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Inside on Page 3
2001 Valdicava
Brunello

Inside on Page 5
Cappellano Barolo
1952-1997

JANUARY 9, 2007

A California Midas

Ramey's Transcendent 2004s Include Two Epic New Cabernets

David Ramey spent nearly two decades of his career securing the reputations of three California red-wine legends: Dominus, Rudd and Matanzas Creek. But it wasn't until he started his own winery in the late 1990s that he became famous in his own right.

David made his first Chardonnays under his own name in 1996—quickly proving that he could craft whites as monumental as his reds. With time, he also revealed his gift 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 talent for making wines of great richness and style, but with a strong sense of place.

Now, with the release of his great 2004s, David's already mythic reputation is sure to grow. His 2004s are surely his finest set of wines to date, adding two stunning new Cabernets to the portfolio. Their release is an important event for anyone who admires David Ramey's brilliant winemaking.

The New Cabernets

David's first Cabernet under his own name was, of course, his now-legendary 2001 Jericho Canyon, from a steeply terraced vineyard at the foot of Mt. St. Helena. With Rudd Estate, David had already been working with Jericho Canyon fruit for three



At left, David Ramey's original Cabernet site, Jericho Canyon, and at right, one of his newest, Larkmead.

vintages, but his 2001 was the wine that established Jericho Canyon as a Napa Valley icon.

For the next two years, Jericho Canyon remained the only Cabernet in David's book. Then in 2004 lightning struck twice, as David picked up a pair of new Cabernet vineyards, each with the potential to rival Jericho Canyon.

The first was **Larkmead**, an historic Napa Valley vineyard owned in the

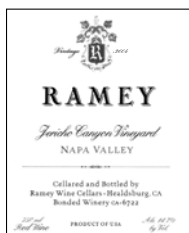
19th century by San Francisco's illustrious Hitchcock and Coit families. The site is distinguished by the well-drained gravel deposited by an ancient creek that once flowed here. David knew the vineyard's unique soil from his work at Rudd, and for his first Larkmead release, he produced a classic Bordeaux blend of 79% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Petit Verdot and 9% Malbec.

Pedregal could be an even more exciting acquisition. Situated on a steep slope off the Silverado Trail, it shares the same soil as its neighbors Rudd, Dalla Valle, Phelps Backus, and Screaming Eagle. This prodigious site is astonishingly rocky and full of iron—facts that naturally limit yields to about three tons per acre. David's 2.8 acres are about 80% Cabernet and 20% Petit Verdot, which he co-ferments. A miniscule 325 cases were made in the inaugural 2004 vintage. ►

David Ramey's Spectacular 2004s

► **This Offer**

Robert Parker's reviews of David's 2004s came out just before Christmas, creating a stampede. As always, his three single-vineyard Chardonnays—**Hyde**, **Hudson** and **Ritchie**—are at the top of everyone's Chardonnay shopping list. David makes far less of these than he does his more easily found Carneros, Sonoma Coast and Russian River Chardonnays. But they are worth the search, as



each is a marvelous example of *terroir*-based Chardonnay.

The three top Cabernets will also be difficult to source—particularly the Pedregal, little of which will find its way into shops. Given its stature and small production, this wine has enormous cult potential.

It's an honor for us to offer *all six* of these single-vineyard gems, including rare magnums. Hurry!

The Cabernets

2004 "Jericho Canyon Vyd."
94 Parker

\$99.95 *bt.* **\$225.00** *mag.*

Parker: "... a wonderfully sweet nose of espresso roast, fudge, blackberry, and cassis with a hint of incense and smoke. The wine is full-bodied, broadly flavored, opulent, and voluptuous, and that in itself seems to give the wine its current appeal, although I think this is a candidate for at least two decades of cellaring."

2004 "Pedregal Vyd."
95+ Parker

\$140.00 *bt.* **\$325.00** *mag.*

Parker: "... another killer wine ... one of my favorite sites for Cabernet Sauvignon in all of Napa ... a knockout. Sadly, there are only 325 cases ... crème de cassis, cedar, truffle, and crushed rocks interwoven with extravagant levels of graphite, black currants, and scorched earth, this dense, powerful, rich wine ...should keep for 20-30+ years."

2004 "Larkmead Vyd."
95 Parker

\$75.00 *bottle*

Parker: "... has that gorgeously pure crème de cassis that I notice consistently in Screaming Eagle ... full-bodied, elegant, sexy and rich, and should easily last and evolve for 10-15 or more years. In fact, I would give it 2-3 years of bottle age. This is a phenomenal wine and one of the finest 2004 Cabernet Sauvignons."

The Chardonnays

2004 "Hyde Vyd."
94 Parker

\$52.95 *bt.* **\$120.00** *mag.*

Parker: "... has extraordinary intensity, with wonderful tropical fruit interwoven with orange blossom, white peach, and some mixed tropical fruits, even a hint of litchi. The undeniable minerality and floral notes add to the complexity of this stunningly full-bodied, opulent, but well-delineated wine. It should drink well for 5-8 years, possibly longer."



2004 "Hudson Vyd."
91 Parker

\$50.95 *bt.* **\$115.00** *mag.*

Parker: "... notes of marmalade, smoky hazelnuts, and tropical fruit, and a lusty, rich, full-bodied palate that offers delicious drinking now, it should age well for several more years."

2004 "Ritchie Vyd."
93 Parker

\$56.95 *bt.* **\$130.00** *mag.*

Ramey's smallest production Chardonnay. Parker: "... brioche, bee's wax, honeyed pineapple, and some hazelnut notes ... a rich, long finish, and a style that seems to beautifully transpose a European allegiance to elegance with a California predilection for ripeness. That is what is so admirable about not only the Chardonnays from Ramey but the red wines as well."

Ambition's Reward

At 98 Points, Valdicava is the Spectator's Highest-Rated 2001 Brunello

When Vincenzo Abruzzese took over his grandparents' Brunello estate in the 1980s, he inherited an ailing winery and a pile of debt. But he also got ten hectares of Montalcino's finest *terroir*—including part of the great Montosoli slope.

It took him nearly two decades, but he has finally reached the pinnacle of Brunello producers. Some would say he got there with the increasingly fine wines he made during the 1990s. But others would argue that the coronation took place only last April, when the *Wine Spectator* proclaimed his 2001 the vintage's best.

A Perfectionist

Abruzzese's exacting touch is the stuff of legend. His vineyards are often deemed "perfect," while his work with enologist Attilio Pagli—who also assists Giulio Salvioni—produces wines of incredible richness, but with a perfect balance of ripe fruit and minerality.

In fact, perhaps more than any other Brunello modernist, Abruzzese captures the essence of what nature gives—in much the same way that Roberto Voerzio does in Barolo. Like Voerzio, he's not afraid to use new, small oak barrels; yet the sheer density of his fruit insures that any flavor of oak is largely absorbed.

This Offer

As Brunello lovers by now know, 2001 was an out-



standing year, producing wines of amazing color, lavish fruit and the structure for aging. Valdicava excelled, earning the highest score (98 points) in the *Wine Spectator's* 2001 Brunello report last April.

But while there's been plenty of press on the wine, actually finding bottles of 2001 Valdicava has been tough. The meeting of hoopla and scarcity has driven prices skyward. Today, you may still be able to find a few bottles in stores at the original \$110 suggested resale; but most merchants are now asking a premium, with typical prices running between \$125 and \$150 a bottle.

While we can, we are privileged to offer this highly sought-after wine at a compellingly low price. It's an added pleasure to offer—at even more amazing prices—the now-rare wines that Abruzzese made in 1993, 1994 and 1995. Each is a fine Brunello in its own right and a spectacular bargain at our price.

2001 Valdicava Brunello
98 Wine Spectator
\$87.50



Wine Spectator: "Black hued, with intense aromas of crushed berries and licorice with hints of oak. Full-bodied, with loads of fruit, velvety tannins and a long, long finish. Superb. One of the best Brunellos I have had in a long time. Best after 2010."

An Early Valdicava Trifecta, Including the Classic 1995

**1995 Valdicava
Brunello di Montalcino**
92 Daniel Thomases
\$59.95 reg. \$128



Big and seamless, this is packed with spicy plum and raspberry fruit. It boasts the bones of a classic 1995, but its huge body and fruit make them invisible. Silky and long, it is fantastic to drink now but has the legs for another 5+ years of aging.

1994 Valdicava Brunello 45.00

Wine Spectator: "90 rating. Superaromatic, with currants, violets, dried cherries and fresh wet earth. Full-bodied, with well-integrated silky tannins and a long, sweet fruit finish. A thoroughly harmonious red." An incredible buy.

1993 Valdicava Brunello 45.00

Gambero Rosso: "Did not disappoint, pushing (its) way to the fore amidst the increasingly tough competition. The Brunello is a wine of character ... cherry preserve ... a sweet attack and a gradual, even and well-balanced progression."

The Standard-Bearer

Agostina Pieri's Astonishing Rosso di Montalcino

The genesis of Rosso di Montalcino twenty years ago was an important moment in Montalcino's long history. By offering an alternative to Brunello's mandatory long wood-aging, Rossos allowed growers to create an entirely different style of red wine, more effusive in their fruit, and no less enticing.

At the beginning, however, only a few growers fully grasped Rosso's potential. The most important of these was arguably Agostina Pieri, whose 1995 remains to this day the only Rosso di Montalcino ever to win *Gambero Rosso's* coveted *Tre Bicchieri*. In giving the award in 1998, the magazine's editors wrote:

"... a great wine that was profound and complex yet absolutely delicious. Most of all, it was a very different wine from Brunello ... supple, fascinating and concentrated"

Even today, Pieri's Rosso is the standard-bearer. Enologist Fabrizio Moltard is crafting brilliantly rich

Rossos from Pieri's steep, south-facing vineyards in Castelnuovo dell'Abate. Drinkable on release, they age with uncommon grace for several years.

From a great Montalcino vintage, the 2004 is one of Pieri's finest Rossos yet. With strong demand from both Italy and the U.S., we were delighted to get a small amount for this offering. But these will go fast.

**2004 Agostina Pieri
Rosso di Montalcino
90 Antonio Galloni
\$19.95 *bt.* \$239.00 *cs.***



Antonio Galloni in the *Wine Advocate*: "An engaging effort ... it displays a perfumed, floral nose along with ... outstanding length and plenty of freshness on the finish, demonstrating the heights Rosso can achieve in the hands of a serious producer. A very classy and elegant Rosso. Anticipated maturity: 2006-2010."

Boglietti's Amazing 2005 Dolcetto Tiglineri

The dynamic young Enzo Boglietti is among the most talented young producers to come out of Piedmont in recent years. Based in La Morra—with holdings in some of Barolo's greatest vineyards—Enzo took over his family's domaine a little over a decade ago and immediately slashed yields in the vineyards, and improved the winemaking and élevage in the cellar. The result has been a transformation reminiscent of the one that occurred in the 1980's in the cellars of Scavino, Altare, Clerico and Corino.



Enzo Boglietti

A Fabulous Dolcetto

Enzo is, of course, admired for his *cru* Barolos—Brunate, Case Nere, Fossati and Arione. But he has earned perhaps his widest following for his sensational barrique-aged Dolcetto Tiglineri.

Tiglineri is made from three parcels of 70- to 100-year-old vines. The biggest percentage of the vines are in Fossati, with an important contribution from

Serralunga, the town famous for its long-lived Barolo. It is the Serralunga element that gives Tiglineri its incredible structure. While most Dolcetto is best drunk in the first two years of life, we can imagine enjoying 2005 Tiglineri years from now. It's that good!

There are few \$20 bottles on the planet as good as this one. Don't miss it.

**2005 Enzo Boglietti
Dolcetto "Tiglineri"
\$19.95 *bt.* \$239.00 *cs.***



As you'd expect in the monumentally rich 2005 vintage, the '05 Tiglineri unleashes an avalanche of ripe blackberry fruit, accented by nuances of toast, licorice, tar and spring flowers. The palate is sleek, but enveloping, with abundant flavor and amazing length. A remarkable effort even by the standards of this outstanding young winemaker.

A Profound Legacy

A Half Century of Rare Cappellano Barolos

As we wrote in our October 2005 cover story, Teobaldo Cappellano is among the last of Barolo's great traditionalists—a man often compared to the late Bartolo Mascarello for his strong philosophical views on wine and life. Since 1983 he has refused to meet with journalists who need scores to judge his wines, and he could be the only one left making Barolo from ungrafted vines.



Teobaldo Cappellano

Before 1993, his Barolo was a Serralunga blend. But today, Cappellano makes two profound Barolos from a single Serralunga *cru*, Gabutti. One is the rich, powerful "Pié Rupestris," made from 50-year-old grafted vines, and the other the hauntingly perfumed "Pié Franco," from ungrafted vines. The latter wine is

so distinctive that Teobaldo wonders if this is what Barolo tasted like before Phylloxera.

With just 500 cases of Rupestris made, and half that of Franco, Teobaldo's wines are incredibly rare. As Antonio Galloni has written, "Cappellano's wines are impossibly hard to find, even in neighboring Alba."

Two years ago, we were treated to a tasting of virtually every Barolo Cappellano made during the 1990s. We were stunned by their consistent beauty, even in unsung years. Inspired, we searched Europe for the wines we'd tasted, scoring the following treasures, including two rarities from the 1950s. Sublime examples of Barolo's proud winemaking tradition, these are priceless bottles for anyone who loves great Nebbiolo.

Gabutti / Pié Rupestris

1997 Barolo Pié Rupestris
\$54.95 *bt.* **\$115.00** *magnum*



From half-century old vines, a brilliant marriage of classical structure with the lushness of the 1997 vintage. Very soft yet concentrated and quite rich on the palate, but with vibrant acidity and muscular structure.

Pié Franco

1997 Barolo Pié Franco
\$69.95 *bt.* **\$139.95** *magnum*



The most brilliant Franco made up to that point. Even longer than the Rupestris, with fabulous persistence, the tannins are soft and rounded and the texture rich and compelling. A magical '97 you'll find hard to put down.



1995 Barolo Gabutti
\$52.95 *bottle*

Like many of the best traditionally made 1995 Barolos, this wine is just beginning to show its incredible complexity. There are abundant notes of tar and red fruits in the nose, and the palate is long, lush and fine. It will drink well for another decade or more.



1995 Barolo Pié Franco
\$59.95 *bottle*

This Franco has the richness and sweetness of Gabutti, but with even finer tannins. The nose is classic: dark fruits, tar, leather. The palate is sweet and long with excellent persistence and noble tannins. Marvelous to drink now, it can only improve over the next decade.

1994 Barolo Gabutti **45.00**

Cappellano's '94s are standouts. The Gabutti has less weight than in '95, but it has a seamless delicacy that is compelling. Lush, with beautiful inner-mouth perfume, this is a great bottle for drinking over the next five years.

1994 Barolo Gabutti "Franco" **59.95**

Teobaldo's first vintage from his ungrafted vines, and a shocker: big, rich, mouthfilling. It has the purity of Francos to come, with an astonishing weight given '94's reputation. A great start for an important new wine.

Rarities from the 1950s

1955 Cappellano Barolo **195.00**

Like the '52, made by Teobaldo's great uncle. A classic old-style Barolo entering its sixth decade. Light strawberry color, a beautiful nose of balsam and sandalwood and a delicate sweetness on the palate. A wine of elegance and warmth that still delivers plenty of flavor and charm.

1952 Cappellano Barolo **195.00**

Slightly lighter in color than the '55, with an intriguing tar and truffle nose. The fruit is surprisingly fresh, held together by firm acidity, finishing with very good length. Like the '55, the wine has left a remarkable sheet of sediment, a phenomenon familiar to old Nebbiolo drinkers.

William Fèvre 2004 Chablis

The Elusive Les Preuses .. Plus Some Second Chances

Domaine William Fèvre's *Grand Crus* are among the most exciting wines of Chablis' great 2004 vintage. In September, we offered all but one that had eluded us: Les Preuses. At last we were able to secure a small amount of Preuses, along with a bit more of four other elite 2004s. Hurry.

"Today's Fèvre wines rank with those of Raveneau and Vincent Dauvissat ... outstanding by any measure." Steve Tanzer

2004 Grand Cru "Les Clos"*
96+ Rovani
95 Burghound
\$69.95 bt. \$149.95 mag.
\$37.50 half bottle

Pierre Rovani "bold, muscular, powerful ... explodes on the palate."

Burghound: "rich and full-bodied ... reminded me more than a little of a great Corton-Charlemagne."



2004 Grand Cru "Preuses"*
95 Burghound
\$62.50 bottle

Burghound: "... the longest and most persistent wine in the range ... it is a dazzling effort that vies credibly for top honors. I could still taste this wine the next day!"

2004 Grand Cru Bougros
"Côte Bouguerots"*
95 Rovani
\$57.95 bt. \$125.00 mag.

Pierre Rovani: "Minerals, chalk, rosemary, thyme, and white pepper ... astounding amplitude, depth, concentration, and power. Its rich core is sappy, silky-textured, and presents intense liquefied stone flavors."

2004 Chablis Grand Cru "Valmur"* **59.95**

Burghound: "94 rating ... the most elegant wine in the entire lineup, closely challenged only by the Les Clos ... that unmistakable sea salt nuance that says 'Chablis!' leads to textured and superbly defined, refined and focused flavors ... explosively long ... one seriously stunning wine ..."

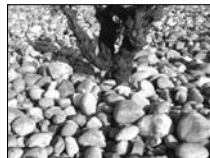
2004 Chablis 1er Cru "Fourchaume Vaulorent"* *half bt.* **24.95**

Pierre Rovani: "94 rating ... the star among Domaine William Fèvre's premier crus ... Its profound aromatics reveal notes of apples dusted with minerals and chalk. Broad, ample, rich, and suave, this wine also boasts superb precision, freshness, and focus"

A Blockbuster Châteauneuf-du-Pape

In *Châteauneuf-du-Pape*, négociant Patrick Lesec picks his growers based on their vineyards. He insists that their vines be very old, well situated, and most importantly, that he can farm them organically and with low yields. In the cellar, he is no less demanding: all of his wines receive the least intervention possible, with minimal rackings and bottling without fining or filtration.

Of all the superb *Châteauneufs* that Lesec has made over the years, the 2003 "Galets Blonds" could be his best yet. It is almost entirely Grenache made from 80+ year old vines in La Crau, aged in a combination of foudre, tank and small barrels, of which only a small fraction are new. An amazing value in superb old-vine *Châteauneuf-du-Pape*.



*The stones of
Le Crau*

2003 Patrick Lesec
Châteauneuf "Galets Blonds"
95 Parker
\$45.00 very limited

Parker: "The brilliant 2003 *Châteauneuf-du-Pape* Les Galets Blonds is the star of these *Châteauneufs*. A blend of 92% Grenache and 8% Syrah was aged in foudre, tank, and small oak barrels (about 20%). Its dark ruby/plum/purple-tinged color is followed by a big, sweet nose of kirsch liqueur, herbes de Provence, and an oil of pepper-like character. Concentrated and full-bodied, with an old vine essence to its personality ... it should drink well for 12-15+ years. "

GERMANY

Wines of an Iconic Site

The Ambrosial Auslesen of J.J. Prüm's Wehlener Sonnenuhr

Over the past century no other Mosel estate has produced wines so consistently great as J.J. Prüm. And since taking charge in 1969, Dr. Manfred Prüm—through careful refinement of the style set by his grandfather—has taken the property to even greater heights.



Wehlener Sonnenuhr

The Prüm estate is best-known for the late-harvest wines—termed *Auslesen*—it makes from the legendarily steep Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard. Here, the marriage of site and style finds its greatest expression, magically combining richness, depth and concentration with refinement and finesse. Astonishingly complex, with a soaring perfume of peach and honeysuckle, they are among the world's greatest Rieslings.

The key, of course, is the fabled Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard, whose 70° slope of Devonian blue-gray slate produces the Mosel's richest and silkiest wines. Prüm's vines here—averaging 50-years-old with many ungrafted—yield fruit of enormous concentration and complexity thanks to Dr. Prüm's penchant for very late, *Botrytis*-affected harvests.

Prüm uses much the same methods as his grandfather Sebastian Alois did in 1911. He hand-harvests and manipulates the wine as little as possible, allowing the *terroir* to be fully expressed. Fermentation is in fiberglass tanks before aging in neutral round Mosel barrels. The wine is then left to settle naturally in Prüm's frigid cellar before bottling directly from cask.

Dr. Prüm's Auslesen are extraordinarily long-lived, culminating with age in a perfectly developed complexity that features intense perfumes and flavors of white pit fruits and citrus, balanced by a slate minerality. Full-bodied and rich, yet with great definition due to their wonderful acidity, they have that eerie combination of intensity without excess weight that is the hallmark of the world's greatest wines.

We are pleased to offer Prüm's monumental 2005 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese, along with a fascinating line-up of rare *goldkapsels*—special selections that Dr. Prüm considered to be of singular quality in their respective vintages.

2005 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese*

97 *Wine Spectator*

\$59.95 750 ml



Wine Spectator: "Peach, lime and floral aromas and flavors are highlighted by a golden apple tone in this pure, focused Riesling. It has great definition, based on a vibrant structure and precision balance. It's all wrapped up in a juicy lime- and mineral-tinged aftertaste. Best from 2009 through 2030."

1988 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Goldkapsel 750ml 149.95

A legendary wine that received a 98 point rating from the *Wine Spectator* back in 1989. Virtually never seen today. Incredible price for a rarity of such stature.

2001 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese Goldkapsel

\$89.95 750 ml \$49.95 375 ml



The coveted goldkap from the great 2001 vintage. We have never seen a review for this, but Prüm's regular Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese received 96 points from the *Wine Spectator*, who noted: "Piercing scent of slate, then the palate is awash in peach, pear and lime notes, intricately layered in the dense, yet clear texture. Beautifully defined by a firm, well-integrated structure, with an endless finish."

1983 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Goldkapsel 750 ml 149.95

A rare goldkap from the rich, opulent 1983 vintage. Extremely limited.

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Ready to Rocket

Why 2003 Yquem Should be Purchased Now

Prior to 2004, the Lur-Saluces family had run Ch. d'Yquem for a breathtaking 219 years—and during that time, Yquem had become the most coveted sweet wine in the world. But 2004 saw a changing of the guard, with Pierre Lurton—estate manager for Ch. Cheval Blanc—replacing Comte Alexandre Lur-Saluces as Yquem's administrator.



Ch. d'Yquem

The change meant more than the end of an era. If anyone thought it would be business as usual at Yquem, they got a vigorous wake-up call last summer. That's when futures of 2005 Yquem opened north of \$600 a bottle. Clearly, Yquem's new owners LVMH intend to make one of the world's most expensive dessert wines even more expensive.

The 2003

The timing is right for LVMH to succeed in its mission. Blue-chip wines are on fire, and what wine is more of a blue chip than Yquem? Ancient vintages are going the way of Romanée Conti, and even more recent Yquem classics like the 1988 and 1990 have jumped in price by 50% over the past two years. Even the 2001, which was released at a heady \$400 a bottle last fall, has already risen 20% in value.

The next chapter in this tale may focus on an Yquem of possibly unparalleled richness: the 2003. This was Lur-Saluces' final vintage, and only the second Yquem ever offered *en primeur*. Three years ago Lur Saluces sold part of the smaller-than-usual production at \$250 a bottle as a future; now that the wine is physically available, and the new owners are in control, we're waiting to see what happens to the price for the rest.

Given how dearly the new proprietors sold the 2005—which is still two years away from release and a likely peer in terms of quality—there's no doubt that they will charge dramatically more for their remaining stocks of 2003. In fact, it's hard to imagine a new price that's not *at least double* the *en primeur* price of three years ago.

This Offer

The 2003 Yquem seems destined to take its place among the greats. In fact, *Wine Spectator's* 98 rating published last month makes it their third highest-rated Yquem of the 20th and 21st centuries (they've reviewed 89 different vintages).

Even as the chateau was releasing the 2003 in December, a négociant in Bordeaux was snoozing on a parcel of prized half bottles priced only 10% above what we had paid in euros *en primeur* nearly three years ago. We grabbed what we could, and so should you. Spring arrival.

2003 Ch. d'Yquem*
94-96 Parker
98 Wine Spectator
\$159.95 half bottle



Wine Spectator: "Subtle and racy, with lemon rind, vanilla cream and dried pineapple. Very spicy and intense. Full-bodied, with great length and flavor. Electrified yet refined, with medium sweetness and a wonderful finish. I love the class of this, and the length. Has afterburners."

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INSIDE

Ramey 2004s Page 1 Cappellano Rarities Page 5
Valdicava Brunello Page 3 William Fèvre 2004s Page 6
2004 Pieri Rosso Page 4 Lesec Châteauneuf Page 6
2005 Boglietti Dolcetto ..Page 4 J.J. Prüm Page 7

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