



# THE RARE WINE CO.

## Newsletter

Online Edition  
April 12, 2011



*The island of Madeira in the 1840s. Page 5.*


# THE RARE WINE CO.

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April 12, 2011 - ONLINE EDITION

## The Millennium Redux

### *A Rare 29-year-old Charles Heidsieck Champagne in Jeroboam*



The build-up to the Millennium in the late 1990s spawned the greatest burst of lavish releases in Champagne's history, as the *grandes marques* pulled out the stops to offer the public something extraordinary with which to celebrate. Most often this consisted of a luxuriously packaged single cuvée, but Charles Heidsieck took a very different tack.

They chose to release a collection of eighteen of its greatest wines from its vaunted library, *L'Oenothèque*. The collection was first presented, with spectacular success, at a special Sotheby's London auction in June, 1999.

Yet, one wine in the collection—a small flotilla of rare, numbered jeroboams of 1987 *Mis en Cave Réserve Privée*—never left Heidsieck's cellar. Intended for release in July '99, they weren't disgorged until September, leaving no chance to regain their equilibrium *post-dégorgement* in time for New Year's Eve.

And so they were never shipped, remaining in Heidsieck's cold cellars in the directors' reserve (*réserve privée*)—until last year when they were quietly sold, as a parcel, to a Champagne insider, who happens to be our close friend. He let us have the lion's share of his purchase. ▶

### *Mis en Cave: A Great Winemaker's Gift*

THE *MIS EN CAVE* series, of which the 1987 was the first, was the crowning achievement of one of 20th-century Champagne's greatest winemakers, Daniel Thibault.

When Rémy Martin acquired Heidsieck in 1985, their instruction to Thibault was to make the non-vintage blend of his dreams, a wine to challenge Krug's Grande Cuvée and Laurent-Perrier's Grand Siècle.

To create his masterpiece Thibault employed a staggering 40% of reserve wines spanning a decade or more. Remy Martin backed Thibault to the hilt, making the costly decision to allow sales of Heidsieck's NV Brut to fall by millions of bottles so he

could build up the reserve stocks.

Thibault used his extraordinary blending skills for each release's base wine, choosing among the myriad of cuvées from 120 villages from the most recent harvest, to be married with the older reserve wines.

Thibault also took the highly unusual step of stating the year the wine went into bottle for the second fermentation—the *Mis en Cave*—as well as the disgorgement date.

Sadly, Daniel Thibault passed away at the tragically young age of 55 in 2002, but the opportunity to experience his genius lives on in the stunning, rare and historic *Mis en Cave 1987*.

# The Millennium Redux

## A Rare 29-year-old Charles Heidsieck Mis en Cave in Jeroboam

### ► Where do we start?

These 3-liter bottles are remarkable on several counts:

1. The wine itself has an average age of 29 years: 60% of the blend is 1986 vintage and the rest is reserve wines dating back to the late '70s.
2. It predates the first official *Mis en Cave* release by a decade, and was the only time any *Mis en Cave* has been put into jeroboam.
3. The Champagne is in astonishing condition, with the ability to *easily* age for another three decades. After beginning its secondary fermentation in 1987, it spent 22 years—of which 12 were on the lees—in Heidsieck's ancient, cold Gallo-Roman *crayères*.
4. Given all this, the price defies logic: just \$425 each (\$399 if you buy three, shipped to the same address).

Each jero comes in the original leather-strapped, wood box made just for the Millennium.

### Charles Heidsieck Cuvée Privée Mis en Cave 1987

**\$425** 3-liter jeroboam

**\$399** with the purchase of three

This remarkably youthful Champagne boasts a beautiful light gold color (suggesting a Champagne ten years younger); extraordinarily fresh floral and vanilla scents, and, on the palate, Heidsieck's trademark creamy richness and finesse, magnified by the indefinable magic that only occurs in large bottles. The packaging is of course classically Millennial: a beautiful label and a classy leather-strapped wood box. A dream-come-true for Champagne lovers.

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# Fontaine-Gagnard

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## Stunning 2008 White Burgundies from a Master

In recent years, some of Burgundy's purest, most elegant whites have come from the cellar of Fontaine-Gagnard. Founded in 1982 when Richard Fontaine married Laurence Gagnard of the Gagnard-Delagrangue dynasty, this domaine's wines are the very model of Côte d'Or Chardonnay—beautifully balanced with intensity, depth and ageworthiness.

The key is the old family holdings in Chassagne's top sites and

Richard Fontaine's winemaking, which is tailored to what the vintage provides. "It is rare to do the same thing twice," Fontaine once noted. "One must observe." In 2008 this meant native yeast fermentation, twice-monthly lees-stirring and minimal new oak, all intended for fine balance, long life and pure expression of Chassagne's great *terroirs*. These two are the quintessence of Fontaine-Gagnard.

### 2008 Batard Montrachet

**\$149.95**

*Burghound*: "95 rating ... the white flower and citrus aromas are well-layered and quite pretty. The restraint continues onto the rich, full-bodied and entirely serious flavors that are notably more backward, all wrapped in a detailed, lightly mineral-suffused and driving finish ... This explosive effort is a real beauty and should enjoy a long life."



### 2008 Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru "La Grande Montagne"

**\$49.95**

*Burghound*: "92 rating ... notes of white flower, citrus blossom and lemon rind that slide gracefully into rich, full and naturally sweet medium-bodied flavors that possess fine volume and a palate staining finish that is impressively persistent. I very much like the sense of tension and poise ... A Zen-like wine."

# The Essence of Finesse

## *Burlotto's Magical 2006 Barolo Monvigliero*

*It was once* dogma that blending was a key to great Barolo; yet, today single-*cru* bottlings have eclipsed that tradition. Each year hundreds of *cru* Barolos are released, but how many rise to greatness? And how many could be picked out in a blind tasting?

One that qualifies on both counts is Burlotto's Barolo Monvigliero, from Verduno's greatest *cru*. Vintage after vintage, its astonishingly intense, and instantly recognizable, perfume of Provençal black olive tapenade, cedar and truffle is nothing short of hypnotic. And it could come from no other place on earth.

Burlotto's Monvigliero has been made as a single-vineyard wine since 1982, but for a century before it was a key component in Burlotto's fabled blended Barolo—the earliest archetype for the 20th century's classic Barolo style. Thus, Monvigliero's nuances have been known to several generations of Nebbiolo lovers.

Monvigliero is not only the essence of its limestone-rich, high-altitude vineyard; it is also the essence of its old-fashioned crushing the grapes by foot, 60-day maceration and long aging in massive wood *botti*.

If there's a pivotal element in this technique, it's the gentle foot treading, which produces eerily soft tannins because seeds and stems are not broken. Conse-



*Botti in Burlotto's Cellar*

quently, Monvigliero's fruit can withstand sixty days of skin contact—a practice that once flourished in Barolo but vanished by the 1980s.

The combination of foot treading, long maceration and traditional *botti*-aging produces a wine of powerful structure, but with an ethereally delicate mouthfeel, providing great drinking pleasure when young but capable of long aging.

The 2006 Monvigliero, from such a great year, fulfills all expectations, and so it's an honor to offer it in bottles and jeroboams.

### 2006 G.B. Burlotto Barolo Monvigliero 94 Galloni

**\$54.95** *bt.* **\$275.00** *3-liter*



Antonio Galloni: "This sumptuous yet delicate, classically built Barolo flows with gorgeous layers of red berries, spices, flowers and herbs, showing superb harmony, plenty of depth and fabulous overall balance. To be sure, the wine's signature profile bears more than a passing resemblance to the wines of northern Piedmont, but in 2006, all of the elements are in perfect harmony. This is a fabulous effort from Burlotto, and is highly recommended, particularly for readers who appreciate a firm, classic style of Barolo."

## *Masnaghetti's Long-Awaited Map of Verduno*

Alessandro Masnaghetti's 23" x 33" maps of Barolo and Barbaresco's major communes have been acclaimed as the finest wine maps ever made—regardless of wine region. Meticulously showing all the major slopes and crus, broken down by ownership and historic parcels, they offer an unprecedented look at the region that produces arguably Italy's greatest wines.

The amount of labor necessary to create these maps is monumental. Consequently, the maps are issued commune by commune, one or two per year. In Barolo, we've already seen Castiglione Falletto, La Morra, Monforte,

Serralunga and Barolo itself. And now we have Verduno, home of Monvigliero.

You can read and see more about Alessandro's epic maps at [www.rarewineco.com/maps](http://www.rarewineco.com/maps). The new Verduno map is one of eight different Langhe communes that are currently available at the low price of—



*Click to  
enlarge.*

**\$8.50** *for purchasers of any four or more maps, including past buyers*

**Single maps are just \$9.95**

# Born of Fire & Tradition

## *The History of Wine on Mt. Etna Burns in Calabretta's 2001 Rosso*

*Sicily's Mount Etna* has an ancient winemaking culture, sharing Barolo's tradition of long aging in massive old *botti*. The resulting delicacy and tarry nuance evoke comparisons not only to Barolo, but to Burgundy. In fact, Jancis Robinson recently asked in the *Financial Times* if Etna is "the Burgundy of the Mediterranean?"

Today, few adhere to Etna's ancient practices. But one great estate, Calabretta, continues to make its majestic reds as in the past, releasing them only after a decade in their cellar.

The wines are extraordinary—and the prices are extraordinarily low. In fact, we can offer the newly released 2001 vintage of Calabretta's flagship Etna Rosso at the mindboggling price of \$29.95.

### Historic Roots

Calabretta's vineyards are located nearly a half mile above sea level in the black volcanic soils of Etna's north slope, between Randazzo and Castiglione di Sicilia. There, Calabretta farms roughly seven hectares of mostly 70- to 80-year-old vines—many of them ungrafted—on stepped terraces supported by stone walls.

Since the winery's founding in 1900, the Calabretta family has farmed and produced wines from Etna's ancient indigenous varieties—including Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio—in the mountain's unique noble vineyards.

Historically, the family had sold its wine in *sfuso* or in barrel to restaurants and to private customers, many of whom travelled long distances to pick up their wine. But in 1997, third- and fourth-generation father and son Massimo and Massimiliano Calabretta decided to bottle their best wine under their own label to ensure the winemaking traditions of their family and Etna would not be lost.

### Trapped in Time

Slow Food's current *Slow Wine* guide describes Calabretta's style as "a thousand miles away" from other Italian wine, but the gap might be better measured in time, since the estate seems stuck somewhere in the 19th century.



*Massimiliano & Massimo Calabretta  
with one of their ancient vines.*

In fact, Calabretta's most distinguishing feature is its dedication to long aging, which has stayed the same throughout the family's history as winegrowers. The Etna Rosso ages much like Barolo and Brunello were aged decades ago, in massive (50- 70-hectoliter) neutral Slavonian oak *botti* for 6 to 7 years.

The vineyard practices sound modern but are in fact rooted in the past. They avoid using chemical pesticides or herbicides, and they harvest by hand, starting around the second week of October.

Fermentations are carried out exclusively with wild yeasts, and

macerations can last two months or more.

Considering such traditional approaches, it's not surprising that Calabretta's wines are so reminiscent of the compelling Brunellos from Montalcino's Soldera, Cerbaiona and Livio Sassetti, or the many great traditional Barolos of the '60s and '70s.

### This Offer

It's an honor to offer Calabretta's jewel, the 2001 Etna Rosso, directly from the estate, where these bottles have slumbered for the past decade. Considering this offer's unique convergence of value, character, and age, these bottles will be gone in an instant. Fair warning.

**2001 Calabretta Rosso**  
**\$29.95**



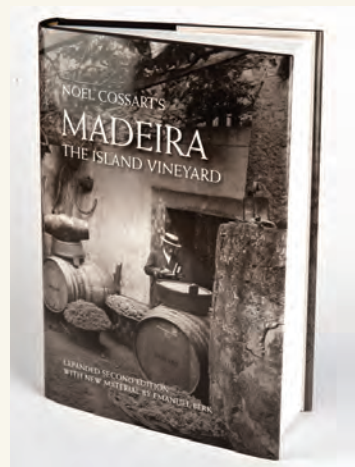
A gift for lovers of traditionally made Italian reds like Barolo and Brunello. The long maceration and extended aging in *botte* shows in the wine's velvety texture. It coats your palate without a trace of excess weight, sliding towards an effortless finish, that seems endless. The complexity is stunning, revealing some of Barolo's truffle, tar, and roses, against an underpinning of red fruit. An epochal bargain.

# A Classic Returns

## *Noël Cossart's Madeira, The Island Vineyard in a New Edition*

Of all the books ever written about Madeira, the most beloved is Noël Cossart's *Madeira, The Island Vineyard*. Noël was the last generation of his family to manage Madeira's most important wine producer, Cossart Gordon, from 1936 until 1953, when economic conditions forced him to sell the firm's assets to the Madeira Wine Association.

Noël had long intended to write a book based on both his experience in the Madeira trade and his business archives dating back to the 18th century. It was his old friend from Christie's, Michael Broadbent, who finally convinced him to write that book, and so *Madeira, The Island Vineyard* was published by Christie's Wine Publications, with



dual launching parties in London and Savannah, Georgia, on October 23, 1984.

Noël's book was enthusiastically received, yet it had only one printing and soon vanished from the market. By the time the world reawakened to Madeira's magic in the 2000s, his book had become a sought-after collectible, with rare book dealers asking several hundred dollars a copy. But even more important, *Madeira, The Island Vineyard* had become the stuff of legend, as the last first-person account of how Madeira used to be.

### Features include:

The Madeira wine trade: 300 years of history / Madeira in America /

Recollections of the Madeira shippers, 1700s-1900s /

Noël Cossart, A Life in Wine (new to the 2nd ed.) /

Vintage and solera Madeiras / Important Madeira collections

Important Madeira auctions (new to the 2nd ed.) / Famous Madeira Tastings

Notes on Madeira vintages, 1863-1981

Noël Cossart's post-publication correspondence, 1984-85 (new to the 2nd ed.)

In 2005, we had asked Noël's widow Pat and Christie's for permission to publish a much-needed new edition of *Madeira, The Island Vineyard*. Finally, last month it was published and is being offered in this newsletter for the first time.

This richly illustrated book makes Noël's words available again, exactly as they were first published in 1984. But it also benefits from extensive new material, including the first published history of Noël's own life; an unprecedented compilation of Madeira auction prices from the 1970s to the present, and Noël's private correspondence with other wine scholars in the months following the book's 1984 publication.

Published in hardcover with a dustjacket at \$40, we are pleased to offer it to Rare Wine Co. customers at preferential, postage-paid prices.

### **Madeira, The Island Vineyard 2nd ed.**

**Original text by Noël Cossart; new introductory & postscript material by Mannie Berk  
400 pp., 88 illustrations & 6 maps**

**\$32 media mail postage paid**

**\$30 with the purchase of 2 or more copies**

**(For Priority Mail in the U.S., add \$5.00/shipment.)**

**For more information, please visit [noelcossartbook.com](http://noelcossartbook.com).**

#### MADEIRA THE ISLAND VINEYARD

	# bts	High-Low Price During Period			Highest Price	
		1971-1989	1990-1999	2000-2010	Year	Location
1830 Barbeito Malmsey	24			249-306	2003	SL
1830 Cunha "APC" Tinta Velha	1			384	2006	CSK
1830 Justino Henriques Sercial Solera	3	165		353	2004	ZNY
1830 Lomelino Sercial Solera	10	32-44		269-598	2008	ZNY
1830 Quinta do Serrado Malmsey	1228	92-163	109-537	235-1400	2007	CNY
1830 Unk. Producer Malmsey (Kassab)	1		230		1988	CL
1832 Acciaiolly Terrantez	353	81-154	121-430	303-1111	2008	ZLV
1834 Barbeito Malvasia	86		394-633	222-1778	2006	ZNY
1834 Barbeito Terrantez	18		227-880	819-1521	2005	HDH
1835 Averys Sercial Solera	1			192	2006	CSK

*This new edition includes an unprecedented compilation of 6000+ Madeira auction results over 40 years.*

# Soul Man

## *Thierry Allemand's Recent Masterworks Distill Cornas' Essence*

For those of us who prize Cornas as one of the world's unique wines, there are three icons: two octogenarians, Auguste Clape and Noël Verset, and the much younger Thierry Allemand.

Each captures Cornas' soul, but Allemand has created a new paradigm, adapting traditional methods to his own beliefs. Like his elders, he dislikes destemming and new oak. But he differs by minimizing sulphur, to which he attributes hard tannins.

Allemand's approach produces incredible purity, complexity and balance. By aging his wines on their lees without racking, they develop classic Cornas dark



*The great Reynard vineyard  
(credit DrinkRhone.com)*

berries, smoke, dried herb and olive flavors, but with incredible definition. His Cornas strikes a unique balance of concentration and elegance.

Allemand's ten acres of vines are on steep south-facing slopes in the heart of Cornas. Here, where the soil is most granitic, he farms 30-year-old vines in Chaillots and 70- to 100-year-old vines in Reynard. Extreme vine densities assure low yields and great concentration.

In the past three vintages—2006, 2007 and 2008—Allemand has continued to raise the bar. With only about 500 cases of each wine made, and a rabid world-wide following, consider yourself fortunate to have access to these wines.

### **2007 Cornas Reynard**

**92 Josh Reynolds**

**★★★★(★) Livingstone-Learmonth**

**\$89.95 very limited**

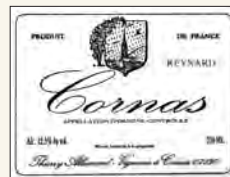
Josh Reynolds: "... cassis, boysenberry, violet, dark chocolate and licorice ... I really like this wine's blend of masculine character and vibrancy."

John Livingstone-Learmonth: "Plenty of heart and potential ... bursts of black fruit ... Powerful wine."

### **2008 Cornas Reynard\***

**\$79.95 very limited**

Josh Reynolds: "**93 rating** ... Pungent aromas of black cherry, blackcurrant, candied licorice and violet, with a suggestion of smoky herbs. Sweet and expansive, with deep flavors of dark berry compote, peppery spices and licorice ... Finishes with gently chewy tannins and a very persistent smoky quality."



### **2006 Cornas Reynard**

**★★★★★ Livingstone-Learmonth**

**\$89.95 very limited**

John Livingstone-Learmonth: "... steady, dark and thorough robe ... reflects damp airs, tea, black fruits and an earthy trail ... The palate has a scented, violet start, with fine tannin and good, expressive length, is very fine ... a striking wine ... old, traditional rose petal at the end. Notably fine Cornas."

### **2008 Cornas Chaillot\***

**\$69.95 very limited**

Josh Reynolds: "**93 rating**. A complex bouquet offers raspberry, cherry compote, potpourri and spice cake. Deeper, darker fruits on the palate, along with suggestions of violet pastille and black pepper. Finishes taut and precise, with a lingering touch of candied flowers and nervy mineral-driven persistence."

**Take advantage of our low-cost Ground Shipping this spring: \$25/case or \$15 within California, including free packaging and free insurance up to \$400 per case.**

# American Royalty

## The Glory of Mount Eden Chardonnay, Pinot & Cabernet

In the 1940s, Martin Ray planted a lofty vineyard in the Santa Cruz Mountains. At a time when few believed that California wines could rival those of Europe, Ray was driven to prove otherwise, and his wines were the evidence. They became the stuff of legend.

Ray's last vintage was 1970, and two years later the property was renamed "Mount Eden." A series of promising young winemakers—including Dick Graff and Merry Edwards—passed through before Jeffrey Patterson finally took up residence in 1983. His tenure has been even longer than that of Ray, and one day we may see that the Patterson era left an even more enduring legacy of great wines.



Martin Ray in the cellar in the '40s

From the beginning, Mount Eden has been known as a source of some of California's most profound and distinctive Pinot Noirs, Cabernets and Chardonnays. The climate is cool and the soil poor Franciscan slate; the vines produce naturally low yields, intense minerality, vibrant acidity and restrained alcohol.

In fact, it is the *terroir* that sets Mount Eden apart, so much so that Matt Kramer writes "if I were to present to a visiting European the wines of just one California winery to demonstrate the originality of California wine, I'd choose Mount Eden."

It is a privilege to offer three superb current releases, along with some treasures from the winery's library.

**2007 Mount Eden "Estate" Chardonnay**  
**96 Parker**  
**\$49.95 bt.**

Parker: "... white currants, lemon butter, poached pear, as well as touches of honey and crushed rock ... great freshness and brilliant purity ... another stunner from this iconic source of high-elevation California Chardonnay. This is probably my favorite vintage over the last decade ...."

**2006 Mount Eden "Estate" Cabernet**  
**94 Gilman Parker 93+**  
**\$39.95 bt.**

Parker: "... subtle smoke, graphite, damp earth, creme de cassis, and blackberry ... impressive concentration, texture, and length. This blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 22% Merlot, and 3% Cabernet Franc from high elevation vineyards (2,000 feet) is capable of lasting two decades or more."

**2008 Mount Eden "Estate" Pinot Noir**  
**93 Burghound**  
**\$49.95 bt.**

*Burghound:* "An elegant, pure and complex nose speaks of spice and floral nuances on the fresh red berry fruit aromas that precede highly seductive and delicious yet entirely serious medium-bodied flavors that culminate in an impressive-persistent finish ... Terrific."

<b>1999 "Estate" Chardonnay Magnum</b> .....	<b>135.00</b>
<b>2001 "Estate" Chardonnay Magnum</b> .....	<b>135.00</b>
Parker: "93 rating ... well-delineated, beautifully pure ... abundant richness and flavor intensity."	
<b>2002 "Estate" Chardonnay Magnum</b> .....	<b>135.00</b>
Parker: "92 rating ... big, rich, full-bodied flavors ...."	
<b>2004 "Estate" Cabernet</b> .....	<b>45.00</b>
<b>2004 "Estate" Cabernet Magnum</b> .....	<b>95.00</b>
Parker: "93 rating ... enormous potential because of its combination of elegance, structure, and intensity."	

<b>2004 "Estate" Pinot Noir</b> .....	<b>52.95</b>
<b>2004 "Estate" Pinot Noir Magnum</b> .....	<b>110.00</b>
Parker: "92 rating ... a brilliantly expressive nose of forest floor, sweet cherries and raspberries ... a French-styled Pinot that resembles a premier cru Chambolle-Musigny or Vosne-Romanee."	
<b>2006 "Estate" Pinot Noir</b> .....	<b>49.95</b>
<b>2006 "Estate" Pinot Noir Magnum</b> .....	<b>105.00</b>
<i>Burghound:</i> "91 rating ... densely fruited ... spice and sandalwood hints that precede rich, full and naturally sweet medium-bodied flavors that coat the palate while possessing good volume and fine balance ... there is more to come in time."	

# A Mythic Barbaresco

## Giuseppe Nada's 1990 "Casotto"

Opinion has long been divided over the relative superiority of 1989 and 1990 in Piemonte. But even those in the 1989 camp often give 1990 a slight edge in Barbaresco. In that blessed zone, there is a richness and sweetness that even the power of 1989 can't quite overcome.

This goes a long way towards explaining our excitement last year with the discovery, in Italy, of a perfectly celledared parcel of bottles and magnums of 1990 Barbaresco from the legendary Giuseppe Nada. Even better, the wine is from Nada's iconic "Casot" *cru*.

Nada is considered one of the great traditionalists of Treiso, which joins the towns of Barbaresco and Neive in comprising the Barbaresco DOCG.

Alessandro Masnaghetti calls him "a *vigneron* of steady conviction, as well as one of the men that contributed to the definition of the *crus* of Treiso. The linear style of his wines, essential and of clear minerality, always account for the best expression of Casot ... considered by many as among the most interesting of all of Treiso."

We first tasted Nada's 1990 Barbaresco "Casotto" about a year ago, while on a



buying trip to Italy, when we met the owner of these bottles.

We were struck by the wine's soil inflection and structure (unusual for a 1990 Barbaresco). We have since had it three more times, each time impressed with its signature aromatics and mouthfeel, and how it responded to breathing. We'd bet on at least a further decade of positive evolution.

### 1990 Giuseppe Nada "Casotto" Barbaresco Riserva Speciale

**\$89.95** bottle

**\$189.95** magnum

The brooding nose offers scents of game, charred earth, iodine, iron, rose petal, dried black cherry and cedar. The palate is firm, with strong tannins for the vintage and zone, reflecting the wine's old-style *élevage*. With just 10 minutes in the glass, the wine's inherent sweetness begins to develop, which continues for an hour or more.

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