



MARTINEZ
FINE WINE

NOBLE ROT

The newsletter of Martinez
Fine Wine.

October/November 2000



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For your pleasure...

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Welcome to a sort of intermediate Noble Rot. Last year we sent out a pre-Christmas-issue issue of Noble Rot, if you see what we mean, and we're at it again! The idea is to offer you all a chance to purchase a few special wines in advance. This is an excellent way to line up some great drinking for Christmas and beyond. There's some exciting wines to choose from, from classic Clarets to some of the best Californian wines available. Have a browse through the selection and get in touch with your friendly Martinez shop with what you'd like and we'll do the rest. Simple, eh?

RIDGE CALIFORNIA

Ridge's 1998 Geyserville and Chardonnay have arrived. No introduction is needed to many, but for those who haven't experienced the delights of these dazzling wines, we can't recommend them enough. **Geyserville (£21.95)** is a Zinfandel-orientated drop of dark nectar, crammed full of blackberries, chocolate and spice. A small blast of Petit Verdot adds some backbone to the wine's massive structure, and it will sit in your cellar quite happily for a number of years if you've got the willpower to resist its ample charms. The **Chardonnay (£21.95)** is, quite simply, glorious. American wines prices may be well inflated nowadays, but this stuff is comparatively good value when compared to some of the rather bloated wines we could mention. Bursting with tropical fruit and classic butterscotch flavours, its carefully balanced oak presence simply enhances the overall quality rather than (in many wines we taste) detracting from it. In typically limited supply, these wines are for those who appreciate the extra dimension Paul Draper can squeeze out of his vines. Their stay in our shops is likely to be short, which is why we're offering customers the chance to purchase the wines in advance. *Don't forget that we also have the excellent 1998 Lytton Springs, 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon (both £20.95), and the blockbusting 1996 Monte Bello (£69.99) in stock!*

Vavasour Dinner in Ilkley...



We're delighted to announce that we are holding a food and wine evening in Ilkley on **Thursday November 9th** in the Farsyde Restaurant. Guest of honour will be **Glenn Thomas** from Vavasour Wines of New Zealand, who will present and talk about his wines, which will accompany a specially selected menu. This promises to be a tremendous night, and should give a fascinating insight into the make-up of some of New Zealand's finest wines. The food should be special too – **Gavin Beedham** (winner of Northern Chef of the Year) will be in charge, and you can take it from us that his food is outstanding. The cost is £39.95 per person. Please contact Julian Martinez at the Ilkley shop (01943-603241) to reserve a place..

Remember that the Ilkley shop is open every Sunday in November and December



Its not often we endorse a publication other than this one, but *The Which Wine Guide 2001* was published very recently. Its an excellent read, with notes on all sorts of wine-orientated things. And its nice to see that Martinez gets as good a review as ever, with attention drawn to our friendly service. They describe Noble Rot as 'entertaining' and go on to say that its possible to buy wine from us with 'confidence' in its quality. Far be it for us to blow our own trumpet but we wouldn't disagree... It's a relief to know that our hard work is recognised by such an



CHAPOUTIER WINES...

A name that inspires devotion among Rhone devotees, and rightly so. We're offering two of his excellent reds En Primeur (at an all inclusive price too!), and they are as follows...

Crozes Hermitage 'Les Meysonnieres' 1999 (£9.75) is 100% Syrah, with 30% of the wine barrel aged (the rest in tank). The vines are rigorously thinned to give very small yields (35 hl/ha), to produce a truly outstanding wine. Lush cassis and wild berry flavours, with herb (garrique) overtones. There's a particularly spicy character running through the wine, with definite minerally, earthy tones, good length

and subtle smoke/toast/tar flavours on the finish. Fantastic value when you consider the seniority of the producer and the quality of the vintage. Smooth and rather sophisticated!

Hermitage 'La Sizeranne' 1999 (£33.95) is also 100% Syrah. Its made from 100% bio-dynamic grapes from vines with a minimum age of 30 years. Yields are again very low – 30 hl/ha, and the wine is highly concentrated whilst retaining some elegance rather than being overtly big or overblown. The grapes are 100% de-stemmed and fermented for 3 days at a temperature of 20-25°C, which is then raised to 33-35°C for good pigment extraction. The wine spends 18 months in wood, a third of which is new oak (80% of which is from the Troncais forest, 20% mixed origins). There is no fining or filtration prior to bottling. The result? A perfect balance of wild fruits, game truffles and a pronounced violet aroma. Very stylish and complex!

Chateau la Cardonne offers some of the best value claret in the Medoc. It became independent in the early 1990s, and the quality of the wine improved radically. Michael Broadbent, in his *Bordeaux Atlas*, says '*La Cardonne remains among the really fine AC Medoc Chateaux, and now also offers considerable substance and a taste in which there can be elements of blackcurrant, plum, cocoa, tobacco and oak*'. We found their 1999 vintage to be just that, but we'd also add that the wine is surprisingly forward for its age. We're offering it at a special advance purchase price of £115 per case, with the wine shipped in March 2001. This price is inclusive of duty, VAT and transport, so there are no extras to pay when the wine arrives in March of next year. Let us know if you'd like some of this lovely stuff – we're taking orders right now.

One of Australia's best kept secrets is the outstanding **Greenock Creek** estate. Situated in one of the warmest parts of the Barossa valley, this is one of the sources for grapes used in Penfold's Grange. The fruit at Greenock Creek is all estate grown, late picked and very low yielding. The results are spectacular. Robert Parker describes them as follows: '*I was absolutely astounded by the quality of these wines... These are massive, opulently-textured extraordinary wines*', and these comments were made about the '96 and '97 vintages, which were *inferior* to '98, which is what we are due to get! Choose from '**Apricot Block**' Shiraz (£21.99), '**Seven Acre**' Shiraz (£29.99), or **Greenock Creek Cabernet** (£25.99). More minuscule quantities we're sorry to say, so first come first served...

If **single quinta port** is your thing then you've a treat in store. **Taylor's** have been in the higher realms of the port world since their establishment in the late 17th century. Their **Quinta de Vargellas 1998** is a serious drop; the estate is one of the most renowned in the Douro Valley, and its wines have formed the backbone of Taylor's legendary ports since they purchased the property over a hundred years ago. Our tasting note reads 'Inky, almost purple black in colour, the nose is very fragrant and perfumed with attractive scents of violets and cedarwood. The palate is full, soft and velvety with rich cedar and spice flavours. Good concentration with well-balanced fruit and tannins and a deliciously long finish'. This port is available as a **6 pack only**, at the highly attractive and *all inclusive* price of **£185**. Again there's not too much to go round. The port will arrive in the UK in early 2001. We await your call!

While we're on the subject of Portugal and its wines, you will have noticed the rather smart brochure detailing our **Portuguese wine promotion** that takes place at Martinez in November, and which accompanies this issue of Noble Rot (to mailing list subscribers). We think its time Portugal's table wine makers got the respect and attention they deserve, so we've got together with the Portuguese trade and tourism office (ICEP) in order to highlight the fantastic strides made in the last decade or so in Portugal. Please have a read. We think there's value, quality and variety galore to be found, and we've even added some traditional Portuguese recipes to complete the picture. There's also a prize draw, which is *free* to enter, with Portuguese wine and a dinner on offer for the lucky winners.

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