



# NOBLE ROT

The newsletter of  
Martinez Fine Wine.

November 2001



**In this issue...** 1999 Chateauneuf-du-Pape offer... Ridge offer... Greenock Creek offer... Charles Melton offer... Gluhwein... New wines... Premium Sherry... Christmas Tastings... Boekenhoutskloof/Rascasse night

*Welcome to what's become a larger edition of Noble Rot than we normally mail out in November. There are so many exciting wines about, from blue chip Aussie gems to mind blowing Rhone reds, that we felt a single sheet wasn't enough. Have a peruse and see what we've got on the shelf, maybe put your name down for a few bottles of something special on the advance purchase front, or just mark a date in your diary for the Christmas tasting. There's lots of interesting stuff going on so settle*

## **On the shelf...**

Good Loire Sauvignon is always a delight and **Jean Max Roger's Mnetou-Salon 2000 (£9.49)**, from just next door to Sancerre, is no exception. This is super stuff, with a fresh and highly aromatic nose and a rich and almost creamy palate crammed full of zesty fruit – it complements our range of Loire whites very nicely.

Blue chip Burgundy remains one of the wine world's great pleasures, and when you're dealing with an esteemed producer such as **Domaine Bertheau** it's sheer heaven. His **Chambolle Musigny 1998 (£22.99)** is quite simply magnificent. It's extremely well-balanced and delicious, with classic delicate and refined Burgundian notes and loads of raspberries, strawberries and red cherries crammed onto the palate.

Christmas for the traditionalists means Claret and we've a couple of 1996's from the right bank's top appellations that are ready to drink now (as opposed to long term cellaring). **Chateau Haut-Brisson Saint Emilion Grand Cru (£11.99)** has that lovely smoky, leathery character of old school Bordeaux - deep, earthy and complex. **Chateau Haut Ferrand (£16.99)** is all that you'd expect of the **Pomerol** region - soft, rounded and intense with a long finish.

For those who missed the 1999 en primeur Burgundy offer other examples of this wonderful vintage are still to be had. **Domaine Roger Belland's Santenay Comees 1er Cru (£15.49)** has a good fruity strawberry character aligned with a silky finish - it epitomises everything that a good Burgundy from a good vintage and top producer should be.

### Portugal

**Herdade do Esporao's Roupeiro (£7.95)** is an oddball white from the Alentejo region. A big, rich and rounded number with a fruity nose of melon, peach and honey, a palate to match plus a long spicy finish. Try something different with your turkey this year!

### Australia

A new range of wines comes courtesy of Victoria's excellent **Shadowfax** winery. Wicked combinations of home grown and bought in fruit provide wines of exceptional character. The **Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc 2000 (£9.49)** is clean and fresh tasting with hints of lemon, passion fruit and a nice gooseberry twist; delicate yet penetrating its just the thing to serve with smoked salmon. Their **Chardonnay 2000 (£12.49)** is quite delicious. A sweet vanilla nose is backed up a terrific vein of crystallised pineapple, with less oak than one would expect so allowing the fruit to dominate. It's got beautiful concentration and is something of a bargain even at this price. Last up is their **Pinot Noir 2000 (£12.75)** which has a brilliant core of cherries and raspberries running alongside a tasty streak of toasty integrated oak; it's vibrant and rich yet elegant and refined with a healthy nod towards Burgundy

From Western Australia we're introducing two wines from **Frankland's Estate**. First up is their zesty **Isolation Ridge Chardonnay 1997 (£9.99)**, a guava and melon scented wine packed full of masses of tropical fruit - mangoes, pineapples and even a hint of tangerine - and a very impressive vanilla twist on the finish. Also due in is the excellent **Olmo's Reward 1996 (£12.99)** which is a Bordeaux blend of considerable power and structure. Lovely black fruits and an attractive vein of spice sets this apart from the norm.

Another new cracker on the shelf is **Blue Pyranees Cabernet Sauvignon**

**1999 (£8.99)** which epitomises that eucalyptus and mint style of Australian Cabernet. It's got a terrific cassis-orientated nose that drifts onto the plum-driven palate and a lingering spicy finish.

Hitting the shelves just in case for the Christmas season is **Oakvale's Old Liqueur Muscat (£15.49 per 50cl)** a dessert Muscat from New South Wales. Our tasting note simply reads 'a monster...' but we loved it! A massively concentrated effort full of figs, caramel, toffee and liquorice. Serve it very cold and enjoy the curious warming sensation it gives you as it slips down...

### Italy

A lot of readers out there will already know how good **Pieropan Soave** is. **La Rocca 1999 (£15.99)** is their top single vineyard wine and what a belter it is! An intense almond-driven nose with almost Burgundian notes and a wonderful complexity with length that goes on forever.

If **Tenuta Carretta's Langhe Bric Quercia 1998 (£15.49)** makes you think of Barolo then that's because it's the same grape variety, Nebbiolo, and what a great example this is! A Barolo of this sort of quality would be *much* more expensive! Its rich almost medicinal nose is backed up by positive fruitcake flavours on the palate. Fabulous now, but with room for development if required.

There's a real treat in store for sherry lovers. Many of you (and us!) have been enjoying **Barbadillo** sherry for sometime; budget priced and highly drinkable, they're excellent value sherries, but that's only part of what this excellent producer has to offer. At the top of the Barbadillo tree sit some extraordinary bottles. The **Cuco Oloroso Seco (£21.99)** has marvellously complex aromas and flavours – it's riddled with walnuts and dried figs and has a sumptuously rich feel in the mouth. Add to that Barbadillo's **Obispo Gascon Palo Cortado (£24.99)**, which is crammed full of nutty aromas plus a nice hint of flor as is found in good Fino sherry. It's lighter and more delicate than the Oloroso but equally as complex and satisfying. Don't say we don't look out for you fans of the great Spanish



RIDGE 2001  
CALIFORNIA

**Ridge Offer...**

Yes folks its that time again when Paul Draper's mighty autumn release is upon us. Most of you will know the respect and praise that every bottle of Ridge commands, and although we may be among the winery's biggest fans word has spread so that with each release there are fewer bottles to go round. And with a new addition to the Ridge family you can expect the feeding frenzy to be even keener than usual.

The autumn release normally sees the flagship red **Monte Bello, Geyserville Zinfandel blend** and **Santa Cruz Chardonnay** briefly reside on the Martinez shelves. But the UK allocation of Santa Cruz Chardonnay has been replaced by a **1999 Monte Bello Chardonnay (£38.95)** to sit alongside its big red brother as a premium quality white. Its incredible stuff, one of the best Chardonnays we've ever come across and according to Paul Draper 'one of the finest Chardonnays we have ever made'. Grab it while you can. The red **Monte Bello 1997 (£88.95)** is Paul's top wine. A Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot, it's in our opinion the very greatest New World wine in existence. It's made in the style of old fashioned claret – powerfully structured, highly complex, and with a view to long term cellaring. 1997 Californian Cabernets have been compared to the legendary 1994 vintage, and this Monte Bello is being earmarked as one of *the* wines of the vintage. Expect it to be at its best in about 15 years. We end our Ridge update with the fabulous **Geyserville Zinfandel Blend 1999 (£22.95)** which has long been a favourite of ours. With a little more muscle than its counterpart Lytton Springs, and a splash of Carignan in the blend this year Geyserville is an exciting and powerful wine. It drinks superbly when young but will develop over the next few years into a rich and silky blockbuster with a fair ripple of spice. Allocation of Ridge is inevitably down so get in touch if you'd like to have

## **Boekenhoutskloof at Rascasse – a night to remember**

Martinez events tend to be great fun for all involved and none so more than the fantastic night enjoyed by a few lucky customers in October. The new releases of Marc Kent's magnificent **Boekenhoutskloof** wines were given their first public showing, with superbly matched cuisine prepared by the outstanding **Rascasse restaurant in Leeds**. It's hats off to all concerned, from the Martinez staff who did much of the organisation to Rascasse and Marc Kent himself for showing off their skills to everyone. And of course the 60 or so Martinez customers who joined us for what was a series of gastronomic delights. We think that people appreciate events where quality and value meet and our Boekenhoutskloof night was certainly one of those. Keep your eye out for future evenings like this one – we continually strive to bring you fine winemakers, fine wines and fine food. If you don't believe us take a look at the menu for the evening.



Cuvee Extra N.V. Champagne, Claude Cazals

Prawn on Chive Risotto/Porcupine Ridge Sauvignon Blanc 2001

Red Mullet, Tapenade, Bourride of Mussels/Boekenhoutskloof Semillon 2000

Galantine of Duck, Salad of Lardons/Boekenhoutskloof Cabernet Sauvignon 1999

Daube of Beef, Parsnip Mash, Red Wine Jus/Boekenhoutskloof Syrah 1999

Vanilla Pudding, Crème Anglais/Chateau Filhot Sauternes 1995

*We may have got over half the UK allocation of Boekenhoutskloof wines but if orders placed on the night of the Rascasse dinner are anything to go by there aren't too many bottles left. If you'd like to experience the extraordinary richness of these wines you haven't much time to grab a share. Choose from the **2000***

*A rare opportunity to own some premium Australian wines..*



**Greenock Creek 1999**

A few rather fortunate Martinez customers enjoyed some truly extraordinary wines from the outstanding Greenock Creek winery last year. We're about to take delivery of this year's allocation and the 1999 wines are as fantastic as ever. Robert Parker was recently quoted as saying that Greenock Creek 'has quickly become one of my favourite wineries, not only in Australia, but in the world', and we wouldn't argue with that. The wines are muscular, concentrated and incredibly powerful yet they manage to attain a high degree of elegance and sophistication. The exceptionally ripe fruit is sourced from vineyards in the same area that supplies fruit for Penfold's Grange, with very low yields and picking left as late as possible to ensure maximum ripeness. Careful selection of both French and American oak, a lack of fining and filtration and amazing attention to detail in both vineyard and winery assures the quality husband and wife team Michael and Annabelle Waugh achieved with last year's release. We've chosen the same three blockbusters that graced our shelves last year – all are made from comparatively young vines but we guarantee you'll be bowled over by the outstanding quality and concentration of these wines. Quantities are even more limited than before; the touch paper lit by last year's release has sent a few people into fits of desperation as they try in vain to secure some of the deep purple nectar. It's first come first served again, so take your places please as we present the following:

**Seppeltsfield Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 (£31.95).** A big husky style of Cabernet with tremendous depth and focus. Gobs of cassis fruit inter-layered with oak spice and beautifully round tannins. Made from 13 year old vines.

**Apricot Block Shiraz 1999 (£27.99).** Hard to resist even at this age, this beefy Shiraz is evidence as to why this area of Barossa commands such respect among Shiraz connoisseurs. Made from very young vines from their premium Roennfeldt Road Vineyard.

**Seven Acres Shiraz 1999 (£33.99).** Outrageous stuff! Jam packed with spicy peppery fruit and a whopping finish to match. Made from 12 year old vines situated behind the Waugh's house. For lovers of truly decadent Shiraz only!

## Charles Melton Wines 1999

**Nine Popes** is legendary stuff and rightly so. Charlie Melton's Chateaufeuf tribute red usually



eclipses most of its namesakes wines, so much so that in price it now also rivals many of the Rhone's finest. The latest release is a bit of a monster, but then what's new. An additional 6 months ageing prior to release adds an ever greater degree of concentration and depth. The blend of Grenache, Shiraz and Mouvedre is sourced from low yielding very old vines. French and American oak is used for ageing and the **1999 Nine Popes (£21.99)** is absolutely glorious.

Charlie's **1999 Shiraz (£21.99)** is a towering achievement that beat both Hill of Grace and Grange in a *Wine Magazine* tasting this year. It's carefully assembled from individual blocks of Shiraz around Barossa, each chosen for their different attributes and micro-climates. The rippling structure is down to the increased percentage of whole bunch fruit pressed. As you'd expect it's a monster of a wine with loads and loads of chocolatey, pruney fruit and a long life expectancy if you can behave and not drink it immediately...

Finally there's the **Charles Melton Cabernet Sauvignon 1999 (£21.99)** which shows classic old fashioned Barossa character. An intense core of blackcurrants flirts with eucalyptus notes and splashes of mint neatly veiled in a spicy oak outer layer. Firm attention to detail in the winery involves much pumping over of the must and careful fermentation in both stainless steel tanks and open fermenters. Its serious Aussie Cabernet with the potential to age slowly for at least a decade.

If these wines sound interesting please drop us a line to ensure you can be part of it all.

*We've been asked many times if we'll be doing an offer for Yarra Yering, an event that normally occurs around this time of year. Sadly no 2000 vintage will be available next year, and the small quantities of the 1999 vintage needs to be spread out over two years. Sadly this means we are unable to offer any Yarra Yering this year.*



## Christmas Tastings at Martinez

Its time to sample a few of the new wines we've got in stock plus a couple of other bottles we feel drink rather well at this time of year. Wing your way down to your nearest Martinez



shop on **Sunday December 2nd** and have a gargle of an array of different wines on show. We're open every Sunday in December from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. and there's no charge for the tasting. So come along and see what's happening – its free and quite often fun!

## Gluhwein – a welcome winter warmer!

Now the temperature's starting to drop a little we felt it was time to get our traditional **Christkindl Gluhwein (£5.75 or 6 for £30)** back into Martinez. It's blend of red wine, cloves, cinammon, oranges, lemons and a dash of sugar is very tasty indeed.

This is the short cut for lovers of mulled wine. No mess, no sticky fingers and no question about how delicious it is. Grab it



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