes, and goes down nicely on its own too. The **Cabernet Sauvignon 1995 (£16.99)** is big and muscular, and although not strictly a summer wine, it has all the potential to be hidden away until richer food makes an appearance (by which time it will all have gone, of course!). If you're like us then you'll get stuck into a bottle to go with your barbecued sausages and lamb chops!

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### FRANCE

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Also new is a great value range of Rhone wines – north and south – from quality merchant **Salavert**. The 3 Cotes du Rhone Villages and a Vacqueyras show the wide range of styles which this part of France can produce from basically the same blend of grapes – perhaps there is something to that old-fashioned idea of 'terroir' after all! We've found that these wines go particularly well with grilled foods, so all will complement your barbecue very nicely indeed. Salavert's **Chusclan 1998 (£4.99)** is from a village in the

'hinterland' on the western side of the Rhone. The wine is soft, full and fruity; its nicely perfumed with chocolatey hints – its ideal lightly chilled. The **Valreas 1998 (£5.49)** is packed with red fruits and peppery spiciness and is a bit more structured than the Chusclan. The latest vintage of Salavert's **Vacqueyras, 1998, (£6.49)** is big, its bold, and its full of warm, Mediterranean-herby fruit, with some oak-ageing adding tannic structure. Its an altogether more serious wine. To complete the picture we have, from the northern Rhone, a tasty **Crozes-Hermitage 1999 (£5.99)**, which completes the range. This is 100% Syrah (which is the only permitted red grape of the appellation) and comes from around the village of Tain l'Hermitage on the Rhone. The core of dark cherry fruit is augmented by notes of savoury herbs, white pepper and tobacco. Try opening this a couple of hours in advance – it makes all the difference. Many of you have been awaiting the return of **Domaine Capion**. This fantastic winery really took our shops by storm just before Christmas last year (Harrogate sold every bottle in the shop when they had the Cabernet on tasting!). We can assure you that the new vintages, as well as the additions to the range, taste even better the last lot, with 1998 being an absolute stonker of a vintage in Southern France. So as well as the **1998 Cabernet** and **Merlot (both £6.99)**, the **1998 Syrah (£8.75)**, we also have some delicious whites. There's a **1999 Muscat (£6.75)**, which is classically fresh and grapey, and a **1999 Marsanne/Rousanne (£6.99)**, a sort of junior white Chateauneuf-du-Pape, with wonderful peaches and cream flavours. As we often say...*Grab a bottle before they all disappear.*



Summer wouldn't be summer without a drop of **Beaujolais**, and we've completely revamped our section. Gabriel Chevalier's words on Beaujolais, from his *Clochmerle* novel, say it better than we ever could: *The more you drink of it, the more you have the feeling that your wife is charming, your friends loyal, the future hopeful and mankind in general tolerable*. We couldn't agree more so why does nobody buy the stuff? Image problem? Maybe... We feel its time to put your preconceptions behind you and get stuck into the latest 'cru' wines we've recently discovered. **Domaine des Mouilles' Julienas 1999 (£6.95)** is the softest and most seductive of our range – lush and velvety – sort of red wine for beginners! **Chateau des Tours' Brouilly 1999 (£8.75)** is an extremely fine and characterful wine from a splendid property with an average vine age of about 40 years. **Domaine de la Chaponne's Morgon 1999 (£7.95)** demon-

strates rather neatly how Morgon is the cru where Beaujolais becomes the drink of grown men and women!! An average vine age of 50 years and very low yields make rich, concentrated and intensely flavoured wines that are closer in style to Syrah than Gamay. **Jacky Janodet's Moulin à Vent Vieilles Vignes 1999 (£8.35)** is the full knife and fork job – firmly structured with dense saturated berried fruit. This will benefit from bottle age, but you can drink it with your favourite wild feathered friend now that the game season is upon us. Other Beaujolais highlights at Martinez are **Domaine Sor-nay's Morgon 1998 (£6.75)**, **Chateau Lacarelle's Beaujolais Village 1998 (£5.75)**, **Sylvian Loren's Chiroubles 1999 (£7.65)**, **Domaine La Madone's Fleurie 1999 (£8.95)** and **Domaine des Pins Saint-Amour 1999 (£7.99)**. All delicious, and very suitable for this time of year...



We've spotted a few terrific lighter-styled Burgundian whites, the first of which is **Cave de Viré's Viré-Clessé 1999 (£6.99)**, a restrained steely Chardonnay with lots of depth but without being overly weighty, and at a very nice price. In addition we have these three other rather tasty whites: **Icarus Bourgogne Blanc 1997 (£6.75)** is nicely fruity, softly spicy, and excellent value. **Chateau de le Saule's Montagny 1er Cru 1998 (£10.95)** is a ripe, balanced, floral Chardonnay from the best estate in Montagny – its full of character. Add to that **Domaine de la Folie's Rully 1er Cru 'Clos Saint Jacques' 1997 (£13.75)**, which is an opulent mouthful of coffee, cream and nuts held together with just the right amount of fresh acidity. Just so the reds don't feel left out there's **Domaine Machard de Gramont's Bourgogne Pinot Noir 1998 (£8.99)**, an attractively earthy wine, with smoky black fruits on the nose and good concentration and length.

We raved about the wines of **Vincent Girardin** in a recent Noble Rot. Well don't say we didn't warn you – the wine press has gone ballistic over his Burgundies. Even a certain Robert Parker has got over-excited, lavishing praise and compliments galore, and instructing his readers to 'run don't walk to your nearest wine merchant' to snap these wines up. The lucky drinkers who grabbed the red Girardin Burgundies can now look forward to the **1998 whites**. The roll of honour is as follows: **Bourgogne 'Cuvée Saint Vincent' (£9.95)**, **Meursault 'Les Narvaux' (£22.95)**, **Chassagne-Montrachet 1er Cru 'Cailleret' (£29.95)**, **Puligny-Montrachet 1er Cru 'Les Referts' (£33.95)**, and **Corton Charlemagne Grand Cru (£44.95)**. We think that this winery could well end up being one of the very highest quality in all Burgundy, thereby making the wines largely unaffordable



in a few years.

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## USA

Those of you who came to the **Ridge** dinner a while ago will know about the love and care that Paul Draper, the winemaker, puts into his wines, and the latest releases are no exception. The **1998 Lytton Springs (£20.75)** has intense fruit with a firm structure which is delicious now, but will be at its best in 5-6 years. The **1997 Santa Cruz Cabernet (£20.75)** is, in our opinion, even better than the excellent 1996. Selected from 5 of his 33 'single vineyard' sites its glorious fruit hides the firm tannins that will ensure this wine ages well over the next 5

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years.

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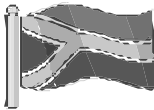
## SPAIN

Also back in is the **Alion 1996 (£19.99)**, from the legendary **Vega Sicilia**, which, following the more backward 1995, delivers everything you could want from 100% Tempranillo. The small allocation has to be divided between many more followers than before, ~~so if you want any there are a few cases scattered between the 4 shops.~~

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**But hurry!**

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## SOUTH AFRICA

This is a country whose wines we enjoy more and more, so our 'Cape Crusade' continues in the form of a few choice bottles. **Simonsig** is a name that tends to attract some deserved attention. We have their **1997 Redhill Pinotage (£11.95)**, which is a classic – all plums and mulberries, and with some spicy oak adding a nice vanilla note. The **1997 Merindol Syrah (£19.95)** is serious stuff, with a huge core of berried fruit, and a marvellous lingering aftertaste that you'd pay far larger sums for from the Rhone. It's **Hamilton Russell** season again, with **1998** vintages of their excellent **Pinot Noir (£16.99)**, one of the country's best, and **Chardonnay (£12.25)**, which is a creamy, nutty wine of serious calibre. And finally, another cracking wine from the Cape is what many regard as one of the country's great reds, **Meerlust Rubicon 1995 (£15.99)**. There's been talk of the 1995 being one of the finest yet, and if our experience of this richly fruited, deep-flavoured Bordeaux blend is anything to go by, we'd have to agree. Its released ready to drink but has superb ageing qualities too.



### **A rare opportunity to purchase some very special South African wine...**

This is possibly the most extraordinary thing to come out of South Africa since the truth about why their cricket team was so successful. Remember you heard it here first – **Boekenhoutskloof**, a name that er... rolls off the tongue (!). *Beech Wood Ravine* is a close translation. This winery has only been in operation since 1996 and is already producing, dare we say it, 'world class' wines. If we tell you that the winemaker's idols are Jaboulet, Guigal and Chapoutier then you'd be right in guessing that his flagship wine is 100% Syrah. The **1998 Syrah (£18.99)** is more Old World than New, like a top northern Rhone, and it simply oozes class. His **1998 Cabernet (£14.99)** was the wine on everyone's lips (so to speak) at last year's Veritas Award tasting. Only time will tell but we think its even better than the legendary *Thelema Cabernet*. It would have been easy for Marc Kent, the man behind these wines, to add a Chardonnay or Sauvignon as a token white, but not this man. Working on the basis that the Franschoek Valley is best suited for the less fashionable Semillon grape, that's what he chose to produce, and why not? The **1999 Semillon (£10.75)** is dry, full and rich, with a deft touch of oak. It's fresh while young, but will be glorious if you can keep your hands off it for a while. These magnificent wines land in the UK in October and we have been assured they will be available later that month. Only a handful of merchants will be in receipt of the small parcels allocated to the UK, until the production increases. We are now taking advance orders for Boekenhoutskloof wines, and when you consider that someone recently offered to buy an *empty* Boukenhoutskloof bottle on display in the Harrogate shop (!), it might be worth your while putting your name down for a few bottles if you're interested.

#### **Horsforth September Tasting**

Tony is holding an informal tasting in the Martinez shop in Horsforth on Wednesday September 20th at 7.30 p.m. The theme will be *Wines of the Americas – North and South*. The cost is £10 per person. Please ring Tony on 0113-281-8989 for more details.

#### ***Good news for wine-loving***

***vegans!*** We have recently discovered that **Chateau Musar**, famous wine of the Lebanon, and regular Martinez resident, is a vegan wine. This means the fining process is done without the use of egg whites or isinglass



## Here's the Beer!

This summer our beer range has been increased with the appearance on our shelves of Newark's **Springhead Brewery**, a small independent with several awards at the Great British Beer Festival to their credit. All the beers are bottle conditioned so they should prove a treat for all the Real Ale fans out there.

**Springhead Bitter (4.2%, £1.49)** is a classically dry, well hopped ale with a good malt nose and very long finish.

**Roundhead Gold (4.4%, £1.59)** is rounder and softer. It's made from Saaz hops (which are used for Pilsner lagers) and wild flower honey, and gives dry apricots on the nose and a touch of sweetness on the palate.

**The Leveller (5.0%, £1.59)** is brewed in a Belgian Trappist ale style. It's big, intense and complex, dark in colour, with a smokey toffee-driven flavour.

Three new beers, three very different styles – underlying that the diversity in well made beer is many times that of wine – all worth trying.

We are also selling a wonderfully packaged gift box commemorating the English Civil War. It comprises of **Roundhead**, **Leveller**, a citrus orientated **Roaring Meg** and a juniper flavoured **Cromwell's Hat**. These are priced at **£8.49** per pack.

## WINES FOR CELLARING TASTING

Due to popular demand we will be holding a series of tastings for those of you who want to taste and purchase wines with a view to laying down wines for future consumption. A range of wines from all the classic regions as well as many New World standard bearers will be on offer. Places are obviously limited and admission is on a reservation basis only, with tickets priced at £12.50 per person (fully refundable on all 12 bottle orders per person). Many wines not previously sold will be available including some examples from Southern France's superb 1998 vintage. So don't delay! Call your nearest branch to grab yourself a ticket. The dates are as follows:

**Horsforth – Wednesday October 4th at 7.30 p.m.**

**Halifax – Thursday October 5th at 7.30 p.m.**

**Ilkley – Thursday October 5th at 7.30 p.m.**





### Frozen Dessert wine? Are we mad?



Well actually not. This rather odd sounding technique is well worth trying. Take a genuinely sweet bottle (such as Miranda’s Golden Botrytis) and freeze it solid. Take it out of the freezer about an hour before serving, and drink it with something savoury – cheesy biscuits are perfect. You’ll need a skewer or something to nudge the slushy wine out, but the result is a series of explosions of sweet nectar on the tongue as the slivers of icy wine melt. Sounds crazy? Well we first heard of this through a good customer of ours who used to stay with Baron Philip de Rothschild at Mouton, and he was freezing *Chateau d’Yquem!!!* He also knew a thing or two about wine, so this isn’t as foolish as it may sound. As the man says ‘try it – you might like it’

**35 The Grove,  
Ilkley.**

**The Ginnel,  
Harrogate**

**20-22 Powell  
Street,**

**87 Town Street,  
Horsforth**

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There are a few customers out there who have expressed their disappointment in our decision to stop selling cigars. But if truth be told we found cigars to be somewhat troublesome, in that stock had to be kept fresh



and rotated regularly, and the ageing qualities we enjoy in wine are sadly absent. There are, however, certain litigation dangers that we hadn’t previously thought about, as this article we read recently illustrates rather well...

*‘A man from North Carolina insured a box of cigars against fire. Having smoked the lot, he filed a claim, alleging the cigars had been lost “in a series of small fires”. When the company refused to cough up, the man sued. A judge ruled that the policy must be honoured, so the company forked out \$15,000 – and waited. When the smoker cashed the cheque, the company demanded his arrest on 24 counts of arson. The man was convicted, jailed for two years and ordered to pay a \$24,000 fine.’*

There’s a moral in there somewhere...