



NOBLE ROT

The newsletter of
Martinez Fine Wine.
Spring 2001



The Martinez Red Nose Tasting – a date not to be missed!



Make sure that you're free this **Thursday March 15th** when we're holding what promises to be one of the major wine events for Yorkshire in 2001. We've assembled a team of top suppliers and winemakers at the **Hilton Leeds Central Hotel in Neville Street, Leeds** (five minutes walk from Leeds railway station).

These knowledgeable folk will be showing a dazzling array of wines from France, South Africa, Italy, Australia, Spain, New Zealand, Chile and Argentina. We're offering tickets to all those interested at the silly price of just £5 per person, with all profits from ticket sales going to **Comic Relief!** There's no obligation to buy anything, although orders will be taken on the day should something take your fancy. Once you've finished sampling there will be a chance to show off your skill (or luck) in a blind tasting – it's just £5 to enter, again with all proceeds going to Comic Relief. The Martinez Wine Event runs from **1 – 7 pm.**



Thursday March 15th at the Hilton, Leeds.

***STOP PRESS!!! Georg Riedel tasting at Harewood House –
Friday 16th November. Details to be confirmed. Contact Phil***

Chateau Musar...A pre-release offer on a Lebanese legend...



Chateau Musar

This isn't normally a wine on which we would consider doing an advance purchase offer but on this occasion we are making an exception. The 1995 Musar has been eagerly awaited for some time. Most articles written on this unique wine are consistent in their praise with comments such as 'just wait for the '95' or 'the

best yet but wait for the 1995'.

The tasting note from winemaker Serge Hochar reads as follows: *"After the endless very hot summer of 1994, December and January were freezing cold, but February, March and April were very mild. Rain and hail affected the flowering in May and June, but the summer of 1995 followed its normal pattern and we then expected an early maturity. The harvest began on the 12th of September slightly earlier than usual. The quality of the harvest was exceptional but there was one problem - the actual size of the crop was down by more than 30% this year.*

"The Chateau Musar Red 1995 has indeed proved to be a great vintage - a very important wine with immense power and concentration of fruit. One third each of Cabernet, Cinsault and Carignan were blended in the third year following the harvest and it was bottled in July and August 1998.

"It will be full of surprises - a very great year with fabulous colour and incredible potential for living... Due to the shortage of this vintage the release has been delayed from January 2001 to May, with a view to making it to December. Somehow we doubt it."

The reduction in yields will inevitably mean higher prices and the '95 will hit the shelves at around £13 a bottle. We feel this is an excellent chance to buy a wine which will provide superb drinking for at least fifteen years to come and, when current Musar prices are taken into account, this vintage could prove a considerable investment. Most of the vintages from the 1980s are now fetching between £30-50, with the 1970s around £70 and more. We are offering the 1995 at £143 per case (you may purchase less if you wish), which is actually *less* than the current vintage! This price is *fully inclusive*, so there is no additional duty or VAT to be added. Orders must be received and paid for before April 30th.

...Halifax happenings...

Don't panic! Contrary to rumours our Powell Street shop is **not** closing down! Regulars to Martinez in Halifax will have met **David Lawson**, who took over from Andy Paterson on February 1st this year. David has been the manager of Wine Rack in Ilkley for 13 years and we are delighted to welcome



him and his considerable expertise into the warmth of the Martinez bosom. From what we've seen so far he's just the man to keep the Halifax flag flying high.

After over 6 years at Martinez Andy, who originally opened our Halifax shop, has decided it's time to move on to pastures new. We wish him and his family all the very best with future ventures, and take this opportunity to thank him for all his hard work over the years.

On the Shelf...

Burgundy isn't an area we normally associate with good value but we think we've found some wallet pleasers after a recent field trip. You'd be hard pushed to find a Burgundian Pinot Noir (or any Pinot Noir for that matter) as good as **Vigne et Verrea Tournu's 1998 Bourgogne (£8.99)** for under £10. Full of wonderful red-berried fruit flavours but with the subtlety you only find in Burgundy. It's a blend of excess fruit from such famous appellations as Ladoix, Givry and Mercurey, where the growers are only permitted to make a certain quota of wine in any one year under that appellation. Speaking of Givry we welcome **Chofflet-Valdenaire's Givry 1er Cru Clos de Choue 1998 (£10.95)**, which is crammed full of ripe cherry and raspberry fruit, with a vibrant palate and a healthy streak of gamey character to boot. It's serious quality stuff for the money and drinking superbly. Moving up a gear we present **Jean Chauvenet's Nuits Saint Georges 1998 (£16.99)**, a wine of classic Burgundian rusticity, and full of dark Nuits Saint Georges character, with beautifully integrated ripe tannins, earthy feel and exceptional length on the finish. It's worth noting that Monsieur Chauvenet is a cousin of the legendary Chopin-Groffier...

We've filled a gap at the top end of our Chianti range with **Isole e Olena's 1998 Chianti Classico (£14.49)**. This wonderful organic producer makes seriously rich wines and this example has bags of Sangiovese character, with great dusty tannins, bitter cherries and a whopping finish. It's a wine that commands respect and stands up well to hearty cuisine.

Our Australian section has had a major boost of some truly superb wines. Followers of our serial Aussie offerings will be pleased to see the return of **Mount Langhi Ghiran's 1999 Billi Billi Creek (£9.99)**. The addition of Grenache (now becoming a star in her own right) into the previous cast line-up of Syrah and Cabernet makes it a glorious full frontal eye opener and a mere sniff should have you salivating. A heavyweight yet sophisticated late night offering – more Channel 4 than BBC – and definitely not one for the children! In the immortal words of Monty Python “And now for something completely different” we present **Tim Knappstein's 1998 Cabernet Franc (£9.49)**, from Australia's famous Claire Valley. It's unusual to find this grape variety bottles on its own (it's usually blended with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot), but this is a real winner; medium-bodied and packed full of ripe raspberry fruit with dusty tannins overlaid by subtle oak. It's a wine that simply has to be tried – we love it! Sweeping over to Western Australia we've found a classic example of a big Australian red in the shape of **Omrah's 1999 Shiraz (£8.49)**. A huge mouthful of rich dark fruit with just the right amount of spicy black pepper flavour to get the taste buds tingling.

But it's not all red from Australia... Many of you will be familiar with the excellent Stonier's Pinot Noirs we've had in stock for a while. Add to those their Chardonnay counterparts and you've got the makings of a party. **Stonier's 1998 Chardonnay (£9.99)** is a bold and balanced wine, with attractive tropical fruit, restrained oak and a smooth finish. It's an easier style of quaffing but with enough character to keep it interesting. **Stonier's 1998 Merriks Chardonnay (£16.49)** is, however, a different beast. With an exceptionally round feel in the mouth, enormous concentration and structure, and a flavour of grilled hazelnuts and hot buttered toast, it's one of the best sub £20 Australian whites we've come across. It's fabulous now but will cellar well too. Something for a special occasion.

Finally a spot of word association. These days if someone says “Malbec” you think “Argentina” and if they say “Argentina” you think “Malbec” (surely “dirty footballers” Ed.) This is the winning combination at the moment and **Finca El Retrio (£6.49)** is a stunning example; full bodied,

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