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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

- 2004 TEMPIER PA
- SAUTERNES CLASSIC
- RED BEAUMES-DE-VENISE

OPEN • TUESDAY-SATURDAY 11 A.M. TO 6 P.M. CLOSED • SUNDAY & MONDAY

JULY 2006

BORDEAUX

2003 SAUTERNES “CUVÉE LÉON” CHÂTEAU ROÛMIEU-LACOSTE

In Provence I put three things together. First, my tasting buddy Daniel Ravier from Domaine Tempier was with me. Second, the sweet Madame Laboucarie from Domaine Fontainte had given me a present when I visited, a little block of foie gras. And just waiting in my cellar was a sample bottle of the 2003 Sauternes from Roûmieu-Lacoste.

Daniel and I agreed that the Cuvée Léon is not a good Sauternes. It is a great one, one of the best either of us could remember, including the fanciest, most expensive labels. We could not come up with one thing that might have improved it. The unctuousness, the class from top to bottom, the straightforward no-holds-barred deliciousness are thrilling.

I am amazed by how open and generous it is, how gorgeous and fun it is already. Drink it now; drink it later.

\$38.00 PER BOTTLE **\$410.40** PER CASE

2003 LUSSAC SAINT-EMILION CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE

If you like your Merlot deep-colored, the Merlot fruit tempered by the *terroir* and vintage, the wine rich and tannic, here is an off-the-beaten-path gem.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE **\$259.20** PER CASE

2005 BORDEAUX *BLANC* • CHÂTEAU DUCASSE

Ducasse is a dry white from the noble *terroir* of Barsac. Think of Yquem's Y and Suduiraut's S. The finesse, complexity, and flavor interest are comparable to a white Graves. The old vines are 55% Semillon, 35% Sauvignon, and 10% Muscadelle.

There is a freshness and subtlety to the bouquet, and an impression of depth. Depth as opposed to superficiality. There is a gunflint aspect, along with citrus perfumes like citronelle and orange blossom.

On the palate too, freshness, liveliness, depth, while the finish mirrors the wine's exquisite bouquet.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE **\$135.00** PER CASE

—NEW DOMAINE—

RÉGIS BOUVIER

2004 BOURGOGNE ROUGE “EN MONTRE CUL”

You might purchase this one because you like Pinot Noir, or because you like red Burgundy, or because Bourgognes have become the world's best Pinot Noir values, or because you speak some French and know what the name of the vineyard means. Well, let's get it right out into the open, so to speak. Montre Cul means, um, to be blunt, Show your butt. Or your behind, to put it more politely. Wine sales lead one into the most preposterous situations.

Anyway, the wine itself is quite fleshy and rounded with good firmness and a sweet, deep Pinot Noir perfume. Look at the label to understand why the vineyard earned the name Montre Cul. During the harvest and pruning, evidently, the slope of the hill provides a certain vantage point. And no, the winemaker did not make it up. Montre Cul is historically the name of the site.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE

2004 MARSANNAY BLANC “CLOS DU ROY”

As for names, I would have preferred Clos du Roi. Better the king's *clos* than Roy's, right?

This white Burgundy reminds me of a quote I used in *Adventures on the Wine Route* from the autobiography of Paris wine merchant Jean-Baptiste Chaudet: “In all sincerity I came to prefer [Chalonnais whites] to the *grands crus* because they are lighter, more ethereal, and easier to digest. I am, I must say, a big eater, and I like to drink well and quench my thirst. I perceived that during the meal it was valuable to have this type of wine on the table, wines which do not oblige you to put on the brakes. And another virtue, the prices are more interesting.”

Marsannay is not from the Chalonnais, but Chaudet's sentiment fits here. This is made of Chardonnay and has a toasty aroma, medium body, and good nerve.

\$27.00 PER BOTTLE

\$291.60 PER CASE

2003 MARSANNAY ROUGE “LES LONGEROIES”

When I first tasted the 2003 red Burgundies, the purist in me was shocked. They were not typical. Now I feel fortunate to experience such a flavorful, opulent vintage. What a treat they are! Sometimes they seem like a marriage of French *terroir* and California sunshine. Give our new producer a try.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE

\$259.20 PER CASE

LOIRE

2005 CHEVERNY • DOMAINE DU SALVARD

Visiting Salvard, I was thinking that 2005 is the perfect vintage for introducing people to the Sauvignon Blanc of the Loire.

Here it is: ripe, tender, friendly, easy, and delicious. Yes, the grapes were good, they were perfectly ripe, and the bouquet offers itself with style and delicacy. Do you agree that some Sauvignon Blancs can seem aggressive, even off-putting? This one has a lovely touch on the palate and the acidity is buried in the wine's flesh. It is a graceful performance that lingers beautifully.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE **\$135.00** PER CASE

2004 MUSCADET CHÂTEAU DE LA FESSARDIÈRE

Here is an organically produced wine, for one thing, and even more rare these days, a Muscadet that spent some time basking in the spherical pleasures of a large oak *foudre*. Most Muscadets are raised in stainless steel.

It has a clear, straightforward expression aromatically. The *foudre* allowed the wine to open up. Also, there is no hint of SO₂ to block the perfume.

On the palate it shows a lovely balance in the sense that you don't feel any acidity. It is there, it does its job, but there is no sharpness.

The ultimate pleasure with Muscadet involves shellfish. There you have a classic duo. But this Muscadet is more versatile than most—thanks, in my opinion, to the *foudre*—so you can consider this one a fine, dry white at a good price.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE **\$135.00** PER CASE

2005 POUILLY FUMÉ “VIEILLES VIGNES” DOMAINE RÉGIS MINET

This “picture-perfect” vintage in the Loire (more than one winemaker used exactly that expression when I visited) certainly blessed Minet's vineyard. The fruit is ripe and fresh, and it seems more complex than usual. In with the pretty fruit I catch hints of black pepper and a Chablis-like stoniness.

As with the 2005 Cheverny, offered at the top of the page, you could not design better balance.

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE **\$204.66** PER CASE

**2003 BOURGUEIL “NUITS D’IVRESSE”
CATHERINE & PIERRE BRETON**

Nuits d’ivresse means nights of drunkenness. Uh oh. Is that still permitted in ever more puritanical France? Drunkenness has become the word never spoken.

Well, folks, we are all in for a bunch of treats with this current shipment of 2003s from the Bretons. You will be dazzled. The great sun was no enemy for them. Four splendid achievements. And this is the one to attack first. It is beautifully ripe and succulent. *Vin de plaisir!* It leaves the stage with a fabulous, delicious, berry-like aftertaste. A mere grape did this?

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE \$215.46 PER CASE

2003 BOURGUEIL “CLOS SÉNÉCHAL” • BRETON

So full of stuff, it sort of boggles the mind. Deep, dark color. Yes, the color makes you wonder, what kind of marvels are lurking in there? The palate is large-scaled with a remarkably thick, supple tannin.

\$17.95 PER BOTTLE \$193.86 PER CASE

2003 CHINON “LES PICASSES” • BRETON

A great Chinon that will reveal its wonders over many decades.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE \$302.40 PER CASE

2003 BOURGUEIL “LES PERRIÈRES” • BRETON

I have had wines from this vineyard many times, but this is the first vintage that makes me think of Meursault Perrières. This is red wine, but like a great Meursault Perrières it is rich and elegant, broad and deep, with a fabulous texture and minerality to it.

Snap up these marvels from the Bretons before they get away. This kind of wine doesn’t happen very often, and you can enjoy them and watch them evolve over a long, long time.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE \$302.40 PER CASE



— VALUE OF THE SUMMER —

2004 **ALSACE *BLANC***
KUENTZ-BAS

Alsace *blanc* means an Alsatian white and nothing more definite than that. I did not know Alsace *blanc* existed until Kuentz-Bas poured theirs for me. I think it deserves to exist. Consider, we have Mâcon, Côtes du Rhône, and Bordeaux *blanc*. Alsace *blanc* is a simple, entry-level appellation that displays a regional character.

Bargain of the summer? Well, it certainly is fresh and tasty and allows thirst-quenching-sized swallows. And unlike Le Montrachet (another French dry white), for example, if you are in the mood for a glass like *right now*, and you don't happen to have a bottle chilled, you can just toss a couple of ice cubes into the glass. Very practical when you are in a rush.

The grape varieties are Sylvaner, Pinot Blanc, Chasselas, and the aromatic Muscat d'Alsace. Put 'em together and what do you get? Well, a fine, whispery aftertaste, for one thing. And I like the way it makes the inside of my mouth feel, which is more than I can say for a lot of high-scoring, high-priced palate manglers.

Enjoy.

\$11.25 PER BOTTLE

\$121.50 PER CASE



— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2004 DOMAINE TEMPIER

I feel like I am in a good position to recommend these 2004s because I left Domaine Tempier about fifteen minutes ago and now I am at my desk with the taste of the vintage still fresh on my tongue. The 2004s saturate the taste buds, and the first word I thought to use was “intense,” but then I decided no, “luscious” is more like it.

The bottling labeled Bandol is referred to by the Peyrauds as the *cuvée classique*. I have tasted every vintage since 1969. Their 2004 is as lusciously aromatic and flavorful as any I can remember. Note: what they used to bottle as their *cuvée spéciale* is now incorporated into the *classique*, which is why it is not listed below.

The small yields and dry 2004 Provençale weather provided the grapes, and the winemaking skill belongs to Daniel Ravier, who took over when Jean-Marie Peyraud retired after the 1999 harvest. Daniel has managed to preserve all that we love about Domaine Tempier. It still tastes like Lucien Peyraud is in the cellar. However, Daniel Ravier has maintained a consistency, a quality level from vintage to vintage that the domaine has never known before. He tells me that he likes his 2004s even better than the 2005s!

Here are the top cuvées, offered pre-arrival. I am hoping that only those of you with cellars will purchase them. Otherwise, wait for the *classique* to arrive.

2004 BANDOL “LA MIGOUA”

\$234.00 PER SIX BOTTLES

2004 BANDOL “LA TOURTINE”

\$234.00 PER SIX BOTTLES

2004 BANDOL “CABASSAOU”

\$169.50 PER THREE BOTTLES



ALSO AVAILABLE IN MAGNUMS AND JEROBOAMS.

Pre-arrival terms: Half-payment due with order, balance due upon arrival.

SOUTHERN FRANCE

2005 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC *BLANC* CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE

There are quite a few grape varieties in here, but none dominate. Each one has its function in the blend. Rolle and Marsanne do their thing, for example. This is a Mediterranean dry white, and we need good ones like this to go with the Mediterranean-style cuisine we all love.

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE **\$161.46** PER CASE

2005 CALVI *BLANC* “E PROVE” DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

If you are like me and have fallen for this dry Corsican white in past vintages, here is something to be happy about: the 2005 version. It sums up the wine; everything good about it in one vintage.

Rarely are wines this full of character so attractively priced. This is a complex white with fruit, floral, and mineral highlights. It has a superb, fresh fleshiness, then it turns dry and crisp, then a subtle aftertaste of stones and citronelle emerges.

Serve with charcuterie, with sea creatures, with goat cheeses, squash blossoms, tapenade . . . and on and on.

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE **\$161.46** PER CASE

2004 BEAUMES-DE-VENISE *ROUGE* DOMAINE DE DURBAN

If you are looking for great values, look where no one else is looking. Well, people do look for Beaumes-de-Venise, but only its Muscat, while Durban is making a rave-up red just on the other side of the Dentelles from Gigondas. But the price is secondary. Rhône fans, you're going to love this beauty!

Deep, unfiltered color. A gorgeous aroma: fresh fruits and Rhône-ness. On the palate, float like a butterfly, sting like a bee. It is ample, harmonious, full of lovely flavors. The feast of Provençal fruits including pit fruits like apricot and peach continues on in the aftertaste. And how about that absolutely perfect tannin?

At this price it's a steal.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE **\$172.80** PER CASE
