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JULY 19, 2005

## RIBERA DEL DUERO

# "A Wine for the History Books"

## *The Monumental 1994 Vega Sicilia*

Few wines have a history as distinguished as that of Vega Sicilia. Founded in the 1860's, its top *cuvée*, Unico, was Spain's first great wine and until recently the only Spanish wine collected and coveted throughout the world.

Much of Vega Sicilia's global reputation was forged in the 1980's and early 1990's, a time of abundance for lovers of the estate's wines. Classics like the 1962, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970 and 1975 Unicos were all readily available. Rarities like 1942 and 1948 were there for the asking, and the current Reserva Especial releases included wines up to 35 years old.

But over the past decade, the pickings have been far slimmer. Vega Sicilia's market has expanded enormously, and availability has dwindled. Though still



*Vega Sicilia*

fine, Reserva Especial is made up of younger wine. And, however splendid, none of the more recent Unico releases has seemed quite as compelling as the wines produced in the 1960's.

### **A Return to Greatness**

For years, many have speculated that the next truly monumental Unico would be the 1994, from one of the greatest Ribera del Duero vintages ever. Of course, this was just speculation, as Vega Sicilia never lets outsiders taste unreleased Unicos. But still the anticipation for the '94 was huge.

Earlier this year, the estate finally announced the wine's release, and the speculation quickly turned into a fever.

*Continued next page*

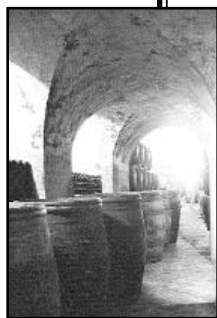
## Fabled Loires

### *Magical Dessert Rarities from Domaine Touchais*

*The Layon River* is Chenin Blanc's Eden. As the river threads its way northward into the Loire, the gently rolling hills laced with schist are the grape's perfect home, producing wines of richness allied to profound minerality, capable of aging for decades, if not centuries.

While several Layon estates are famed for their old wines—including Domaine des Baumard and Ch. des Fesles—one property towers over the rest: Domaine Touchais. Having been in the same family since the 1700's,

*Continued page 3*



*The Touchais cave*

## RIBERA DEL DUERO

# 1994 Vega Sicilia Unico

Continued from Page 1

Even before any reviews, merchants and collectors were snapping up parcels. We jumped at our first chance to buy some two months ago. And now that Robert Parker has issued his rapturous notes, we are set for a full-scale assault on the limited quantities put onto the market.

The retail price of this wine has been set at \$325, reflecting the domaine's belief in its stature. Yet our pre-Parker purchase was at a *very* attractive price. One for the ages.

**1994 Vega Sicilia Unico\***  
**98+ Parker**  
**\$245.00**



Parker: "This bodega has produced many profound wines, but the 1994 Unico Reserva may be the greatest vintage released since their legendary 1970 and 1968. A truly prodigious effort, it boasts an opaque ruby/purple color as well as a gorgeously sweet, expansive bouquet of sweet cherries interwoven with black currant, truffle, licorice, and scorched earth aromas. Full-bodied, potent, powerful, and well-delineated with crisp acidity, sweet but noticeable tannin, a multidimensional, expansive, layered palate feel, and a pure yet refreshing finish, it should be a wine for the history books. Anticipated maturity: now-2035. **\$325.00** retail."

## ... and from the Past

**1962 Vega Sicilia Unico 1-bt. limit ..... 495.00**

Parker: "95 rating ... fabulously complex ... This knock-out Unico ... will last for at least 15-20 more years."

Tanzer: "95 rating ... silky-sweet, seamless and fresh, with terrific intensity of flavor ... Very long ...."

**1964 Vega Sicilia Unico\* 1-bt. limit ..... 495.00**

Parker: "94 rating ... opulent ... attractive, sweet inner-core of ripe fruit...admirably balances power and finesse."

Tanzer: "94 rating. Dense and pungent in the mouth, with superb sweetness; great inner-mouth flavor."

**1966 Vega Sicilia Unico very limited ..... 475.00**

Parker: "95 rating ... decadently-styled ... thrilling level of flavor extraction ...."

Tanzer: "96 rating ... should hold for another 15-20 years."

**1968 Vega Sicilia Unico 1-bt. limit ..... 950.00**

**1968 Vega Sicilia Unico Magnum 1-mg. limit ..... 1900.00**

Parker: "98 rating. An awesome wine ... massively rich, and unctuous ... amazing wine!"

Tanzer: "98 rating ... This powerfully structured wine is reminiscent of a '61 Latour or La Chapelle, seemingly built to go on for decades ... A legend in the making."

**1970 Vega Sicilia Unico very limited ..... 495.00**

Parker: "96 rating ... boasts an elegant, complex bouquet of cedar wood, blackberries, cherry liqueur, and vanilla.

Opulently-textured, with fabulous unctuousness, vivaciousness, and vigor, superb ripeness, a full-bodied, super-concentrated attack as well as lush mid-palate and finish ... can be drunk now, or cellared for two decades."

## ... and 2001 Alión

In 1991, Vega Sicilia launched its first new project in over a century: Alión. Also situated in Ribera del Duero, the winemaking here is more modern and, of course, the price is much more accessible. In the great 2001 vintage, Vega Sicilia produced its best Alión to date. We are pleased to offer a small quantity at a below-market price.

**2001 Alión\***  
**95 Parker**  
**\$47.95**



Parker: "The finest Alión I have tasted from this project owned by the proprietors of Vega Sicilia, the 2001 is a sensational effort. Moreover, while it's not inexpensive, 25,000 cases are produced. A deep ruby/purple color is followed by a glorious, smoky nose of espresso, dried herbs, roasted meats, sweet black currants, new saddle leather, plums, and cherries. This provocative, rich, complex, full-bodied Ribera del Duero possesses wonderful glycerin, fabulous purity, and a long finish that lasts for 40+ seconds. It is an opulent, voluptuously-styled wine with great stature. Drink it over the next decade. **\$65** retail."

# Jewels from Domaine Touchais' Vault

Continued from Page 1

Touchais' winemaking philosophy is all about age. They don't release their flagship wines until they are at least 10 years old, and they continue to hold substantial stocks for decades more.

Part of the secret to the Touchais wines' longevity is how the grapes are harvested: 20% are picked 90 days after flowering before the fruit is fully ripe and is still loaded with acidity. The other 80% are picked very late at high sugar levels and with maximum concentration of flavor. As a result, a great Touchais wine is remarkably rich, but with penetrating acidity, superb focus and impeccable balance.

## This Offer

We recently had the opportunity to select from a range of vintages that had never left the Touchais cellars. Though 15 vintages were offered to us, we selected the six that represent the greatest Layon vintages between 1971 and 1990.

The bottles all bear the distinguished "Réserve de nos Vignobles" label. Veteran Touchais drinkers should know that the wines are *identical* to those bearing the more commonly seen "Moulin Touchais" label. The prices, uniformly, are a steal.



**1971 Domaine Touchais  
Réserve de nos Vignobles  
\$59.95**

A beautiful gold color. The nose is bursting with yellow plum, apricot, peach, walnut and pine, while the silky, luscious palate follows with more honeysuckle, peaches, honey and an invigorating note of quinine. Superbly sweet and unctuous, but with incredible focus and persistence. Will live for decades more.

**1975 Domaine Touchais  
Réserve de nos Vignobles  
\$49.95**



A slightly deeper color than the 1971. The nose is exceptional, featuring honey, buttered oranges, almonds, beeswax and peaches. The palate is long and complete, beautifully balancing ripe white fruits and apple cider, ample sweetness and cleansing acidity. Drink between now and 2020.



**1976 Domaine Touchais  
Réserve de nos Vignobles  
\$45.00**

A medium gold color is followed by an arboreally tinged nose featuring earth, underbrush, beeswax, yellow plum, and apricot. The glycerol, honeyed palate is distinguished by a citrus tang and quinine on the finish. Very full in the mouth, with excellent length. Drink through 2015.

**1979 Domaine Touchais  
Réserve de nos Vignobles  
\$35.00**

A deep, brassy gold color. The nose is among the most exotic of this group, featuring apple donuts, peaches and cream, steel and allspice. Very sweet, yet slightly lower in acidity than the other vintages of the 1970's, giving the wine its smooth mouthfeel. Drink between now and 2015.



**1989 Domaine Touchais  
Réserve de nos Vignobles  
\$35.00**

Light gold color with yellow highlights. The nose is high-toned, with aromas of yellow plum, caramelized apples and chamomile. Medium to full bodied, and quite sweet and glycerol, but with superb balancing acidity. A baby that's yet to reach its peak, it has great long-term aging potential.

**1990 Domaine Touchais  
Réserve de nos Vignobles  
\$39.95**



Thanks to the year's abundant botrytis, this is the richest wine of the group. Dessert wine aficionados will love it. The bouquet offers loads of sweet orange blossom, lanolin, apricots, lemon and honey, while the palate is Sauternes-like in its glycerol mouthfeel and sweetness. Nectar for drinking over the next decade.

# Time Travelers

## *Vines from Another Epoch Yield a Staggering Red*

*Feudi di San Gregorio's* 2000 Sirica is among the most extraordinary wines to come our way. It is remarkable not just for its great richness, its deep color, its texture of liquid velvet or its Syrah-like aromatics.

Its uniqueness also goes beyond the fact that it is from very old grapevines that stand like soaring trees ... and that it is essentially unobtainable on the open market. Its importance even goes beyond the fact that its vines not only survived Phylloxera, they have survived 20 centuries of whatever nature has thrown at them.

In an era when too many wines delight the senses but tell us little more, the 2000 Sirica not only delivers sensory fireworks, it offers a unique window into more than 2,000 years of wine history.

### **A Genetic Survivor**

The source of this remarkable wine is a vineyard near Mount Vesuvius, whose Sirica vines were praised by Pliny nearly two millennia ago. The few vines that remain today are as big as trees and are an estimated 200 years old. The product of more than 2,000 years of natural inbreeding, their DNA has features found in no other modern grapevines. Tourists pay 30 euros for the privilege of seeing these freaks of nature.

Given the vines' age, yields are of course tiny.



*An ancient Sirica vine.*

However, each autumn, Feudi harvests the small production, making a wine of profound richness and depth of color. There's too little wine to offer for sale through its usual channels, so Feudi makes the wine available *only* to those who visit the estate itself.

But Feudi has made one exception, selling some of its majestic 2000 Sirica to a friend of ours in Europe, who in turn let us have a small part of their treasure.

This a highly important and uniquely compelling wine. Please don't miss it.

**2000 Sirica**  
**Feudi di San Gregorio**

**\$59.95** *very limited*



Deeply colored, with an evocative nose of blackberry, briar, Earl Grey tea and juniper. The bouquet recalls Northern Rhône Syrah, which may explain why Sirica had long, and erroneously, been thought to be Syrah. On the palate, this 2000 has great presence, and impressive breadth and length. Though aged in barrique, any new wood is all but absorbed by the wine's impressively deep material. A fabulous introduction to a long-forgotten grape variety.

## *Bordeaux's 2004 Elite in Imperiale*

In 2004, fewer than a dozen *châteaux* produced truly compelling wines. We have selected four of the best to be bottled in the rare and imposing *imperiale* format (the equivalent of 8 bottles). Prices are very attractive.

We have just a few of each, so hurry. Delivery 2007.

**2004 Ch. Lafite Rothschild 6-Liter \*** ..... **1295.00**

Parker: "92-95 rating ... Only 40% of the crop made it into the 2004 *grand vin* ... a classic Lafite ... With terrific concentration ... and a vibrant, stylish taste ...."

**2004 Ch. Margaux 6-Liter \*** ..... **1295.00**

Parker: "92-95 rating ... a streamlined, graceful example of Ch. Margaux ... black currant fruit intermixed with notions of white flowers, oak, and cherries .... tremendous purity ... This beauty should be at its finest between 2010-2025."

**2004 Ch. Pavie-Macquin 6-Liter \*** ..... **395.00**

Parker: "92-95 rating ... a sumptuous perfume of creosote, blackberries, cassis, incense, and a balsamic character ... one of the most concentrated wines of the vintage ... brilliant."

**2004 Ch. Lascombes 6-Liter \*** ..... **375.00**

Parker: "92-95 rating. This has now become one of Margaux's top wines, even challenging Palmer and Château Margaux ... gorgeously expressive ... beautifully concentrated, with tremendous precision ...."

# Montrachet's Progeny

*Mindblowing 2002s from Puligny-Montrachet's Greatest Premier Crus*

*It has been written* that Puligny-Montrachet has the most valuable land on earth. The home of Le Montrachet and its sister *grand crus*, it is arguably the world's most perfect place to grow Chardonnay.



*On Laval's 1855 map, Cailleret & Pucelles are upper center next to the Montrachets; at right, Combettes abuts Meursault.*

In the shadow of Le Montrachet are the three *premier crus* closest to being *grand crus*: Le Cailleret, Les Pucelles and Les Combettes. In fact, Cailleret is really an extension of Montrachet; 145 years ago, it enjoyed *grand cru* status.

As our readers know, 2002 was a very great white Bur-

gundy vintage, one of the two finest of the past 15 years. Having been released more than a year ago—and with neither 2003 or 2004 at the same level—the value of the top 2002's becomes more apparent daily. But they must be bought now.

For this very special offer, we've assembled the flag-bearers of Cailleret, Pucelles and Combettes: de Montille, Leflaive and Sauzet. And to sweeten the pot, we've added the towering 2002 renderings of Vincent Girardin, who now has important stakes in all three sites. Lovers of great Chardonnay take heed.

## **Le Cailleret**

An extension of Le Montrachet itself—but stonier—Cailleret was ranked a *grand cru* in 1860. Cailleret was once a Chartron monopole, but today the elite example is de Montille's.

### **Domaine de Montille Puligny Le Cailleret**

**95 Tanzer  
\$110.00**

Tanzer: "... an extension of Le Montrachet ... Dense, sappy and highly concentrated ... great lift in the mouth ... Finishes with superb density, length and finesse. An outstanding 2002."

### **Domaine Girardin Puligny Le Cailleret\***

**92-95 Tanzer  
\$59.95**

Tanzer: "Strong earth tones of minerals, cinnamon and nut oils ... Offers impressive inner-mouth lift and energy. Less thick than the Pucelles but chewy, lively and quite dry, with a very strong, soil-inflected finish."

## **Les Pucelles**

Just below Le Cailleret, and next to Batard Montrachet and Bienvenue Batard, Les Pucelles is famed for the opulence of its wines. Domaine Leflaive makes the most coveted example.

### **Domaine Leflaive Puligny Les Pucelles**

**93-95 Rovani  
\$149.95**

Rovani: "... an aromatic profile composed of baby powder and minerals ... loads of spiced apple flavors in its pure, concentrated core. This rich wine is admirably well-balanced, fresh, and impressively long."

### **Domaine Girardin Puligny Les Pucelles\***

**92-95 Tanzer  
\$65.00**

Tanzer: "... partly from 50-year-old domaine vines ... chewy, concentrated and rich, with superb acids giving it terrific inner-mouth lift ... boasts impressive precision and elegance for a wine with so much volume."

## **Les Combettes**

Of Puligny's great *premier crus*, Les Combettes produces the most generous wines—not unexpected given its location on Meursault's border. Leflaive and Sauzet are the two greatest producers, though we might give Sauzet's Combettes a slight edge.

### **Domaine Sauzet Puligny Les Combettes\***

**93+ Tanzer  
\$99.95**

Tanzer: "from two parcels averaging 58 years old ... highly concentrated flavors of lemon, flowers and minerals build impressively. A solid, penetrating wine ... a superb combination of elegance and material."

### **Domaine Girardin Puligny Les Combettes\***

**93 Tanzer  
\$59.95**

Tanzer: "Fat, thick and sweet ... Enticing flavors of lemon, peach and baking spices. Long, mounting finish features terrific breadth of flavor leavened by piquant acidity. Very impressive."

## BIERZO

# Bierzo's Bargain

## *The Incredible 2003 Petalos of Descendientes de J. Palacios*

In the late 1990's, Alvaro Palacios arrived in the remote region of Bierzo, drawn to its mountain-sides of century-old Mencía vines. Within two years, he and his nephew Ricardo Pérez were making some of Spain's most riveting red wines here.

From the outset, the pair focused on Corullón, the town with the most promising vineyards. They've created five breathtaking single-vineyard wines in Corullón, including the sublime Las Lamas and the profound La Faraona.

### **Petalos**

Yet, Alvaro and Ricardo hadn't lost sight of the excellent vineyards in the rest of Bierzo. To take advantage of these sites, in 2003 they launched Petalos, priced incredibly to sell below \$20 a bottle. In just its first vintage, Petalos has proved itself one of the region's most exciting wines.

The only wine in the portfolio not made entirely from the domaine's own vineyards, Petalos is crafted from leased vineyards—farmed by Ricardo's crew—and purchased fruit. But regardless of ownership, each vineyard is very old and organically farmed, and is on either a steep slope or a hilltop, with plenty of schist in the soil. As Alvaro learned from the abundance of schist in L'Ermita, this brittle stone allows vine roots to work their way deep into the earth, insulating against drought, while imparting minerality.



*The steep old Mencía vineyards of Bierzo*

### **An Incredible First Vintage**

The 2003 Petalos offers the richness you'd expect from one of the hottest summers ever in this part of Spain. But with airing, you also get the minerality and complexity of old-vine Mencía grown in extraordinary *terroirs*. In fact, the 2003 Petalos offers a tantalizing glimpse of the monumental 2003 single-vineyard wines that will emerge from this cellar next year.

This is one of the great values in the wine market today. September arrival.

**2003 Petalos del Bierzo\***  
**Descendientes de José Palacios**  
**92 Parker**  
**\$16.95**



Parker: "This unfiltered, unfiltered offering, from steep vineyards (60-100 years old) ... is fashioned by the brilliant Spanish winemaker, Alvaro Palacios, from tiny yields of 25 hectoliters per hectare. The 2003 Petalos del Bierzo exhibits a blueberry and blackberry-scented bouquet, an intense ripeness, but plenty of finesse and elegance ... The textured, rich, beautifully made 2003 boasts a long, persistent finish. A distinctive, singularly-styled effort that admirably displays this varietal's potential, it should drink well for a decade."

## *A Phenomenal Premier-Cru Chablis Value*



*La Chablisienne's famous 1920's advertising poster*

Since 1923, La Chablisienne has been a source of outstanding wines from throughout the Chablis appellation, including virtually every *premier cru* and *grand cru* vineyard. And the value is consistently amazing.

Last month, *Wine Spectator's* Bruce Sanderson raved about La Chablisienne's hard-to-find 2002 Mont de Milieu. Don't miss this chance to buy it.

**2002 La Chablisienne**  
**Chablis 1er Cru Mont de Milieu\***  
**93 Wine Spectator**  
**\$27.95 bt. \$14.95 half bt.**

*Wine Spectator*: "Compact, yet dense and powerful, exhibiting honey, mineral and lemon aromas and flavors, all balanced with a vibrant structure and supple texture. Fine length, but needs time. Should age well over the next decade."

CALIFORNIA


# Prodigies

## *DuMol's Elusive Single-Vineyard Syrahs & Pinots*

Among the most charismatic young winemakers in California today, Andy Smith is the genius behind red-hot DuMol.

In the past, we've featured Andy's Burgundian Chardonnays, with their deep leesy flavors and fabulous textures. But Andy also makes incredible Pinot Noirs and Syrahs, particularly the micro-production single vineyard cuvées: *Ryan* and *Finn* Pinot and *Eddie's Patch* Syrah. Each is highly sought-after.

To demonstrate Andy Smith's gifts, we've assembled an offering of the remarkable 2001 and 2002 Finn, 2002 Ryan, and 2001 and 2002 Eddie's Patch. Because they were released some time ago, and were made in tiny quantities, all are nearly impossible to find today. Quantities are very limited.

 "As I was tasting ... I was thinking what a great young winemaker Andy Smith is .... Readers are well-advised to jump on the bandwagon before the mainstreamers find out about DuMol." R. Parker

### *The Pinot Noirs*

#### **2001 Pinot Noir "Finn"**

**95 Parker**

**\$75.00 limited**

Parker: "One of the most profound Pinot Noirs I tasted ... An extraordinary perfume of fresh mushrooms interwoven with smoke ... remarkably Burgundian, complex aromatic fireworks. Dense, rich ... with profound complexity..."

#### **2002 Pinot Noir "Finn"**

**94 Parker**

**\$75.00 limited**

Parker: "A clone for an old style Ponsot Clos de la Roche, the 2002 Pinot Noir Finn is a brilliant effort. A distinctive nose of plums, figs, sweet cherries, and flowers ... rich, concentrated ... boasting tremendous purity, stature, and nobility."

#### **2002 Pinot Noir "Ryan"**

**94 Wine Spectator**

**\$65.00 limited**

*Wine Spectator*: "... a rich, elegant band of spicy wild berry, black cherry and raspberry scents accented by nutmeg, spice and hazelnut before returning to the delicious medley of berry flavors. Impeccably balanced, graceful and delicate."

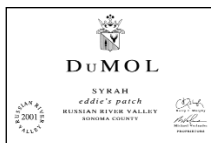
### *The Syrahs*

#### **2001 Syrah "Eddie's Patch"**

**93 Parker**

**\$59.95 limited**

Parker: "... a blockbuster effort from this hillside vineyard. One-hundred percent destemmed, and bottled unfiltered, it boasts a roasted meat, charcoal-infused, blackberry-scented nose with hints of violets in the background. Dense, full-bodied, and super-rich as well as gorgeously pure ..."



#### **2002 Syrah "Eddie's Patch"**

**95 Wine Spectator**

**\$69.95 limited**

*Wine Spectator*: "... pure, rich, intense and concentrated, with a wonderful core of zesty black cherry, blackberry, wild berry and pretty fresh earth scents. Just when you think the flow of flavors is about to slow down then the light, toasty vanilla oak flavors fold in, giving it yet another added dimension of flavor."



***As always in the summer, if it is too hot to deliver your wine to you safely, we are happy to store it in our temperature-controlled warehouse at no charge until cooler weather prevails. For urgent orders, overnight delivery options are available.***

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# Sorrel Hermitage Le Gréal

*"A freak ... but a wonderful one!" Robert Parker on the 2003*

When insiders talk about Hermitage's greatest wines, one *cuvée* sure to come up is Marc Sorrel's Le Gréal. Yet, because the wine's production never exceeds 325 cases, many collectors have never seen a bottle.



Hermitage.

This phenomenal Hermitage has been made since the early 1980s from the adjacent climats of Le Méal and Les Greffieux. Marc's father had bottled the two parcels separately, but the younger man believed the blend to be a more complete wine. Nearly two decades of great Le Gréals have proven Marc correct.

The wine's complexity is due to the contrasting character of the two plots. Le Méal, perfectly placed at mid-slope, has a mixture of chalk and small glacial stones, producing a wine of complex refinement. Les Greffieux, lying just below Le Méal, is mostly brown limestone and sandy clay, giving a richer, fuller wine.

Twenty percent of the blend comes from Les Gref-

fioux, the rest from 50- to 60-year-old vines in Le Méal. The Le Méal portion includes 8% of Marsanne planted in the vineyard in the early 1900s. This component reinforces the naturally floral character of the Le Méal *terroir*.

Vinification of the tiny production is traditional, with no destemming in great years; whole-bunch fermentation for 2 weeks; *élevage* in 6 to 7 year old Burgundy *pièces* for 18 to 24 months, and bottling without fining or filtration. The result is a mammoth Hermitage of great power, aromatic complexity and explosive fruit that is capable of 20 to 30 years of development.

The 1989 and 2003 vintages are arguably the historic benchmarks for Le Gréal. The '89 was the first monumental Le Gréal, while the 2003 could be the first to achieve perfection. We are pleased to offer both, along with three other rare examples of this important wine.

## 2003 Sorrel Hermitage Gréal\* 96-100 Parker

**\$235.00** extremely limited



## 1989 Sorrel Hermitage Gréal\* 95 Parker

**\$154.95** extremely limited

Parker: "... production was off by nearly half, so there are only 200 cases of this blockbuster wine ... it is an unctuously-textured, magnificently pure, rich, full wine that tastes like pure blackberry liqueur ... it should last for two decades ... minimum. It's a freak ... but a wonderful one!"

### 1998 Sorrel Hermitage Le Gréal\* ..... 169.95

Parker: "95+ rating ... spectacular ... one of the finest wines Sorrel has made, and it has the potential to be as good as his 1990, 1989, 1988 ...."

Parker: "... nearly immortal ... a heady, chewy ripeness, extraordinary presence, and an almost massive amount of weight and fruit ... a benchmark example ..."

### 1991 Sorrel Hermitage Le Gréal\* ..... 89.95

Parker: "93 rating ... spectacular ... a huge bouquet of Asian spices, licorice, black fruits, earth, and vanillin. Fabulously concentrated ... a terrific Hermitage."

### 1988 Sorrel Hermitage Le Gréal\* ..... 89.95

Parker: "92 rating ... a great wine, as well as a blockbuster Hermitage."

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