



NOBLE ROT

The newsletter of
Martinez Fine Wine.
Summer 2001



Inside... New lines... Alsatian wine... New Ikley hours... Bordeaux 2000... Premium Californian wines... 1999 Port... Chateau Musar... Events...

On the shelf -

Keep an eye out for the following beauties which will be winging their way into your local Martinez shop over the next few weeks. An array of excellent wines ranging from sparklers to stickies and rosés to reds – whatever your preference you're bound to find something that'll appeal...



Spain's ability to produce cracking value bottles is further enhanced by these three dazzlers. Anyone who knows our range will be aware of the quality of **Muga's Riojas** – both red and white. Their **Rosada 2000 (£5.49)** is no exception – its vibrant salmon pink hues are brilliantly set off by hints of strawberries, redcurrants and raspberries but with a wonderfully dry and refreshing finish that's quite unlike most of the confected and cloying rosés on the mass market – perfect for summer. One wine that stood out a mile at our recent staff tasting was **Cerro Anon's Reserva Rioja 1996 (£11.99)**, which has a soft vanilla nose, with hints of raspberries and smoke drifting on to the palate. This stuff is absolutely classic Rioja – elegant and feminine but without lacking power. It's just starting to show its maturity and is exactly what good Rioja is all about – as someone remarked 'a Mrs. Robinson of a wine'. Also from Spain is **Prada Rey Primium Reserva 1998 (£7.49)**, a softer, slightly sweeter and more berryed fruit orientated beast than its baby brother (which we raved about in the last NR). It's very accessible and very drinkable but perhaps not as traditional as the other Prado Rey and is made for drinking now as opposed to



long term keeping.

We've finally found a quality Pinot Grigio that we feel offers genuine character and value. Italy's **Mazzolada Pinot Grigio 2000 (£6.49)** from the Veneto region has fresh and clean citrus notes on the nose – it's dry and mouth-wateringly crisp on the palate and has a touch of spice and almonds on the finish. Just the thing for this time of year.

Australian Shiraz is given an outing through **Hollick Wilgha Shiraz 1998 (£14.99)**, a truly monumental effort cramming vast quantities of spice, dark fruit and round tannins into a heady red. High fruit extraction and an Ayers Rock size finish ensures its place at Martinez. Not



for the faint hearted or those with loose tooth fillings!

Portugal's table wines get more and more interesting and **Vinhos Douro Superior's Crooked River 1999 (£8.49)** proves the point. It's unquestionably from Portugal but meanders its way into an almost New World style with a raging torrent of fruit, good weight, balance and length. We expect it to flow out of our shops in a steady stream...

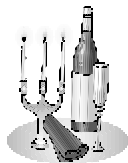


A new range of **Champagne** is also available. **Gosset** is a name to respect – their 400 year history is steeped in tradition and high quality wines. Choose from the sublime **Grande Reservé (£29.99, halves £15.99)** with its soft yet mouth filling mousse and powerful yeasty flavour, or the outstanding **Grande Rosé (£29.99, halves £16.99)**, a vivid pink creamy sparkler, with delicate strawberry fruit and a gentle finish. Both are absolutely superb Champagnes and must rate as some of the best presented bottles we've ever seen! We've been looking for a *Blanc de Noirs* Champagne for some time now and our quest is over. To complete the range we've added **Gallimard Père et Fils Cuvée Réserve Brut (£16.99)**. Made from 100% Pinot Noir and with a tinge of salmon colour, it has an excellent yeasty, biscuity nose with a strong rich fruit presence and an underlying elegance befitting the Martinez range. A super bottle and just a bit different from the norm. From French aperitif to French pudding wine... We've been selling the excellent Jurancon Sec from **Domaine Cauhape** for some time now and we are delighted to introduce their dessert wine, **Noblesse du Temps 1999 (£12.99)**. It's deliciously sweet and with evidence of noble rot as the name suggests. Great acidity as you would expect from the Petit and Gros Manseng grape varieties that go into the wine. It's drinking beautifully now but will be even more honeyed and complex in a couple of years' time should



you want to cellar it.

From South Africa we've added two more wines from the glorious **Morgenhof Estate** on the outskirts of Stellenbosch. Very French in style, the **Premiere Selection 1997** (£11.99) is quintessential claret – it's up there with the best Cape Bordeaux blends. Made from 65% Cabernet, 25% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Franc it will give any Medoc wine twice the price a run for its money. From the same estate comes their **Chenin Blanc 2000** (£5.99). Rich and complex cream and honey aromas, hints of lanolin, muscular 14% alcohol, and a juicy tropical fruit salad finish. Aged eight months in oak this is a serious wine, which will convert all you Chenin Blanc sceptics.



Alsatian Bulletin...

A quick tip of the hat goes to everyone who attended our **Schlumberger** dinner at Rascasse in Leeds last month. A fine time was had by all, with top marks of the night going to the magnificent combination of the Grand Cru Spiegel Pinot Gris and roast quail.

A range of these delicious Alsatian wines is available at Martinez... It comprises **Pinot Blanc 'Princes Abbes' 1999** (£6.99), **Riesling 'Princes Abbes' 1999** (£7.99), **Gewürztraminer 'Les Princes Abbes' 1998** (£9.95), **Pinot Gris Grand Cru 'Spiegel' 1998** (£14.99), **Gewürztraminer Grand Cru 'Kitterle' 1997** (£19.99) and **Gewürztraminer Grand Cru Cuvée Christine 1997** (£34.95). It's our opinion that not nearly enough Alsatian wine is consumed and we really can't recommend these marvellous wines enough. Rich, aromatic and powerful, they exhibit everything that's great about the region. The lighter styles (such as the Pinot Blanc) work brilliantly as aperitif wines and the truly awesome Cuvée Christine rates as one of the finest botrytised dessert wines in France. With such a comprehensive range available maybe this is the time to discover just how good these wines are.

Extended Ilkley Opening Hours

Please note that from August 1st our Ilkley shop's opening hours will be as follows:

Monday – Friday; 10 am–8 pm

Saturday – 9.30 am-6 pm

Sunday – 12 pm – 4 pm





Bordeaux 2000 – Hype, Hike, Hooray!

If you thought millennium hype ended 20 months ago (or as pedants would have it 8 months ago), then you've clearly missed the latest En Primeur offering from Bordeaux. After all the spin and talking up of the vintage the opening offers have been a boon to those who believe in significance of a new millennium.

The considered assessment is that 2000 is a uniformly good vintage – both across regions and down the classification hierarchy. Rich, ripe, concentrated fruit with balanced tannins – ageing potential longer than the average. But mythologising and Parker points have taken their toll; there were outrageous opening prices – especially for the top growths. Bought by those with more money than sense (the American market) it seemed that three noughts on the label was going to lead to three noughts on the price.

For Chateaux not hiking prices great value can be found – we feel that Cru Bourgeois and lower growths offer a particular En Primeur attraction or – dare we say – bargain! We are quite happy to follow many of our usual houses, with the addition of a couple of others which came highly recommended. Buy judiciously from the following. No cellar will be complete without the number two thousand! *All prices are for 12 bottle cases. Please see our notes on En Primeur purchases on the following page.*

Chateau Haut-Beausejour, Saint Estephe (£168). This Louis Roederer owned property has excelled since it was replanted in 1992. Its old-fashioned dark-fruited character is brilliantly shown in the 2000 vintage – hints of violets and tar with a smattering of spicy wood tannins set it apart from many others. Great ageing potential here.

Chateau de Pez, Saint Estephe (£204). Regular Martinez customers will know of our passion for this excellent producer. This vintage is their best ever and proves our enthusiasm to be sound. One for the cellar it'll only start to show its true colours in 5 to 6 years' time.

Chateau Haut-Marbuzet, Saint Estephe (£336). A welcome return to one of our favourite Chateaux that seems to make superb wine even in lesser vintages. With its spicy oak (courtesy of 100% new barrels) and vivid blackcurrant fruit it's an outstanding performer that has genuinely excelled in 2000.

Chateau Roland la Garde (£171). The intensive berry selection and 100% new barrels ensure that their 2000 release could potentially be their greatest

to date. Further enhancement is provided by a lack of fining and filtration.

Chateau L'Enclos, Pomerol (£228). A classic Pomerol displaying positive fruit content and with typical earthy notes on the finish. Such is the powerful structure this hints more towards left bank in style and if the fantastic 1998 is anything to go by this will be truly stunning on maturity.

Chateau Ramage la Batisse, Pauillac (£132). A Chateau that has been realising its true potential since the mid 90s – it has classic Pauillac tobacco and cedar notes written all over it. Its slightly higher Merlot make up means its soft and elegant character can be enjoyed a little earlier than many.

Chateau Patache d'Aux, Medoc (£120). Always delicious, with its extra vibrant fruit content, this Chateau is one of particular value in our opinion. A soft vanilla oak finish adds complexity to the intense currant-like character.

Chateau Siran, Margaux (£228). Now regarded as one of the best modern Margaux performers and listed as one of the best six 2000 Margaux releases. Its marvellous fragrance is backed up by penetrating fruit, a hint of cinnamon and beautifully integrated tannins.

Chateau la Tour de By, Medoc (£132). Firm yet rounded tannins in harmony with tobacco and cassis notes in this aromatic and warm cuvée. Typical Medoc style with excellent ageing potential for a wine in this price bracket.

En Primeur is a method of buying wine when it is still in barrel. In great vintages, such as 2000, by the time the wine would hit our shelves much, if not all, has already been sold. In most cases a second instalment that covers duty, transport and VAT is payable on receipt of the wine. The prices we've quoted above are all inclusive so there is nothing further to pay.

Tailor made cases

Don't forget that if ever you want a case of mixed wines but can't decide what to buy then any of our shops can make up a case for you. Just give us a ring (or call in), tell us the price you'd like to pay and an idea of the wines you prefer to drink and we'll do the rest. We'll even deliver it free if it's local, or £9.95 for anywhere in the mainland U.K.





A rare chance to buy some boutique Californian wines...

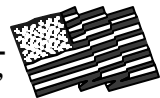
Every now and then we're able to grab tiny quantities of small production wines from around the world. These beauties are never cheap but their extraordinary quality makes them a rare treat to be savoured! We introduced a lucky few of you to the delights of Giaconda and Greenock Creek from Australia as well as Winslow from New Zealand. Now it's California's turn. Blink and you'll miss the following gems as we'll only receive two cases of each wine...

Cafaro, Napa Valley. Highly respected wine consultant Joe Cafaro makes a small amount of wines under his own name. Rich and powerful, they have lots of individuality and character - accessible while young but they'll cellar for at least another 5 years. Wines available: **1998 Cabernet Sauvignon (£34.99), 1998 Merlot (£32.99).**

Justin Vineyards, Paso Robles. Robert Parker's '*Wine Heroes of the Year*' in 1994 are based in a region 1000 feet above sea level, which brings more flavour out of the grapes due to the combination of warm days and cool nights. Their **1998 Isosceles (£41.99)**, a Bordeaux blend that ranks with America's finest, is a heady mix of cedar and blueberry flavours, with a complexity normally associated with top rated Claret.

Seghesio, Healdsburg. Ted and Pete Seghesio are now regarded as one of the country's top three Zinfandel producers. They grubbed up other varieties such as Chardonnay and Sauvignon to concentrate on what the area was best suited for - Zinfandel and a few Italian varieties such as Barbera, Sangiovese and Pinot Grigio. With expert consultant advice and careful fruit selection the resultant wines are truly outstanding, with 1999 claimed as their 'best Zinfandel vintage ever'. Wines available: **1999 Sonoma County (£14.75), 1999 Old Vines Zinfandel (£23.99), 1999 Cortina Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel (£23.99), 1999 Home Ranch Alexander Valley Zinfandel (£23.99), 1999 Barbera (£18.75).**

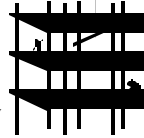
Testerossa, Los Gatos. A relatively young winery (started in 1993) which has been winning more and more fans with each release. Husband and wife Rob and Diana Jensen run the winery but it is winemaker Ed Kurtzman, once of Chalone Vineyard (one of California's top Pinot Noir producers) who has pushed Testerossa to the top of the quality pile. Their dedication to squeezing the most out of individual vineyards is admirable and the wines produced, whilst powerful, possess a subtlety only found in the area's finest bottles. Available wines: **1999 Chardonnay (£25.99), Sleepy Hollow Chardonnay (£28.99), Garys' Vineyard Pinot Noir (£35.99).**



These wines will available at Martinez in mid-August.

The Harrogate Shop.

Those of you who visit our Harrogate shop regularly will be aware of the lack of car parking space now the rebuild has started on the building adjoining the Spa baths. Unfortunately the contractors have the use of the car park for some time yet although we're assured that it will be eventually reopened. In the meantime more effort has been made to keep the spaces next to the shop clear to facilitate those of you wishing to collect cases of wine. If you still find it a problem then please don't hesitate to contact Phil or Mark who can arrange home delivery in the local



1999 Niepoort Port advance purchase...

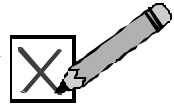
Many of you will know the **Niepoort** name by now, a house we rate as possibly the best in the Douro. The accolades heaped on their 1997 vintage were considerable – it was one of the top performers. The 1999 Port vintage would have undoubtedly been unanimously declared were it not for the fact that the 2000 is equally good but with the obvious attraction of those three zeros. Dirk Niepoort has made two '99 ports: the already famous **Quinta do Passadouro (£175 per 6-pack)** and a new label the **Niepoort Secundum (£348 per 12 bottle case)**. At Passadouro Tinta Roriz accounts for 40% of the blend, with Touriga Francesa being the other dominant variety (around 20%). The remainder of the blend includes Touriga Nacional, Tinta Barroca and Sousao. Yields were just nine hectolitres per hectare resulting in concentration and richness for which Passadouro is renowned. Niepoort "Secundum" is based around the same vineyards from which he produced the now iconic Niepoort 1997. Such old vines giving minuscule yields allow Dirk to make Ports with the immense concentration and complexity central to his wine-making philosophy. These Ports are for medium to long term ageing. Elsewhere in the newsletter you will see our 2000 Bordeaux offer, if you're interested in the 2000 Ports, which we'll be telling you more about early next year, give your local shop a ring and get at the front of the queue. *The above prices are all inclusive with nothing further to pay. Smaller quantities are available.*

Chateau Musar - Stop Press!

Those of you who bought the '95 vintage on our offer in the Spring edition of Noble Rot may be interested to know that although we said it would be available until Christmas, the demand world-wide has led Chateau Musar to release the 1996 vintage as early as October - only five months after the 1995. If anyone does want more of the '95 then please get in touch. Remember you heard it here first; this will be one of the most sought after vintages since the 1988 and 1972.

Shop Tastings

We've decided to hold our traditional laying down tastings in September this year. They will be held on the following dates:



Thursday September 27th – Ilkley and Horsforth

Friday September 28th – Halifax and Harrogate

Following the success of David's recent tasting in Halifax he's decided to hold an additional tasting of a few new wines on **Wednesday August 8th in Halifax**, with a £5 ticket price (refundable on any case purchase). Julian is holding a similar tasting on **Thursday 9th August in Ilkley** (with no admission charge).

Also watch out for a **South African food and wine night on Thursday October 4th, 1997 vs 2000 Beaujolais tasting on Thursday October 11th, our Riedel night at Harewood House on November 13th and an Italian food and wine evening during the last week in November**. Final details are to be confirmed – please contact your local shop manager for further details. As if this isn't enough we're still planning our annual Christmas tastings! Phew – will there be any space left in



Web site update...

Many apologies for the misquoted web site address on the front of May's issue – we always seem to have a little trouble where the internet is concerned! We hope all you surfers managed to find the site in the end which we are quite delighted with; lots of interesting stuff and it looks brilliant. You can expect regular updates over the next few months as we adjust everything into its rightful place. The idea is not only to show off our wine portfolio but also to provide an information service with good notes on countries and grapes as well as the wine we sell. Your comments are much appreciated – please direct them to the email address listed below.

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