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Old & New**

FEBRUARY 1, 2005

# Wine's New Icon

## *Dönnhoff's 2003's Secure His Place in the Elite*

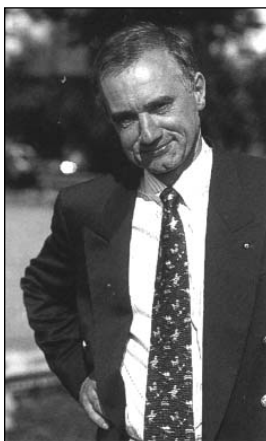
In *Helmut Dönnhoff*, Germany has finally found its equivalent to Henri Jayer, Gerard Chave, Henri Bonneau, Anselme Selosse and Angelo Gaja—an iconic winemaker whose wines transcend region and category.

The jewels Dönnhoff produced in 2001, 2002 and 2003 are not only among the greatest German wines ever, one would be hard-pressed to find wines from any place, and any vintage, that offer a comparable combination of sweetness and complexity, with the potential for additional fireworks with age. It's no wonder that Dönnhoff's wines increasingly are so well-represented in the world's finest wine collections ... even when no other German wines can be found.

### **Miraculous Soils**

Dönnhoff began to get noticed for his work in the 1980's and by the early 1990's, insiders were calling him Germany's most gifted winemaker. His domaine has some of the most diverse soils in Europe—slate, loess, prophyry, melaphyr—and Dönnhoff is a magician in allowing the soils to express themselves.

He is a fanatic in the vineyard, seeking low yields from healthy vines harvested at optimal maturity. In the cellar, he does very little. In fact, he usually bottles his offerings after only six months in large, old



*"Stellar winemakers craft wines that leave tasters shaking their heads in awe. Dönnhoff is stellar."*

*Pierre Rovani*

casks. He leaves the wine on the lees in high-acid years, and racks off quickly in low-acid years.

The result are wines of unbelievable complexity, especially from the great sites like Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle and Norheimer Dellchen. The more you taste these wines (and the longer you age them), the more facets they reveal. They have the fabulous richness you expect from great German wine, but they also have incredible aromatics. And while they can be supremely delicate on the palate, their finishes go on forever. Ultimately, they represent the triumph of balance and complexity in wine.

### **This Offer**

After hugely successful vintages in 2001 and 2002, Helmut Dönnhoff made the wines of the vintage in 2003, particularly at the Spätlese and Auslese levels. Because of the year's historically hot, dry weather, even some of the best German producers produced wines that are plenty rich and sweet, but with limited structure and focus. In contrast, Dönnhoff's 2003's are majestic, with all of the layers and crystalline clarity of his '01's and '02's, but with off-the-charts richness. They must be tasted to be believed.

It's an honor to offer four of Dönnhoff's greatest 2003's at very attractive prices. ►

## GERMANY

# Dönnhoff's Ambrosial 2003's

**2003 Riesling Auslese  
Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle  
97 Rovani  
\$49.95 half bottle**

Rovani: "... spectacular ... blew me away with its juxtaposition of immense richness and elegant detail ... awash in spices, herbs, poached pears, and super-ripe apples. Note of red currants, slate, and candied minerals intermingled with linden blossoms can also be discerned in its complex flavor profile ... this wine's lush, tremendous finish appears to last over a minute. **\$61 half bottle.**"

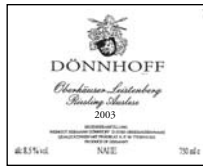
**2003 Riesling Auslese  
Norheimer Dellchen  
98 Rovani  
\$69.95 bt. \$39.95 half bt.**

Rovani: "... the finest 2003 Auslese I tasted ... depth of stupendous proportions. Powerful, yet refined, it has the ethereal qualities that mark this brilliant winemaker's best cuvées. Combining the vintage's sensual nature with exquisite precision and refinement, this gem displays crystalline minerals enrobed in red berries whose effects linger throughout its long, sublime finish. **Wow!"**

**2003 Riesling Spätlese  
Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle  
95 Rovani  
\$49.95 bottle**

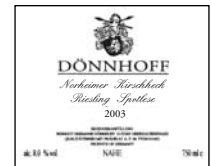
Rovani: "... powerful waves of pears, candied apples, spices, melon balls, raspberries, and red currants ... This offering's stupendous flavor profile, depth, and sensual nature led me to write 'sexylicious!' in my notebook. Yet, what makes this Niederhäuser stand out most when compared to Dönnhoff's other 2003 Spätlesen is the extraordinary precision of its fruit. **\$63.00 bottle.**"

**2003 Riesling Auslese  
Oberhäuser Leistenberg  
93 Rovani  
\$29.95 half bottle**



Rovani: "sultry, ample ... it slathers the palate with red fruits (mostly raspberries and cherries), apple jelly, and sweet herbal teas. Medium-bodied and concentrated, it is highly expressive, seamless, and suave. **\$68.00 bottle.**"

**2003 Riesling Spätlese  
Norheimer Kirschheck  
92 Rovani  
\$32.95 bottle**



Rovani: "... pristine ... Its lovely floral, spicy aromas lead to an attractive, concentrated, deep core of red berries and minerals. Projected maturity: 2007-2020. **\$45.00 bottle.**"

## *A Compelling Price on Vigna d'Alceo*

Of the hundreds of Super Tuscans created over the past thirty years, only a handful have established themselves as blue chips. Most of these have been around for more than 20 years. Castello di Rampolla's Cabernet-based Vigna d'Alceo is a rarity, having first been made in 1995. Even on release, it sells for more than \$200 a bottle.

The sensational 2001 has just been shipped; we have a small amount that we can offer at 40% savings.

**2001 Castello di Rampolla  
"Vigna d'Alceo"  
\$139.95**



Daniel Thomases: "95 rating ... one of the greatest wines in the distinguished history of the estate, something which becomes immediately evident from the deep ruby color as well as the sweet, focused, and weighty nose with its important notes of ripe berry fruit, sage, rosemary, and classy oak. Rich, dense, deep, and layered, the sensual and potent palate is sheer joy, the maximum in fused power and elegance. **\$231.**"

# The Great Usseglio 2003's

## *An Historic Vintage Yields Historic Wines*

In the Southern Rhône, 2003's freakishly hot weather challenged producers in a way that no recent vintage has. Yet, only a few domaines rose to the challenge, producing wines of mindblowing richness and power. And of those who did, no one made more astonishing wines than Jean-Pierre and Thierry Usseglio.



Thierry & Jean-Pierre Usseglio

The brothers' emergence into the limelight has been nothing less than breathtaking. They took over the winemaking at their family's domaine in 1998, immediately rising from obscurity to superstardom.

They did so by totally revamping the domaine's vineyard and cellar practices, and transforming the family's flagship Châteauneuf du Pape into one of the region's best. They also created two glorious old-vine cuvées: Mon Aïeul (introduced 1998) and Réserve des Deux

Frères (introduced 2000).

With their 2003's, we see Jean-Pierre's and Thierry's winemaking come into its own. They handled the year's high sugar levels with grace and skill, producing three wines of superb balance, great intensity and wonderful aromatics.

With scores from Robert Parker in the high 90's, the 2003 Mon Aïeul and Deux Frères are already hot tickets in the world wine market. But as in all the past vintages, we received a generous allocation at very attractive prices. Don't miss either wine.

And don't overlook the regular cuvée in 2003. Made primarily from Grenache, it is a wine of sensational, spicy richness. A joy to drink now, it should age with ease for a decade or more.



**2003 Cuvée Mon Aïeul\***  
**96-98 Parker**  
**\$79.95 bt. \$925.00 case**  
**\$165.00 magnum**

Parker: "Sadly, there are only 8,000 bottles of this wine, which is aged completely in epoxy lined tanks before being bottled without filtration. It generally comes from three old vine *lieux-dits* called Les Serres, Guigasse, and La Crau ... a glorious nose of blueberries, blackberries, cassis, roasted meats, licorice, and spice box ... an awesome, chewy, low acid offering with amazing concentration, huge glycerin, and a stunning finish that lasts over a minute. It should drink well for 15-20 years."



**2003 Châteauneuf du Pape\***  
**89-92 Parker**  
**\$29.95 bt. \$330.00 case**

Parker: "The Usseglios excelled in 2003, producing some of the superstars of the vintage. For starters, the deep plum/ruby/purple-colored 2003 Châteauneuf du Pape ... exhibits aromas of cassis, black cherries, earth, and pepper. This full-bodied, tannic, rich, age-worthy 2003 will benefit from 1-2 years of bottle age, and drink well for 12-14 years."



**2003 Réserve des Deux Frères\***  
**97-100 Parker**  
**\$169.95 limited**

Parker: "The Usseglio brothers make a selection of the finest lots of the Mon Aïeul which becomes the limited production (4,000 bottles) cuvée ... it is Châteauneuf du Pape on steroids. The 2003 reminded me of the Cuvée da Capo from Domaine du Pégau. A wine of extraordinary concentration, amazing length, and awesome levels of fruit, glycerin, and alcohol ... it is about as compelling as an old vine, low production wine can be ...."

## RED BURGUNDY

# Joseph Voillot

### *An Outstanding 2002, Plus Rarities from the Domaine's Cellars*

In the best sense, Joseph Voillot is a classic Burgundy vigneron. He owns parcels in some of the finest *premier cru* vineyards in his home Volnay and neighboring Pommard. With low yields and vine age averaging 30 years, he has, for decades, produced intense, robust wines that repay cellaring.



Pommard

When young, Voillot's wines offer excellent color, soft tannins and great harmony and length. But when mature, they can be magical, boasting pure perfumes, layered flavors, and the fabulous, velvety texture that is mature Burgundy at its best.

#### Classic Winemaking

To achieve this, Voillot destems two-thirds of the grapes and practices a slow, cool fermentation, using wild yeasts and *pigeage* (breaking down the cap). The wine is drawn off the skins after about 10 days and then aged for about 18 months in barrel, 25% of

which are new. There is no filtration.

Fortunately, Voillot has long kept a significant library of back vintages for later sale. These bottles are a gift for Volnay and Pommard lovers, since they can be exquisite examples of their sites and are in perfect condition. And the best part are the shockingly reasonable prices.

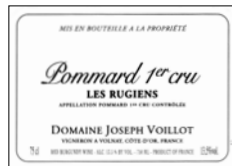
#### This Offer

Last summer, we had the opportunity to choose from a range of Voillot wines from the period 1978-1985. We tasted extensively and, while virtually everything was impressive for its quality and condition, we selected seven wines to feature.

At the same time, we had an opportunity to buy his marvelous 2002 Pommard Rugiens at a great price. This is a unique opportunity to explore the past and present of an outstanding Burgundy winemaker.

### 2002 Joseph Voillot Pommard-Rugiens

92-94 Rovani  
\$57.50



Pierre Rovani: "Sporting a ruby-colored hue, the masculine 2002 Pommard Rugiens displays perfumed black cherry aromas. A masculine wine of considerable weight and concentration, its intense personality unleashes pit fruits, plums, blackberries, and dark cherries. This brooding effort's tannic structure demands patience."

#### Classic Pommard-Rugiens

**1985 Joseph Voillot Pommard-Rugiens .....79.95**

Still not fully mature, the gorgeous Rugiens flavors are just beginning to unfold. A Voillot classic-in-the-making.

**1978 Joseph Voillot Pommard-Rugiens\* .....89.95**

A powerful Rugiens, befitting this great, low-yield vintage. Very concentrated, long and impressive.

**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 2005 The Rare Wine Co.

#### Volnay

**1982 Joseph Voillot Volnay-Champans\* .....79.95**

A treasure. In 1982 Voillot bought a parcel in Champans of 70-year-old vines. Voillot replanted the site the next year, but for one glorious vintage, 1982, he allowed the old vines to speak, producing a wonderfully textured wine, powerful yet delicate, with real old-vine intensity and outstanding length.

**1982 Joseph Voillot Volnay-Caillerets\* .....75.00**

Another superb 1982 and one of the finest wines in Voillot's cellar. The core of black cherry, truffle fruit is framed by supple, mature tannins. Outstanding.

**1978 Joseph Voillot Volnay-Fremiets .....89.95**

Volnay's Fremiets vineyard is steep and chalky, producing wines that are earthy and fragrant. This 1978 is classic: round, supple, expansively flavored, with great finesse. A beauty.

#### Pommard-Epenots

**1985 Joseph Voillot Pommard-Epenots\* .....79.95**

Quintessential Epenots: fat, rich and packed with lush Pinot fruit. Drink over the next 5 to 8 years.

**1979 Joseph Voillot Pommard-Epenots\* .....69.95**

Delicately styled, with sumptuous flavors and excellent length. A beautiful mature Burgundy at an amazing price.

## PIEDMONT

# Ghisolfi Barolo 'Bricco Visette'

*A New Star Restores an Old Vineyard's Luster*

*Barolo's Renaissance* has not only brought to the fore dozens of fine new producers; it has also reminded us of a number of vineyards, revered in the distant past, yet more recently forgotten.



*Visette occupies a south-facing slope of Bussia, pictured here.*

The Ghisolfi family's Barolo "Bricco Visette" is a case in point. A section of Monforte d'Alba's famed Bussia vineyard, Visette was, in the 1800's, considered among the elite crus of Barolo, but it was all but forgotten in the 20th century. The reason was simple: the site's principle owners, the Ghisolfi family, sold all their production to larger producers. And none ever chose to make a single-cru Barolo "Visette."

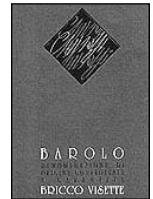
### Out from the Shadows

But then in 1988, the Ghisolfi's joined so many other small growers and began to estate-bottle their wine, producing their first Barolo "Bricco Visette." The wine showed great promise, revealing the mineral- and earth-scented nuances that are the vineyard's hallmark. Over the next decade, the family searched to optimize the wine's balance, concentration and expressiveness, finally hitting a home run in 2000.

The 2000 Barolo "Bricco Visette" was produced from 40-year-old vines—all on the south- or southwest-facing slopes of Visette. Stylistically, the wine bridges the old and new, with aging 70% in Slavonian oak *botti* and 30% in French *barrique*, and is remarkable for its beautiful texture and aromatics.

One of the virtues of an undiscovered producer is modest prices; thus, at its normal \$50 a bottle price, the Ghisolfi "Bricco Visette" is one of the great values among top 2000 Barolos. At our \$37.95 price, it is simply a no-brainer. Don't miss it.

**2000 Ghisolfi Barolo  
"Bricco Visette"\***  
**94 Wine Spectator**  
**\$37.95 bt. \$77.95 mag.**



*Wine Spectator:* "Very, very ripe on the nose, verging on raisins, with hints of tobacco and meat. Full-bodied, with loads of jammy character and soft tannins. Long, dense finish. A late harvest style of red. Massive."

# Taittinger's Comtes de Champagne Rosé

*... at an incredible price*

*Taittinger's limited-production* Comtes de Champagne Rosé is made entirely from *grand cru* Pinot Noir from Bouzy and Ambonnay. It is famous for its intensely concentrated raspberry fruit and great longevity. It is also expensive, selling for about \$200 at release.

With the recent release of 1997 Comtes de Champagnes Rosé, we had the chance to grab a few cases at a mindboggling price. We doubt that you will ever see this wine priced this low again.

**1997 Taittinger  
Comtes de Champagne Rosé**  
**\$95.00**



Champagne's 1997 vintage will be known for its beautiful wines, more forward than 1996, and full of fruit and richness. The 1997 Comtes de Champagne Rosé is sure to be one of the vintage's standouts: soft, creamy, yet concentrated, with the structure for long-aging. Given its regular \$200 selling price, you may never have another opportunity like this.

PRIORAT

# 2001 Clos Martinet

*A Priorat Legend-in-the-Making*



José Luis Pérez

*José Luis Pérez* was a Priorat pioneer, a Barcelona-born biologist who arrived in the 1980's to head the local enology school. In 1986, he purchased the Mas Martinet estate which included 15 acres of old-vine

Garnacha and Cariñena, to which he added new plantings of Cabernet, Syrah and Merlot.

The estate's flagship wine, Clos Martinet, has been made since the early 1990's by selecting the estate's best fruit. While Dr. Pérez made the early vintages, the winemaking today is overseen by his daughter, Sara, who has become famous for her work at Cims de Porrera, Val Llach and her own project, La Universal.

We are pleased to offer the acclaimed 2001 Clos Martinet at a very attractive price.

**2001 Clos Martinet**  
**96 Parker**  
**\$69.95**



Parker: "With great density and fabulously explosive aromatics (acacia flowers, crushed blackberries, blueberry liqueur, and wet stones), this full-bodied, compellingly rich, multilayered, awesome wine is a great example of what makes the Priorat appellation so special. Still young and unevolved, it needs 2-4 more years of cellaring, and should last for 15+ years."

## *A Great Sauternes Awakens*

*1990 Suduiraut, including Halves, at a Phenomenal Price*

One of several bombshells hidden in the new edition of Robert Parker's *Bordeaux* was his startling reassessment of 1990 Suduiraut.

Parker's re-evaluation (with a new rating of 94 points) mirrors the world's experience with this puzzling wine. For the first decade of its life, it was strangely unimpressive—a great disappointment for the Sauternes considered most like Yquem in style.

But 1990 Suduiraut eventually blossomed; today, it is surely among the three or four finest Sauternes of a very great vintage. It is also, according to Parker, the finest *cuvée classique* made at Suduiraut in the 33 years between 1967 and 2001.

### **A Rare Opportunity**

Last fall, when we learned about the wine's new rating, we negotiated an incredibly low price on a large parcel of 1990 Suduiraut that had never left the château. The parcel included bottles, magnums and imperiales, but sadly no half bottles. Due to time pressures, we offered the parcel by email\*, selling every bottle in every size.

\*If you're not already on our list to receive special offers by email let us know at sales@rarewineco.com.

A few weeks ago we were offered a bit more, again straight from the château's reserves. While there were no imperiales this time, there were half bottles. The price, miraculously, is the same as before.

We've been assured that this will be the last we'll see at these prices—any further releases will be considerably more expensive. Snooze, you lose.

**1990 Suduiraut\***  
**(ex-château stock)**  
**94 Robert Parker**



**\$64.95 bottle — \$750.00 case**  
**\$39.95 half bottle — \$135.00 magnum**

Robert Parker's *Bordeaux* 4th Edition (2003): "This is a gorgeously rich, fat, concentrated wine with an intense, spicy nose of almost burnt peaches intermixed with brown butter, almond paste and caramel. Extremely full-bodied, thick and juicy, with almost marmalade-like sweetness ... Anticipated maturity: now-2020. Tasted January 2003."

## CALIFORNIA

# Wildcat Mountain

## *Steve MacRostie's Beautiful New Syrah*

For centuries, man has known that the greatest wines are made in sites where the grape is challenged for survival. Thin soils, high altitudes, scarcity of water and high winds all push the grape to the limit, resulting in wines with greater character and concentration.



Wildcat Mountain

So, when veteran winemaker Steve MacRostie learned about Wildcat Mountain in the mid-1990's, he knew it promised to produce some of Sonoma County's most powerful and complex wines. Perched on Carneros' western edge at an elevation of 700 feet, the wind wails from late each morning until late afternoon each day. The vines respond by budding late and developing their crop slowly, producing one of the longest growing seasons in Sonoma County.

Steve—who started his career as Hacienda's first winemaker in 1974—mostly planted the classic Carneros varieties of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir on Wildcat.

But he also planted a small amount of Syrah, a variety known to thrive under Wildcat's difficult conditions. Just 600 cases of intensely aromatic, yet wonderfully rich, Syrah are produced each year. The 2001 is only the second vintage for this promising newcomer; and so we were thrilled to receive a small allocation.

### 2001 MacRostie Syrah "Wildcat Mountain"

**\$35.00**



Dark, inky and deep purple in color. Beautifully perfumed nose of mulberry, pepper, coffee, resonating with classic Northern Rhône aromas of violets and game. Very Syrahish. The palate is broad, well-concentrated and mouthfilling, with seductive texture and excellent flavor persistence. Delicious now, it will develop for another 4 to 6 years.

# Holy Grail Squared

## *Coche-Dury's Coveted 2002's*



For white Burgundy lovers, what's more exhilarating than snagging Coche-Dury? It's getting Coche in a great year like 2002. Look at what's happened to the likes of Coche's 1978's, 1989's and 1996's and you have an inkling of the potential star power of this great producer's 2002.

Coche is, of course, the Holy Grail name in white Burgundy. This old domaine virtually defines artisanal white wine making in the Côte d'Or and most of its production disappears into the cellars of 3-star restaurants in France. Consequently, even Coche-Dury's Bourgogne Blanc and Bourgogne Aligoté are nearly impossible to find, except at very high prices.

We have acquired a small parcel of the great 2002 whites, along with a bit of the extremely rare 2002 reds. Hurry; you may not have the chance again.

### Whites

- 2002 Coche-Dury Bourgogne Aligoté .....45.00**  
A tangy, zesty white of deep character ... Coche's best buy.
- 2002 Coche-Dury Bourgogne Blanc ..... 59.95**  
A superb Coche white at an attractive price.
- 2002 Coche-Dury Meursault .....169.95**  
A key to the soaring quality of Coche's Meursaults is that they come from single sites, in this case Chaumes.
- 2002 Coche-Dury Meursault Perrières .....495.00**  
Tanzer: "97+ rating ... great power and cut "
- 2002 Coche-Dury Corton-Charlemagne .....1195.00**  
Along with DRC Montrachet, the most coveted white wine of Burgundy.

### Reds

- 2002 Coche-Dury Bourgogne Rouge .....39.95**
- 2002 Coche-Dury Monthélie .....59.95**  
Both of these 2002 reds are lovely, offering beautiful Pinot character in Coche's minimal-interventionist style.

# The Year there was no Pingus

## *The Amazing 2002 Flor de Pingus*

Since its birth in 1995, Pingus has been fabled as one of the world's great wines—masterfully made by a gifted winemaker, a profound expression of its Ribera del Duero *terroirs*. Yet, due to painful scarcity, few have actually experienced Pingus' magic firsthand.



*One of the old Tempranillo vineyards that produces Pingus.*

Even in a "good" year, only 300 to 400 cases of Pingus are made—from four ancient Tempranillo vineyards whose yields average an incredible 14 hectoliters per hectare. But occasionally even less Pingus finds its way into the market. In 1995, for example, one-third of the production was lost in a shipwreck, leaving a mere 250 cases for the world to fight over. And in 2002, *no* Pingus was made.

### A Painful Choice

The decision of winemaker Peter Sisseck to make no Pingus in 2002 was both difficult and courageous. The summer had been warm and sunny, but the spring had been cool and there was intermittent rain during the harvest. Once the wine was in tank he could tell that the quality was good, but was it good enough to be Pingus?

Earlier in Peter's career, there might not have been any question. After all—thanks to his brilliant work in the vineyard—2002's fruit was arguably superior to what he had to work with in both 1997 and 1998—years in which he made Pingus.

But in 2002, Peter had just come off three near-perfect harvests in 1999, 2000 and 2001. These three

vintages had raised the bar for Peter, setting a higher standard than even the great 1995 and 1996 had done.

And, so in early November, he decided to "declassify" every drop of 2002 Pingus and to use it as the backbone of a monumental 2002 Flor de Pingus.

As regular readers know, Flor de Pingus is Peter's "second" wine, produced from fruit that he buys from a number of old Ribera del Duero vineyards. With an average vine age of nearly 40 years, Flor de Pingus is always compelling, but the 2002 Flor is an order of magnitude greater. Thanks to having the declassified Pingus as the wine's core, it comes closer in style to Pingus itself than any previous vintage has ... yet it still sells at Flor's bargain price.

Quantities are extremely limited, so hurry.

### 2002 Flor de Pingus 92-93 Tanzer

**\$47.95** *bt.* **\$575.00** *case*



Tanzer: "Black raspberry, tar, violet and roasted oak on the nose. Thick, velvety and wonderfully sweet, with compelling inner-mouth perfume and sap. Large-scaled, broad wine with superb palate coverage. Finishes with big, chocolaty tannins and excellent length. Peter Sisseck will not offer his *grand vin* Pingus in 2002; that juice forms the backbone of Flor de Pingus, making this a wine to buy."

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