

THE RARE WINE CO.
21481 EIGHTH STREET EAST
SONOMA, CA 95476
e-mail: sales@rarewineco.com



1-800-999-4342
1-707-996-4484
Fax: 1-707-996-4491
1-800-893-1501

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**Austria's
Quiet Revolution**

AUGUST 10, 2004

2001 Pingus

The Essence of Wine

Pingus' mythic reputation was born in the 1990s, when our world was exploding with new wines that promised greatness. Yet, only a fraction fulfilled their early promise, and even fewer are today embraced as blue chips.

This inner circle runs the gamut. Some wines—like the Bordeaux First Growths, Pétrus and Romanée Conti—have been with us for a century or more. Others—like Le Pin, Krug's Clos du Mesnil, the Guigal single-vineyards and Coche-Dury's Corton-Charlemagne—are of more recent origin.

But few have made their journey to the top with such speed as Pingus, its desirability forged by inescapable quality and painful scarcity.

For us—and for many others—Pingus is the greatest wine created in Ribera del Duero since Vega Sicilia was conceived more than a century ago. Made by Peter Sisseck from four parcels of 60- to 80-year-old vines, it has, since its first vintage in 1995, proven itself a wine of not only unparalleled majesty, but also potential immortality.



One of the magical old Tempranillo vines of Pingus.

In fact, the more we experience Pingus, the more we are convinced of its greatness. This is no mean statement, given that our first brush with the wine—the 1996 vintage tasted in 1998—evoked comparisons to the legendary late-1940's Pomerols. Pingus' black color, staggering richness and massive concentration could only be compared to the likes of 1947 Pétrus or 1948 Lafleur.

As the years have passed, the early vintages have sustained our admiration, and the later vintages have left us groping for new adjectives with which to describe them. It has also become very clear that the essential greatness of Pingus is the low yields and old vines, just as the essential greatness of the old Pomerols was their low yields and old vines. And Peter Sisseck's greatest triumph has been to create a wine so expressive of its raw materials.

2001 Pingus

The 2001 vintage was perfect from Day One: glorious sun, just the right amount of rain, clear skies during harvest. Yields were "normal" for Pingus—in other words, 15 to 20 hectoliters per hectare, some of the lowest numbers on the planet. And after 2000's freakishly low output of 300 cases, production was back to a slightly more comfortable 500 cases. ►

There will be no 2002 Pingus

Because of weather conditions in 2002, Peter Sisseck made the difficult decision not to make Pingus—the juice from his four old vineyards will form the backbone of 2002 Flor de Pingus instead. Therefore, 2001 will be the only Pingus offered for the next two years. This is sure to put even more pressure on the tiny availability of this great wine.

RIBERA DEL DUERO

2001 Pingus

Continued from Page One

Five hundred cases of monumentally great wine, that is. Reflecting the year, the 2001 Pingus possesses mindboggling color, concentration and length. The 100% Darnajou oak has been soaked up, leaving the olfactory fireworks dominated by ultra-ripe black fruits, smoked meat and Mediterranean herbs. And the density of the fruit is so great that the massive structure is hardly felt; though this is clearly a 30-year wine, it drinks sublimely now.

This Offer

Pingus is Spain's most sought-after wine—the 2001 is already selling throughout Europe at \$400 to \$500 a bottle. This price is likely to go even higher, given the absence of a 2002 Pingus. Consequently, it is a privilege to make the extraordinary offer that follows.

2001 Pingus
95 Parker 94-96 Tanzer
\$319.95 very limited



\$650.00 1.5 liter \$1350.00 3 liter \$2750.00 6 liter

Tanzer: "... a tightly coiled spring of black raspberry fruit and considerable class. Very intensely flavored but also subtle. Finishes with big, chewy, noble tannins and superb length. This filled my mouth and the entire inside of my head. As young Pingus typically does, this began floral and rather delicate, then grew fatter and more chocolatey with extended aeration, showing near-roasted ripeness."

Parker: "... huge body and notes of grilled meats intermixed with the Provençal herbs, pepper, spice box, cigar smoke and copious quantities of barbecue smoke-infused blackberry and cassis flavors. The finish last for nearly a minute."

2001 Flor de Pingus

Needless to say, in a great vintage like 2001, Peter's second wine Flor de Pingus is also awesome, with much of the old-vine concentration that you find in Pingus itself.

Peter gets such remarkable intensity in Flor de Pingus by working with the owners of old Tempranillo vineyards scattered around the Ribera del Duero region—and by pushing them to slash yields. The success of this formula has been increasingly apparent since 1999—the vintage that Robert Parker called "as good as the 1998 *grand vin* and unquestionably better than the 1997 Pingus."

The Weather Dividend

But as fine as previous vintages were, the 2001 Flor de Pingus reaches a new level. In large measure this is due to the year's glorious weather, which carried through to a flawless harvest—Ribera vineyards had the longest hangtime in memory—and an effortless vinification.

Wines may be sold and delivered only to persons who are at least 21 years old. All wines are sold in California and title passes to the buyer in California. We make no representation to the legal rights of anyone to ship or import wines into any state outside of California. We are not responsible for typographical errors. All items and prices subject to availability. An * indicates pre-arrival. Issued 16 times yearly. Copyright 2004 The Rare Wine Co.

Nothing got in the way of Peter's making a great Flor. Easily the finest Flor de Pingus to date, the 2001 has superb density and structure, thanks to yields that were no higher than 25 hl/H. Few red wines anywhere are made with yields that low.

This is a great bottle of wine at a seriously low price. Not to be missed.

2001 Flor de Pingus
90 Parker
\$45.95 limited



With its noble structure bathed in dense, luscious fruit, the '01 Flor is a classic "iron fist in a velvet glove" red. The aromatic fireworks are already stunning, and thanks to the old Tempranillo vines, there is unusual complexity for such a young wine. (Parker describes the nose as "deep, smoky ... black cherry, berry, and earthy notes along with notions of barbecue spices and cigar smoke.") The most harmonious Flor de Pingus to date, it is fantastic to drink now but will easily improve for a decade or more. A very serious wine for the price.

2000 Barolo, Part 2

More Top-Rated Wines from a Highly Acclaimed Vintage

In its July 31st issue, *Wine Spectator* confirmed its 100-point rating for the 2000 Piedmont vintage by giving soaring scores to a number of 2000 Barolos. In our last issue, we offered a few of these stars; we are now pleased to offer several more. As before, quantities are very limited at these low prices.

More Great 2000's from Scavino

2000 Scavino Barolo*
94 Wine Spectator
\$45.00



2000 Scavino Barolo "Carobric"*
94 Wine Spectator
\$59.95

Wine Spectator: "Decadent and exotic with wild aromas of ripe berry and black truffles. Full-bodied and Port-like, with ultrafine tannins and an incredible finish. One, two, three ... it goes on and on. Wonderful."

Wine Spectator: "Wonderfully fresh and floral, with strawberry, raspberry and cut cedar aromas. Full-bodied, with refined tannins and a clean, fresh finish. Builds on the palate. Very elegant and long."

Vietti "Rocche": One of the Great Traditional Barolos

While the Vietti family is eclectic in its winemaking, they pay homage to the classical tradition in their Barolo Rocche—not only their greatest wine, but one of the great wines of Piedmont. A rich and concentrated Barolo, aged entirely in large oak botti, the 2000 is spectacular and sure to be a classic. As always with this cuvée: very hard to find.

2000 Vietti Barolo
"Rocche"*
95 Wine Spectator
\$77.50 bt. \$159.95 mag.



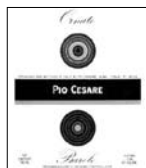
2000 Vietti Barolo
"Ravera"*
95 Wine Spectator
\$75.00

Wine Spectator: "Silky seductive, with roses, berries and raspberries. Full bodied, with wonderfully integrated tannins. Great length. A super wine. Like sleeping in silk sheets. 200 cases made."

Wine Spectator: "This is a supermodel of a wine. Precise, with everything in perfect proportion. Blackberries, minerals and cedar. Full bodied, with ultrafine tannins and a supersilky finish."

Gilt-Edged Cuvées at Below-Market Prices

2000 Pio Cesare Barolo
"Ornato"*
95 Wine Spectator
\$79.95



2000 Ceretto Barolo
"Bricco Rocche Bricco Rocche"*
96 Wine Spectator
\$135.00



Wine Spectator: "Loads of crushed flowers and berries, with hints of licorice. Full-bodied, with silky tannins and a long, long finish. A decadent and wild wine with loads of character. \$145 retail."

Wine Spectator: "Wild aromas of decadent fruit, with lots of plum, fresh mushroom and fresh strawberry. Full bodied, with ultra-silky tannins and a long finish. Wonderfully crafted. Seductive. \$186 retail."

WHITE BURGUNDY

Henri Boillot 2002's

Our Second Offer of Some of the Vintage's Greatest Wines

"As I worked my way to the top of Boillot's hierarchy of white wines, this thought crossed my mind: how can chardonnay get better than this?"

Steve Tanzer

"It is perhaps worthy of some discussion to try and understand how someone can accomplish what Boillot has done in such a short period of time in a wine market that is so hotly contested for the very best juice." Burghound

Back in April, we offered five of Henri Boillot's finest 2002 whites, ranging from the superb Meursault Perrières and Genevrières to the monumental Batard Montrachet. Not only were these among the stars of this great vintage; but our prices were nothing less than irresistible.

We have since been on the hunt for further quantities of the same wines, along with a few other cuvées missing from the April line-up. We have succeeded on both counts—and done so at prices virtually the same as this spring.

Included are four wines that we did not offer in April, among them bargain-priced half bottles of village Meursault and Puligny-Montrachet. All are must-buys.



2002 Henri Boillot Batard Montrachet

94-98 Tanzer

\$199.95

Tanzer: "Precise, complex aromas of clove spice and nut oils. A huge yet suave grand cru, showing great freshness for an infant Batard ... Here one senses a concentration of sugars and acids. Palate-saturating finishing flavors go on and on. \$265 retail."

2002 Henri Boillot Meursault-Charmes

93-95 Tanzer

\$69.95



Tanzer: "Superripe aromas of lemon cream and hazelnut, along with a trace of apple from some unconverted malic acidity. Dense, thick and fat ... showing great sweetness and ripeness. The longest and strongest on the finish to this point."

2002 Henri Boillot Puligny-Montrachet Folatières

93-96 Tanzer

\$79.95

Tanzer: "Sappy aromas of hazelnut, clove, white flowers, flint and nut oil. Thick on entry, then precise in the mouth despite its great fat and richness. The impression of minerality is almost painful. Finishes with superb length and grip."

2002 Henri Boillot Meursault-Perrières

93-97 Tanzer

\$89.95



Tanzer: "Deeply pitched aromas of lemon drop and wet stone. Superripe and thick, with chewy soft citrus and pineapple flavors complicated by stone and gunflint ... A wine of great solidity, concentration and palate-staining persistence"

Bargain-Priced 2002 Half Bottles

2002 Henri Boillot Meursault half bottle22.50

Tanzer: "89-92 rating ... a blend of three lieux-dit, Narvaux, Tillets and Chevaliers ... Aromas of mirabelle, peach and menthol. Classically sweet-but-dry, with expressive flavors of peach, yellow plum and nuts underpinned by firm minerality. Should make a very rich village wine."

2002 Henri Boillot Puligny-Montrachet half bottle .22.50

Tanzer: "90-93 rating ... a blend of Enseignerés and Charmes ... Pure aromas of peach, clove and nut oil. Sweet, lively and fruit-driven, with lovely solidity ... Should make an extraordinary village wine."

CHAMPAGNE / RHONE

Fleur de Passion

Diebolt-Vallois' Incredible 1998 Tête du Cuvée

Of all the villages in Champagne's Côte de Blancs, Cramant is second only to Les Mesnil in importance. Whatever Les Mesnil gives in refinement and finesse, Cramant can match in rich, creamy opulence.

Cramant's greatest grower is Jacques Diebolt. He is also among the most revered small producers in all of Champagne. In 1992 *Gault-Millau* named him Champagne Producer of the Year, while Richard Juhlin has called him an "uncompromising quality fanatic." In his authoritative *2000 Champagnes*, Juhlin wrote:

"Several producers in (Cramant) make supremely enjoyable champagnes, but personally I think Diebolt gives the cru another dimension ... There is a thought-provoking depth which reminds you of Le Mesnil, combined with Cramant's creamy structure."

Fleur de Passion

Jacques Diebolt's crowning achievement is his Fleur de Passion. Produced exclusively from Diebolt's old-



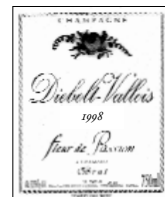
*"This is supreme
Champagne ...
Perhaps the most
exciting wine in
Champagne today."
Richard Juhlin*

est, best-situated Chardonnay vines, the wine is vinified and aged entirely in small oak barrels; it is racked only once, in December, and there is no *bâtonnage* and no filtration.

Jacques' 1998 Fleur de Passion has just been released, and it is a gem: silky and creamy ... its sumptuous texture rivaled by its knockout bouquet. As marvelous

as it is drink now, we can't wait to drink it after a few more years in bottle. A great young Champagne.

**1998 Diebolt-Vallois
"Fleur de Passion"
95 Richard Juhlin
\$69.95**



Richard Juhlin: "Surprising style that differs completely from other vintages of this wine ... Lightly roasted, smiling Dom Pérignon-ish with a large dollop of passion fruit ... charming."

Cuvée Centenaire at Spectacular Prices

Domaine Les Cailloux's Cuvée Centenaire is one of the "holy grail" wines of Châteauneuf. Made only in top years from vines planted in 1889, it is a profound wine of great concentra-



tion. With their tiny production and awesome quality, you'll be lucky to find the 2000 and 2001 Cuvée Centenaires for under \$250 a bottle, or the very rare 1998 for under \$300. Hurry.

**2001 Les Cailloux
Cuvée Centenaire***
96 Parker
\$149.95

Parker: "... This fabulous wine boasts ... a provocative perfume of incense, black tea, plums, figs, and kirsch liqueur ... Rich and voluptuous with great length, massive body ... its alcohol must be over 15%, but it is well concealed by the wine's great concentration."

**2000 Les Cailloux
Cuvée Centenaire***
96 Parker
\$179.95

Parker: "... heady ... a knock-out bouquet of blackberry and cherry jam intermixed with licorice, pepper, and dried Provençal herbs, this sexy, voluptuous, enormously concentrated 2000 possesses a huge, silky, seamless finish. Drink this irresistible effort now and over the next 12-15 years."

**1998 Les Cailloux
Cuvée Centenaire***
100 Parker
\$259.00

Parker: "... the essence of both Châteauneuf du Pape and the Grenache grape ... an extraordinary bouquet of melted, jammy black cherry, raspberry, and currant fruit ... it is rich, full-bodied, and unctuously-textured ... a tribute to just how great Châteauneuf du Pape can be."

Austria's Quiet Revolution

The Ascendancy of Austria's Great Dry Rieslings

The white wine elite hasn't changed much over the past hundred years. Chardonnay from Burgundy has always been King, though the likes of Trimbach's Clos Ste. Hune, Didier Dagueneau's Silex and the best white Graves and California Chardonnays remind us that other grapes—and other *terroirs*—can also produce compelling wines.

But the real challenge may yet come from Austria, which one day could redefine how the world thinks about white wine. Championed by influential sommeliers as magical companions to food, Austrian Riesling promises to create an entirely new paradigm, in which richness and complexity comes almost entirely from the grape and the soil.

The Big Four

Leading the revolution have been four growers in the Wachau region, a land of vertiginous, rocky vineyards one hour west of Vienna. In Europe, **Franz Prager**, **F.X. Pichler**, **Franz Hirtzberger** and **Emmerich Knoll** have earned themselves the kind of worshipful following formerly reserved for the likes of Coche-Dury or Comte Lafon. From extraordinary sites and miniscule yields, they produce tiny quantities of profoundly complex wines. Increasingly, these wines are coveted by elite restaurants, and passed from collector to collector at sometimes dizzying prices.

Normally, these producers' best cuvées are nearly impossible to find—at any price. But last month, we were given the keys to the kingdom: *carte blanche* to select from the Big Four's most desirable wines—priced way, way below market.

Not shy about opportunities like this, we eagerly loaded up on the Big Four's greatest rarities. In this issue, we begin by offering the best wines of the Riesling master—Franz Prager—at truly bargain prices.

Depth & Purity

The best Austrian whites combine the purity and minerality of top German wines, the depth of the finest Alsace Rieslings, and the full, rich finish of extraordinary white Burgundy. The best examples are unmarked by new wood, and their endless nuance, unbound purity, and racy acidity make them incredibly versatile at the table ... capable of creating some of the most innovative wine and food pairings imaginable.

In this country, the buzz was largely created by the sommeliers at such restaurants as San Francisco's The Slanted Door, New York's Jean Georges, Chicago's Charlie Trotter's, Los Angeles' Campanile and Las Vegas' Aureole. Today, it is hard to find a truly creative

international wine program anywhere in the U.S. that does not feature top Austrian wines prominently.

Nature's Gifts

The Wachau seems to have been created to make great wine. Virtually all of the top vineyards lie on steep, south-facing, terraced hillsides overlooking the Danube River. Summers are warm, and sunlight reflecting off the Danube bolsters photosynthesis, leading to great potential ripeness. However, cool nighttime temperatures allow the grapes to retain vibrant acidity. Soils are very rocky and poor, and there is incredible variation of soils and exposures.

With its unparalleled "transparency," Riesling can produce strikingly diverse single-vineyard bottlings, all with brilliantly defined personalities. One need only taste a wine from a vineyard like Achleiten to know that the idea of *terroir*, while sometimes ►



Austria's Wachau Valley

"The finest Austrian Rieslings are as mind-boggling as any dry Rieslings produced in the world." Pierre Rovani

"The only undiscovered producer of great white wines in Europe." Stuart Piggott

AUSTRIA

overplayed elsewhere, has stunning relevance here.

The top Wachau growers have some of the lowest-yields in Europe (typically lower than Germany, Alsace, or Burgundy), producing wines of remarkable ripeness and intensity. Their best wines, late-harvested only in top years, are labeled “Smaragd.” While Smaragd equates to Auslese in Germany, the wines are dry, the sugar converted to mouthfilling richness.

This Offering

In later issues, we will offer rarities from other Big Four producers—including the famed F.X. Pichler. But why not begin with Prager, who is making some of the most profound Rieslings in the world today? We are pleased to offer this legendary producer’s three most sought-after Rieslings—in two great vintages—at prices easily 30% below market.

Franz Prager

Until Toni Bodenstein took over in the early '90's, Prager had been one of the Wachau's elite domaines. But under Bodenstein this revered estate has reached a new level.

Today, Prager's Rieslings are second to none, displaying a precision and sense of *terroir* that few producers on the planet can imagine. Many people, particularly in the U.S., believe that this is Austria's—and possibly the world's—greatest source of dry Riesling.



Jancis Robinson calls Achleiten—the source of Prager's most famous Riesling—“proof-positive of the terroir effect.”

Prager's three top single-cru Rieslings demand aging. When young, they are concentrated and packed with flavor, but with obvious restraint. With five to ten years in the cellar, they broaden and deepen, achieving new heights of complexity.

As you might a young Clos St. Hune or Raveneau Grand Cru Chablis, we recommend decanting young bottles for an hour or two.

2001 Riesling Smaragd Achleiten \$32.95



How special is Achleiten? No other vineyard on earth imprints itself more completely on its wines, and Prager's is the definitive interpretation. It and Klaus are the only two Wachau vineyards to plunge steeply to the Danube's edge, and the site imparts a profound minerality. Until you've experienced a Prager Achleiten in its full glory, it is hard to imagine how wine can possess such an astonishing intensity of fruit and minerality.

David Schildknecht, writing in Tanzer's IWC, gave the 2001 Achleiten his highest 2-star rating: “In the mouth, persistent, lovely florality and a fine-grained, subtle minerality that acts as a sounding board for juicy, expressive orchard fruits.”



2001 Riesling Smaragd Wachstum Bodenstein \$29.95

This vineyard has been Toni Bodenstein's passion: a high-altitude site that produces remarkably rich but ageworthy Riesling.

Schildknecht writing for Tanzer: “Juicy, open and pure in its apple and white peach fruit character ... The delicacy, refinement and smoothness of texture here are particularly intriguing ... Tiny, wind-beaten, late-harvested fruit will be the norm in this unusually high-elevation site and that is in large part what stamps its character. 2 stars”

2001 Riesling Smaragd Klaus \$29.95



An extension of Achleiten, Klaus shares its intense minerality; with time, ravishing aromas of peaches and Alpine flowers unfold, matching—or even surpassing—Achleiten in its complexity and depth. Schildknecht on the '01: “Intensely mineral ... formidably dense ... rendition of a great terroir ...”



1999 Riesling Smaragd Klaus \$32.95

Klaus is famously slow to evolve. The 1999 is not only from a great year, it has the advantage of two extra years in bottle. Schildknecht wrote: “Here, compared (to other Prager crus), one has a much clearer sense of fruit and ... a highly expressive interplay of fruit, spice and minerals in the finish.”

Giusto di Notri & Redigaffi

Tua Rita's Amazing 2001's

In less than a decade, Tua Rita has become one of the elite producers of Tuscany. Its Giusto di Notri is now an icon for its rich palate and signature bouquet of chocolate, coffee and dark fruits. Redigaffi, 100% Merlot, is among Tuscany's two or three most sought-after wines.



*The Cellar at
Tua Rita*

The 2001's could be Tua Rita's finest wines yet. Giusto di Notri is fabulous, a stunning Cabernet-Merlot blend. And Redigaffi will excite anyone who worships monumental Tuscan merlot. We are pleased to offer both of these great wines at below-market prices.

2001 Giusto di Notri **97 Wine Advocate** **\$67.50**

Daniel Thomases in *The Wine Advocate*: "... stunning ... a fabulous nose of textbook Cabernet aromas, black currants and blackberries, graphite, river gravel, and sweet herbs, its potent, dense, and packed palate displays flavors of perfect poise, grace and power intertwined and intermingled ... from the initial explosive notes to the resonant, sweet finish."

2001 Redigaffi **97 Wine Spectator — 96 Wine Advocate** **\$225.00 extremely limited**

Daniel Thomases in *The Wine Advocate*: "... an exotic nose of chocolate covered cherries and plum ... has the tell-tale super richness and density of perfectly ripe Merlot, lush, enveloping, plush, and concentrated."

Wine Spectator: "Really fantastic. Absolutely breathtaking, with blackberry, incense, dried fruit and spice ... A playback of the stunning 1997."

Another Coveted Tuscan Merlot

With the creation of Masseto in 1986, Ornellaia proved that a Tuscan Merlot could rival the greats of Pomerol and St. Emilion. But only a few wines have scaled similar heights. And owing to its quality and rarity, one of the most sought-after of these is Galatrona.

Recent reviews have been impressive to say the least. Since 1998, the *Wine Spectator* has not rated the wine less than 95 points, while Parker gave the 1999 and 2000 95 points each. Such scores have pushed Galatrona prices to \$100 and beyond.

The newly released 2001 continues Galatrona's hot streak. We are pleased to offer it at a sensational price.

2001 Petrolo Galatrona **96 Wine Spectator** **\$79.95 very limited**



Wine Spectator: "A perfectly formed bodybuilder. Gorgeous aromas of crushed flowers and ripe red fruits, have hints of minerals. Very perfumed. Full-bodied, with ultrafine tannins ... Builds and builds on the palate."

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