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FEBRUARY 5, 2008

A Year for the Ages

Ramey's 2005s Mark a Turning Point for a California Great

It was thirty years coming, but David Ramey is now firmly established as one of the great winemakers of California. And his reputation has been secured by a set of 2005s so phenomenal in their power and concentration—yet so sublime in their texture and nuance—that they defy belief.

Only a decade ago, David's brilliance was known only to California insiders. For the previous 15 years, he was the quietly gifted winemaker at Dominus, Rudd and Matanzas Creek, helping to make them among the biggest names in California red wine. He didn't make his first Chardonnays under his own label until 1996, and we had to wait until 2001 for his first Cabernet. But from that point on, it took him no time at all to become a superstar.

He also quickly revealed his talent for adapting to varied *terroirs*. Whether working in the coolness of Carneros' Hyde and Hudson vineyards—or the warmth of Jericho Canyon—he showed his gift for making wines of great richness and style, but with a strong sense of place.

Now, with the release of his great 2005s, David's already mythic reputation is sure to reach a new level. And it's a great honor for us to be able to offer all of his top wines, including the highly sought-after (and nearly impossible to find) Pedregal Cabernet.



David Ramey

The Wines

The magic of David's work with Chardonnay is well-known, having been established early on with a sensational series of single-vineyard wines from Hyde and Hudson. That reputation got a further boost with the introduction of the coveted Ritchie Vineyard in 2002.

As for his work with Cabernet, he began his career as a Cabernet specialist at

Dominus and Rudd. But his finest work was yet to come, with five breathtaking vintages of Jericho Canyon—from a terraced site at the foot of Mt. St. Helena. Sadly, 2005 was David's last Jericho Canyon vintage, so you'll want to grab it while you can.

In 2004, he introduced two new Cabernets. Larkmead is an historic Napa Valley vineyard that dates back to the 19th century. The site is distinguished by the well-drained gravel deposited by an ancient creek that once flowed here. David produces a classic Bordeaux blend of 79% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot and 9% Malbec.

Pedregal is on a steep slope off the Silverado Trail and has the same soil as its neighbors, Dalla Valle, Phelps Backus, and Screaming Eagle. This prodigious site is astonishingly rocky and full of iron, resulting in tiny yields. In 2005, David made less than 500 cases of Pedregal, an 80% Cabernet-20% Petit Verdot blend. ►

David Ramey's Spectacular 2005s

This Offer

Recognizing our longstanding commitment to his wines, David has honored us with a prized allocation of his three most limited Chardonnays and three top Cabernets—including lusted-after big bottles. He makes little of these six wines, and the demand

generated by Robert Parker's and Steve Tanzer's reviews has been nothing less than amazing. So, you will want to act quickly. This is particularly the case for Jericho Canyon—which we will not see again—and the incredibly rare Pedregal, which has “Blue Chip” written all over it.

The Cabernets

2005 “Jericho Canyon”
95 Parker
94-96 Tanzer

\$99.95 *bt.* **\$225.00** *mag.*
\$525 *double magnum*

Parker: “... a Graves-like personality of scorched earth, chocolate, charcoal, and black currants as well as a sumptuous, full-bodied palate, and a layered, multi-dimensional finish. Drink this remarkable Cabernet Sauvignon over the next two decades.”

Tanzer: “Flamboyantly aromatic ... deep, sweet and expansive ... This became fresher with air, taking a raspberry turn and picking up mineral accents. Finishes energetic and spicy, with ... remarkable length.”



2005 “Larkmead Vineyard”
93-95 Tanzer

\$75.00 *bt.* **\$154.95** *mag.*
\$395 *double magnum*

Tanzer: “Dark purple. Remarkably spicy and vibrant on the nose, with powerful cassis, kirsch, espresso and rose pastille aromas and a subtle iron note. Intense red and dark fruit flavors are powered by vibrant minerality and framed by fine but solid tannins. Exotic spice notes come up on the long, stunningly sweet finish.”

2005 “Pedregal Vineyard”
96 Parker
95-97 Tanzer

\$175.00 *bt.* **\$395.00** *mag.*
\$950 *double magnum*

Parker: “... a Screaming Eagle look-alike ... amazing richness and intensity ... Beautifully pure creme de cassis fruit interwoven with notions of spring flowers, espresso roast, and truffles jump from the glass ... a massive, full-bodied palate, and superb elegance ... this stunner should drink well for 20-25+ years.”

Tanzer: “Utterly mouthfilling and powerful ... one of the most impressive cabernet samples I've tasted in years, from anywhere.”

The Chardonnays

2005 “Hyde Vineyard”
95 Parker

\$54.95 *bt.* **\$115.00** *mag.*

Parker: “A stunning effort ... great intensity along with huge tropical fruit notes interwoven with notions of spring flowers, orange marmalade, white peaches, and steely minerals. Its abundant fruit conceals any evidence of wood. Well-delineated, with outstanding acidity as well as a layered, sumptuous finish.”

2005 “Hudson Vineyard”
94 Parker

\$54.95 *bt.* **\$115.00** *mag.*

Parker: “Offering copious amounts of orange marmalade, smoky hazelnuts, and tropical fruits, the full-bodied, rich 2005 Chardonnay Hudson Vineyard is on a faster evolutionary track than the Hyde Vineyard.”

2005 “Ritchie Vineyard”
95 Parker

\$59.95 *bt.* **\$125.00** *mag.*

David Ramey's smallest-production Chardonnay. Parker: “shows crushed rock, white currant, citrus oil, pineapple, peach, and apricot characteristics. Long, rich, and deep with strong acidity, it should be consumed over the next 4-5 years.”

Piedmont's Other Glory

Great Barberas from Conterno, Mascarello & Giacosa

A decade ago, the young producers of modern-styled, barrique-aged Barolo and Barbaresco ruled in *Piemonte*. Today, that is no longer the case, as the great old-style producers have reclaimed their rightful position at the top of the region's hierarchy. And once lustrous names like Giacomo Conterno, Bruno Giacosa and Giuseppe Mascarello are again golden.

The Conternos and Mascarellos are of course best-known for their majestic Barolos, and Giacosa is revered for both Barolo and Barbaresco. But all three can also be considered elite sources of great Barbera.

These producers' Barberas are a far cry from the mod-



ernists' extracted, lavishly oaked Barberas. In fact, their traditionally made Barberas are the polar opposite: they are the essence of

purity, offering transparency of variety and site. They also offer extraordinary aging potential, resembling Barolos when mature. There is even a word for this: *Baroleggiare*, which means "to become like a Barolo."

We have just received the latest releases of all three of these giants. As bonuses, we got a bit more of Conterno's great 2004 Barbera in magnum, along with some of Giacosa's brilliant 2006 Dolcetto from his great Falletto vineyard. Quantities are limited, so you'll want to hurry.

Giacomo Conterno

2005 Barbera d'Alba "Cascina Francia"

92 Galloni

\$34.95 bottle \$79.95 magnum

Antonio Galloni: "Its silky aromas meld seamlessly onto the palate, where vibrant layers of dark fruit come to life. As it sits in the glass, licorice, tar, smoke and mineral notes become more prominent, adding further complexity to this irresistibly sensual wine."

2004 Barbera d'Alba "Cascina Francia"

93 Galloni

\$79.95 magnum

Antonio Galloni: "Stunning ... an utterly seductive explosion of sweet fruit, tar, licorice and pomegranate sensations, with superb length and a finish that lasts forever ... this supremely elegant Barbera will redefine for many the heights the varietal can achieve."



Mauro Mascarello

Giuseppe Mascarello

2004 Barbera d'Alba "Codana"

\$34.95

Antonio Galloni: "... richer, more concentrated ... packed with sweet dark fruit, herb and spice notes on an ample frame, with outstanding length and fine, silky tannins. Made from a vineyard adjacent to Monprivato, it is a very classic, old-style Barbera that will appeal most to those who appreciate traditionally-made wines. It will show at its best if opened several hours prior to drinking."

Bruno Giacosa

2005 Barbera d'Alba \$24.95

Tanzer: "Wild, meaty aromas of redcurrant, leather and tobacco. In a distinctly leathery, musky style, with suggestions of exotic fruits."

Galloni: "A fresh, vinous wine with floral, red fruit and spice notes. It is a simple, accessible wine best enjoyed over the next few years."

2006 Dolcetto "Falletto" \$21.95

Giacosa's top Dolcetto in a potentially legendary vintage. Galloni: "... made from the same vineyard in Serralunga that is the source of Giacosa's Barolos. It is a rich Dolcetto jam-packed with vibrant, shimmering fruit supported by notable structure ... This is one of the very rare cases with Dolcetto where I am tempted to say that a few additional months of aging will help the wine come together even more."

BURGUNDY

Henri Gouges

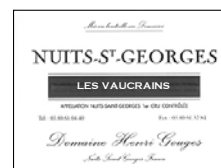
The Great 1999 Vaucrains Plus a Trio of Les St. Georges

Henri Gouges is Nuits-St.-Georges' most storied estate—its stature unrivalled during much of the 20th century. From the 1920s until the 1970s, Gouges' domaine bottlings helped make Nuits one of the Côte d'Or's most fashionable addresses. And it was Henri Gouges in the 1930s who spearheaded Burgundy's appellation-contrôlée movement, protecting not only "Nuits-St.-Georges," but every other historic Burgundy place name, from imitation.

Gouges' luster dimmed in the early 1980s but was soon restored when Christian and Pierre Gouges took over in 1986, returning the domaine to excellence. By the late 1990s, Gouges was again on top, with only Robert Chevillon competing for top honors in the commune.

We are pleased to offer *gloriously pristine* bottles of Gouges' great 1999 Nuits-St.-Georges Vaucrains, along with three top NSG Les St. Georges, the latter subject to one-bottle limits.

**1999 Henri Gouges
NSG Vaucrains
92 Tanzer
\$110.00**



Steve Tanzer: "Cool, vibrant, floral aromas of blackberry, bitter chocolate, violet and spices. Big, chewy, rich and deep, with cool black fruit and floral flavors similar to the aromas. This has wonderful inner-mouth lift and subtlety. Very long, slow-mounting finish; really opens out on the back."

1999 NSG Les St. Georges150.00 2000 NSG Les St. Georges84.95 2001 NSG Les St. Georges ... 110.00

Tanzer "94 rating ... Knockout nose of black fruits, minerals, espresso, roasted meat, licorice, violet pastille and menthol. Huge but utterly lively and suave ... great intensity and inner-mouth lift ... superb persistence ... grand cru quality."

Tanzer "91 rating ... Deep, sappy aromas of redcurrant, plum, tobacco leaf and mocha ... sweet and lush but fresh and floral in the mouth ... offers superb sweetness and volume. Finishes with lush, noble tannins and excellent persistence."

Tanzer "92+ rating ... Explosive, complex, sappy nose melds dark berries, cocoa powder, minerals, leather and spices. The densest and most concentrated of these 2001s, with compelling purity of flavor and class"

Jean-Marie Fourrier's Brilliant 2005s



Among Burgundy insiders, Jean-Marie Fourrier is revered for the richly elegant and beautifully transparent wines he makes from some of the Côte de Nuits' most celebrated sites. His 2005s are masterpieces.

2005 Griotte-Chambertin*895.00

Burghound: "95 rating ... incredibly complex ... mouth coating flavors possess superb vitality and serious depth plus the transparency and harmony of expression is nothing short of remarkable. Buy it if you can find it."

2005 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Clos St. Jacques* 475.00

Burghound: "94 rating. A positively gorgeous nose of cool red, blue and violet aromas ... classy, refined and very pure flavors that retain a terrific sense of focus and detail on the firmly tannic and almost Zen-like finish that is a study in harmony and grace. Flat out terrific ... stated differently, don't miss it!"

2005 Gevrey-Chambertin 1er Cru Cherbaudes*129.95

Burghound: "92 rating ... abuts Chapelle on its northern border ... infused with hints of wet stone, game and underbrush introduces rich, full and relatively fine yet powerful flavors that culminate in a long and delicious finish where the minerality resurfaces. Terrific quality."

2005 Gevrey-Chambertin Aux Echezeaux*95.00

Tanzer: "... from a 1928 planting ... Red fruits and smoked meat on the sexy nose. Quite elegantly styled, with a flavor of blackberry; this is rather Chambolle-like in texture and finesse. Very suave... these vines are adjacent to the Mazoyeres-Chambertin holding of Perrot-Minot."

2005 Vougeot 1er Cru Les Petits Vougeots*115.00

Tanzer: "Pungent aromas of raspberry, spices and stone ... spicy red berry, stone and mineral flavors conveying an impression of sappiness. Finishes with broad, dusty, building tannins."

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2004 Granato

Elisabetta Foradori's Masterpiece

In the shadow of the Alps is one of Europe's most beautiful wine-growing areas, Trentino's Campo Rotaliano. Here, from its gravel-based vineyards, the Foradori family has built a reputation for some of Italy's most distinguished red wines, all of them made from an obscure grape variety called Teroldego.

Since 1986, the family's greatest wine has been its barrique-aged Granato, made from the oldest and best situated vines in their vineyards. It is consistently one of Italy's most compelling red wines.

In recent years, our friend Elisabetta Foradori has been responsible for the winemaking, carrying the estate's wines—and particularly Granato—to a new level. Though our association with Granato dates back to

"A unique example of power and complexity"

Gambero Rosso on Granato



Elisabetta and another of our heroes, Beppe Rinaldi.

the legendary 1991 vintage, we believe that Elisabetta's wines are the finest in the estate's history.

Antonio Galloni shares our passion for Granato and gave a glowing review to the 2004 in the October *Wine Advocate*. We are pleased to offer this stunning wine, in bottles and halves, at very attractive prices.

2004 Foradori Granato
94 Antonio Galloni

\$52.95 *bt.* **\$27.50** *half bt.*



Antonio Galloni in *The Wine Advocate*: "A wine of extraordinary personality. Constantly changing in the glass, it offers a kaleidoscope of smoke, tar, graphite, earthiness, roasted coffee beans and sweet dark fruit sensations. It is gorgeously ample and long on the palate, with superb depth as well as freshness. This is an awesome effort from Elisabetta Foradori."

A Page from Mouton

Altanza's Stunning Joan Miró Artist Label Rioja

Having taken over his family's estate, Altanza, in 1998, Oscar Martinez is the third generation of his family to make wine near Fuenmayor, in Rioja.

Blessed with 120 low-yielding hectares of Tempranillo vineyards, Martinez was determined to make great Rioja, but he was also inspired to adorn his best cuvée with works of the great Catalan painter Joan Miró. In the same way that the Mouton Rothschild artist labels have moved three generations of Mouton collectors, the Miró labels promise to do the same for Altanza.

Oscar chose the great 2001 vintage to launch his Miró artist labels. He paid the Miró estate a reported \$80,000 for the rights to use three different paintings to label his luxury cuvée, **Lealtanza**.

We are pleased to be able to offer 2001 Lealtanza in



3-bottle sets—one bottle of each painting. As these sets were released at \$300, our price is a no-brainer. But quantities are very limited.

2001 Altanza Lealtanza
Joan Miró Labels

95 Jay Miller

\$215.00 *3-bottle set*

Jay Miller in *The Wine Advocate*: "... brilliantly made. It has a gorgeous Miró painting reproduced on the label attached to the extra heavy custom-made glass bottle. Reportedly, the Martinez family paid \$80,000 to the Miró estate for the rights to the artwork. Remarkably, the wine stands up to the art with no problem. The super-spicy, toasty, espresso roast, chocolate and blackberry aromas lead to a seamless, layered, rich wine ... a tour de force in Rioja"

RHONE & BURGUNDY

A Return to Form

The Great “La Chapelle” Hermitages of the New Millennium

The *Jaboulet* family spent more than a century building the reputation of its marquee Hermitage La Chapelle into not only the towering wine of its appellation, but the greatest wine of the entire Rhône Valley.

But after the glorious 1989 and 1990 vintages, La Chapelle's reputation fell in the early '90s. The 1997 death of the charismatic Gerard Jaboulet didn't help, and most long-time La Chapelle collectors



La Chapelle

gave up—many casting their lot with Chave.

Since 2000, with the very capable Philippe Jaboulet in charge, La Chapelle has enjoyed a renaissance, with an excellent 2001 and a 2003 that Parker calls “reassuringly great.” The 2003's painfully low yield of 16 hectoliters per hectare suggests that this iconic cuvee is indeed back.

Both wines are now scarce, and so we're pleased to offer a small amount of each at very attractive prices.

2001 Hermitage “La Chapelle”
97 Wine Spectator
\$95.00 bottle



Wine Spectator: “... lovely fruit, polished and clean, with all the attributes of a fine terroir—mineral and above all a lot of sweet, ultraripe fruit. Full-bodied, long, with plenty of toasted, smoked bacon and blackberry notes. Easier to appreciate young than many La Chapelles, but what hedonistic pleasure.”

2003 Hermitage “La Chapelle”*
95 Parker
\$125.00 bottle

Parker: “The finest example of this cuvée since 1990 ... 50,000 bottles rather than the normal 96,000+ were produced ... a tremendous bouquet of creme de cassis, crushed flowers, truffles, and licorice. Full-bodied and powerful ... this big, rich, dense, reassuringly great La Chapelle should be cellared for 5-8 years, and drunk over the following 20-25.”

Vincent Dauvissat's Gorgeous 2005 Petit Chablis

Grand Cru and *Premier Cru* Chablis are prized by connoisseurs for their profound depth and minerality. But the *crus* represent only 20% of Chablis' acreage. What of the remaining 3,000 hectares that are classified as *village* Chablis or Petit Chablis?



Vincent Dauvissat

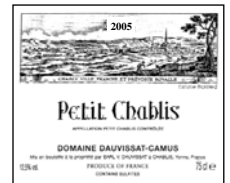
With one exception, no one makes consistently great wine from these sites. That exception is, of course, Vincent Dauvissat. While Vincent's rivals, the Raveneau brothers, have no holdings in either of these basic appellations, Vincent farms less than a hectare of Petit Chablis, producing a wine that surpasses many producers' *Premier Crus*.

Apart from Vincent's brilliant viticulture and wine-making, this wine's soaring quality is due to the location of the vines: a tiny plot above Les Clos, sharing its full south exposure. It is typically the last of

Dauvissat's vineyards to be harvested.

It is also the rarest and hardest to find of Dauvissat's wines. Thus, we were pleased to find a small parcel from the coveted 2005 vintage. Hurry, quantities are very limited.

2005 R & V Dauvissat*
(Dauvissat-Camus label)
Petit Chablis
\$29.95



Burghound: “Prominent citrus ... aromas leading to nicely complex and delicious flavors that possess real vivacity and punch. This is a relatively powerful effort for its level and recommended. Outstanding!” *As noted by both Tanzer and Burghound, this Dauvissat-Camus cuvée is identical to what appears under the more familiar R & V Dauvissat label.*

AUSTRALIA & TUSCANY

Maxed

Penfold's Hot New Special Bins Were Born of Schubert's Early Searching

Grange didn't just happen. It was the result of years of experimentation by Max Schubert in the late 1940s and 1950s. Schubert created dozens of "Special Bin" wines exploring different vineyards, grapes and elevages. The early Special Bins that have survived are iconic for collectors of early Australian wines.

Penfolds has kept alive this legacy through such legendary Special Bins as 1962 Bin 60A, 1980 Bin 80A, 1982 Bin 820, 1990 Bins 90A and 920, and 1996 Block 42. But *none* of these wines *ever* generated as much interest as the 2004 Bin 60A Cabernet/Shiraz and Block 42 Cabernet that were released last year.

Each of these wines pays homage to the early work of Max Schubert. The Bin 60A "Kalimna" is a blend of 56% Coonawarra Cabernet and 44% Barossa Shiraz



—paying tribute to the great 1962 Bin60A, which has become the stuff of legend.

The 2004 Block 42's ancestry is equally impressive. It's entirely from a single block of Cabernet planted in 1888 on the edge of the Kalimna vineyard. This so-called "Block 42"

—one of the world's oldest Cabernet plantings—gave us some of Schubert's greatest late-1940s experimental bottlings. It was also the sole source of the mythic 1953 Grange Cabernet, which today remains a testament to the longevity of Block 42 wines.

Though released last year, the 2004 Bin 60A and Block 42 were both pre-sold *en primeur* in 2006. As a result, they have been virtually impossible to find, even in Australia, and have been fetching stratospheric prices. We are pleased to be able to offer, in very limited quantities, both of these legends-in-the-making.

2004 Penfolds Kalimna "Block 42"

96 Parker 98 Raynolds

\$595.00 very limited

Parker: "... a gorgeously intense perfume of graphite, acacia flowers, black truffles, blueberries, and blackberries ... amazing intensity ... a sensational cascade of fruit ... should age gracefully for 20-25 years."

Josh Raynolds: "Probably the greatest Australian wine I've been privileged to drink ... jawdroppingly pure."

2004 Penfolds Kalimna "Bin 60A"

98 Parker 96 Raynolds

\$495.00 very limited

Parker: "... blackberry, blueberry, tar, lead pencil shavings, licorice, and spice box-scented bouquet ... fabulous extract and richness. This stunning blend should have a minimum of three decades of aging potential."

Josh Raynolds: "... has great flavor extract and richness ... a wine of great structure, depth and length."

2004 Solaia

Piero Antinori's Solaia was one of the first—and is still among the greatest—Super Tuscans. And so no one should be surprised that Solaia is among the monuments of Tuscany's magnificent 2004 vintage.

With time, the price of the 2004 will surely go the way of the 1997, which now sells in the \$400-\$500 range. So, if you're counting on adding the '04 to your collection, we suggest that you do it now.

2004 Solaia*
96 Antonio Galloni
\$199.95 very limited



Antonio Galloni: "... thrilling ... one of the highlights of this great vintage. Endowed with massive amounts of concentration as well as structure, it is a big, powerful Solaia that does not sacrifice elegance or balance ... Packed with the essence of blackberries, chocolate, tar, smoke, cassis and menthol ... not to be missed."

VINTAGE MADEIRA

Fifty & Fabulous

D'Oliveira's Great 1958 Bual is Another Torreão Treasure

All this year, wine lovers will be scouring the market for bottles to celebrate 50th birthdays and anniversaries. But they are unlikely to find much that's great. About the only place in Europe that struck it rich in 1958 was *Piemonte*, whose properly cellared '58 Barolos can be magical. Otherwise the pickings will be slim.

But 360 miles off the coast of Africa, Madeira also enjoyed a great vintage, though production was tiny. The trade was still reeling from all the problems of the previous century, and few producers were still in business. But one who was, and who enjoyed a great vintage in 1958, was the legendary Adegas do Torreão.

By the 1990s, Torreão had also faded from view, closing its doors after decades in business, and leaving a few priceless wines still in barrel. Several other producers competed to acquire these treasures, with the spoils going in 2002 to Pereira D'Oliveira. One of the wines D'Oliveira found was a very small amount of 1958 Bual of astonishing quality.

Torreão & D'Oliveira

The man behind Adegas Torreão was Vasco Loja, who—during the difficult years of the 1960s and 1970s—built Torreão into one of the island's most powerful companies, supplying wine to Madeira's most famous houses. But after his death, his children



At left, Pereira D'Oliveira's cellars, dated 1619, and at right, Adegas do Torreão's cellars from 1949.

chose not to continue his work, eventually selling all of the company's assets to D'Oliveira.

This included not only the company cellars, near the historic Hinton Torreão sugar works, but its wines, the most famous of which is the 1927 Bastardo (see our 10/3/06

newsletter). D'Oliveira is currently restoring the 59-year-old Torreão cellars and will soon be opening them to the public.

We had our first opportunity to taste the 1958 Bual during a visit to the island in late December. We were floored. As a result of nearly a half-century in barrel, the wine has become hugely concentrated, yet magnificently balanced, unleashing a volcanic nose of coffee, crème brûlée and dark chocolate, as well as a tidal wave on the palate. In fact, the richness and sweetness of this wine must be approaching the level of a great Malmsey.

This is one of the finest Madeiras we've ever tasted from the 1950s and is both highly recommended and very limited. April-May arrival.

1958 D'Oliveira Bual*
ex-Adegas de Torreão
\$195.00

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February 5, 2008

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