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Biondi-Santi

JUNE 26, 2007

A Mythic Terroir

A Profound Barolo Reveals a Vineyard's Greatness

In the late 1800s, when Giovan Battista Burlotto, a giant of the early Langhe, decided to buy vineyards in Barolo, he had his pick of the greatest sites. In the end he chose two.

Cannubi was an obvious choice, having been the region's most prestigious *cru* since at least the 1750s. The other site would surprise most of today's Barolo lovers, though at that time it rivaled Cannubi in fame.

That *cru* was Monvigliero, a south-facing Nebbiolo vineyard in Verduno, near the Langhe's northern border. And it was Monvigliero, not Cannubi, that became Burlotto's iconic vineyard, producing the Barolo that would make the Burlotto name famous.

For more than a century, five generations of Burlottos



*Monvigliero's
perfume of
Provençal black olive
tapenade with classic
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recognizable.*

have made one of Barolo's most compelling wines from Monvigliero. And for virtually all of that time, it has been a wine of soaring quality. But no one has ever made greater Barolos from this site than the family's fifth-generation winemaker, Fabio Alessandria, who, in just his third vintage, has produced a wine for the ages: 2001 Burlotto Barolo Monvigliero.

Monvigliero's Glory

The greatness of Monvigliero lies in its signature aromatics, which are unlike any Barolo we've ever experienced. Its astonishingly intense, and instantly recognizable, perfume of Provençal black olive tapenade, cedar and truffle is nothing short of hypnotic. And it

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The Father of Barolo: Giovan Battista Burlotto

During his 77 years as a winemaker (1850-1927) Giovan Battista Burlotto's accomplishments were rivaled only by those of Biondi-Santi and Vega Sicilia, as he achieved superstardom in a world dominated by French wines.

He was a larger-than life character who pioneered selling Barolo in bottle (not cask or demi-john), predating even Giacomo Conterno's Barolo Monfortino. He was official supplier to the Royal House of Savoy—which once ruled *Piemonte*—and his fame spread to other courts and among the continent's Barolo *conoscenti*. And his renown rested on a Barolo made almost entirely from Monvigliero.



G.B. Burlotto

G.B. Burlotto not only made his own name famous, he made Verduno one of Barolo's elite 19th-century addresses. Despite its remote location near the appellation's edge, Verduno came to rival Barolo itself as the most famous of Barolo's wine-producing communes.

G.B.'s death in 1927 not only took away Burlotto's driving force, it also deprived Verduno of its greatest champion. And so both faded into obscurity in the decades that followed. But with the arrival of a brilliant new winemaker in the 1990s, Burlotto's star is again rising, reclaiming its position as one of Barolo's great small producers. □

The Mythic Barolo Monvigliero

► could come from no place else on earth. It is the essence of its *terroir*.

Five generations of Burlottos have approached Monvigliero in a way that is both classical and idiosyncratic—to extract the vineyard’s essential greatness. At the core of this technique is a gentle crushing of *all* the grapes by foot, an incredible 60-day maceration on the skins and, of course, long aging in large wood *botte*.

In fact, when we visited the cantina last November, we were struck by how differently Fabio treated Monvigliero from every other wine in his cellar (including Barolo Cannubi). It’s an approach virtually unheard of today, yet its brilliance is revealed in every glass of this unique Barolo.

Secret of the Ancients

For centuries, it’s been known that crushing grapes by foot yields the softest tannins. The seeds and stems are not broken, avoiding the bitterness and hard tannins that can result from mechanical extraction. It’s the perfect way to treat a wine like Monvigliero, whose ethereal nuance is derived from 45-year-old vines in limestone-rich soil.

Such an approach also explains how Monvigliero’s fruit can withstand sixty days of skin contact—a practice that once flourished in the Langhe’s greatest cellars but vanished by the 1980s. The combination of foot



At left, the Burlotto cantina at the turn of the last century, and at right, Monvigliero.

treading, long maceration and traditional *botte*-aging produces a wine of powerful structure, but with a velvety mouthfeel.

While many modern Barolos bear little relationship to the past, Burlotto’s Monvigliero has been made almost identically for more than a century. In fact, the only notable difference between the wine

that Fabio makes today and that of his great-great-grandfather is that his is 100% from Monvigliero. As was the custom in those days, the early wines were blends of which Monvigliero was the dominant part. The first pure Barolo Monvigliero was made by Fabio’s mother in 1982, a wine that is now legendary.

This Offer

With so much of wine’s history and *terroirs* now thoroughly traversed—and *great* wines steeped in history increasingly inaccessible—it sometimes seems that there are few discoveries left to be made.

Yet, Burlotto’s 2001 Barolo Monvigliero, from one of the great vintages of our time, is just such a discovery. It excites every sense that a great Barolo should, while delivering nuances unique in our experience. But most of all, it is a window into a noble *terroir*.

It’s an honor to be able to offer this extraordinary wine, along with two other great vintages: 1999, Fabio’s first on his own, and 1996, which Fabio made with his father. All are superb examples of a profound Barolo.

2001 G.B. Burlotto Barolo Monvigliero

\$43.95 *bt.* **\$499.00** *cs.*



Intense, astonishingly perfumed aromas of black olive tapenade, cinnamon, tar, cherry blossom, citrus rind, rose hip, truffle, clove and incense. The palate gives a very delicate impression on entry and then glides steadily into a disarmingly rich finish. The texture is soft and seductive. Apart from the bouquet, the most startling thing is the fineness of the tannins, which are unlike any Barolo we’ve encountered. With time in the decanter, the wine gains in richness and the finish builds and lengthens. A beautiful, noble Barolo.

1999 G.B. Burlotto Barolo Monvigliero54.95

As spectacular as the 2001, the Provençal aromas are married to more classic Langhe scents of underbrush, truffle, tar and earth. The deceptively supple palate impression mirrors that of the 2001, but the structure seems slightly bigger. A couple of hours in a decanter contributes even more weight and sweetness. *One bottle limit.*

1996 G. B. Burlotto Barolo Monvigliero 59.95

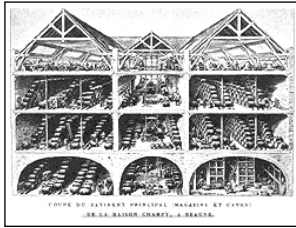
With the winemaking essentially the same, this has similar qualities to the 2001 but magnified by age. The nose is quintessential Monvigliero—black olive, cedar, tar, leather, truffle and earth—and time has added layers of flavor and sweetness. Still a baby, but showing the potential of this great vintage. *One bottle limit.*

RED BURGUNDY

An Old Name is Back

Champy Returns to Form with Stellar 2005s

Since its purchase by the Meurgey family in 1990, quality has soared at Champy, Burgundy's oldest merchant house (founded 1720). Today, Champy's wines are beginning to rival those of Drouhin, Jadot and Bouchard—and the 2005s are easily the best wines yet from the new regime.



Champy's 19th-century bâtiment

Under the direction of young Pierre Meurgey—who exchanges winemaking ideas with his friends Christophe Roumier and Etienne Grivot—Champy has fashioned an impressive series of red *vins de gardes* over the last fifteen years, using traditional methods to make marvelously ripe, well balanced and complex

wines with great aging potential. In 2005 Champy's old-school approach married brilliantly with the vintage's perfect ripeness to produce a range of Côte-de-Beaune *premier crus* with fresh, vivid fruit. They are superb expressions of their *terroirs*, firmly structured for long aging.

With the cost of 2005 red Burgundies at unprecedented levels, finding excellent, reasonably priced wine is becoming increasingly difficult. Champy's wines are a rare opportunity to experience the magic of 2005 at very attractive prices. But as is the norm in Burgundy, quantities are small, so hurry.

2005 Pernand Vergelesses 1er Cru Les Fichots* ...29.95

Burghound: "... exceptionally fresh and notably ripe raspberry liqueur aromas that merge into racy, intense and minerally flavors that possess excellent phenolic maturity of the structural elements and fine precision on the firm, dusty and linear finish. Lovely and recommended."

2005 Savigny Les Beaune 1er Cru Les Peuillets* ..37.95

Burghound: "91 rating ... a relatively earthy and expressive red berry fruit nose that combines with rich, generous and subtly mineral middle weight flavors that are delicious, balanced and firm on the beautifully intense finish. This is a fine effort and for the money a mid-level Savigny 1er usually sells for, a bargain."

2005 Beaune 1er Cru aux Cras*45.00

Burghound: "89-92 rating ... ripe red berry fruit aromas of impressive depth that introduce racy and generous middle weight flavors ... all wrapped around a core of minerality on the beautifully long finish. This is definitely more "old school" in style and character"

2005 Volnay 1er Cru Santenots*49.95

Burghound: "91 rating ... an elegant and pure nose of raspberry, cherry and warm earth aromas that dissolve into rich, full and impressively well defined flavors that are supple, sweet and delicious with a classy mouth feel and outstanding length on the complex finish. A lovely wine and very Santenots in character."

... & Brilliant 2005s from Jadot & Bouchard

While Champy has only recently rejoined the elite, its historic peers Louis Jadot and Bouchard Père et Fils have been there for years. Both houses produced some exceptional 2005s, like the following....

2005 Jadot Latricières Chambertin*139.95

Burghound: "93-95 rating ... highly expressive nose of finely detailed earthy red berry fruits that emphasize the underlying minerality before dissolving into rich, textured and supple medium full-bodied flavors that possess outstanding intensity and a powerful and stunningly long finish. This is one of those 'wow' wines with the balance and inner density to age for decades."

2005 Jadot Clos de la Roche*129.95

Burghound: "92-94 rating ... notes of dark berry fruit, mocha and café on the wood spice infused nose that merges into rich, dense, powerful and palate drenching flavors that are impressively concentrated and despite the ripeness, retain a fine sense of precision and length."

2005 Jadot Clos Vougeot*125.00

Burghound: "92-94 rating ... ripe earth-infused nose of red and dark berry fruit that possess a subtle savage character ... big, structured, well muscled and powerful ... the potential is considerable and I especially like the bold character. A wine that will last 3 to 4 decades."

STUNNING MAGNUM BUY!

2005 Bouchard Père et Fils

Beaune 1er Cru Teurons Magnum*89.95

Burghound: "91 rating ... concentrated fruit aromas ... leading to rich, full and borderline robust flavors that are obviously structured yet the very firm tannins are buried beneath an impressive amount of mid-palate sève. A serious Beaune built to last at least two decades."

NORTHERN RHONE

The Ancient One

Noël Verset's Historic Old-Vine Cornas

As the Northern Rhône's bastion of traditionalism, Cornas is the ultimate source of classically made Syrah of great depth, character and complexity. Clape is, of course, the best known name here, yet insiders know of someone who has been making great Cornas even longer: Noël Verset.



Priceless old terraced vines in Cornas

Incredibly, Verset has worked continuously in Cornas for 76 years, having begun at age 12 with his father Emmanuel in 1931. The first wine to wear his label, from a rented vineyard, came in 1943. He subsequently acquired his own vines, by purchase and inheritance; and as recently as 2003, he still climbed the steep Cornas hills daily to work the vines by hand.

Historic Treasures

Verset has never changed his methods—including crushing by foot and no destemming—believing that to do so would alter his wines' unique character. And while other Cornas growers have drifted towards single-vineyard bottlings, Verset makes only one cuvée, believing the sum to be greater than its parts.

He has also come to believe in the greatness of the ancient local Syrah clone, *la petite* Syrah, whose

small, olive-shaped berries produce a wine of greater aromatic complexity than modern clones. While one-third of Cornas has now been lost to new plantings, his vineyards are a historic treasure, still almost entirely planted to the *ancienne la petite* Syrah.

A Vanishing Legacy

Over the years, Verset acquired some of the finest vineyards in Cornas—all on steep, terraced slopes of granite, sand and limestone. Particular prizes were his piece of Chaillots, planted about 1910, and his section of Sabarotte, planted in 1903.

But because he has no successor, Verset has lately begun to sell his vineyards. Thus, after the 2001 vintage, his wines will never again contain fruit from Sabarotte. And the amount of wine he's making has been reduced to a trickle, with 2003 rumored to be the last commercially available vintage.

With their enormous intensity of fruit, and their creamy texture when mature, many Syrah enthusiasts consider Verset's the best, and most authentic, Cornas of all. It's an honor to offer a selection of these important and vanishing wines. *Very limited.*

2001 Verset Cornas
89-92 Steve Tanzer
\$69.95



1999 Verset Cornas
93 John Gilman
\$89.95



Tanzer: "Blueberry, gunflint, licorice and minerals on the nose; essence of old-style Cornas. Sweet, dense, rich and serious, with sappy, sauvage black fruit and spice flavors. A mouthfilling Cornas of considerable power. Finishes with firm but thoroughly ripe tannins. An excellent showing."

1996 Verset Cornas **39.95**

Livingstone-Learmonth's *Wines of the Northern Rhone*: ★★.

1990 Verset Cornas **135.00**

Parker: "The quintessence of Syrah and of Cornas—almost like port ... remarkably rich, thick, and opaque, and so phenomenally intense that you could almost stand a spoon in it! Unbelievably concentrated ... a remarkable, even spectacular Cornas"

Jonathan Livingstone-Learmonth, *The Wines of the Northern Rhone*: ★★★★★.

John Gilman, *A View from the Cellar*: "A superb example of the vintage ... deep and compelling ... on the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and well-balanced ... more complexity will come with further bottle age, but it is hard not to revel in the wine's voluptuous and generous youth. A fine, fine vintage chez Verset."

1988 Verset Cornas **135.00**

1986 Verset Cornas **69.95**

The 1988 is, of course, deservedly famous—and sought-after—but both wines are classic and at the peaks of their considerable powers.

CHABLIS

Dauvissat, The Crus

Part I: "La Forest"

We have long worshipped at Vincent Dauvissat's throne. Over the past decade, we have probably bought and sold more of his Chablis than any other merchant in America. In fact, so great is our devotion that not long ago one poster on *erobertparker.com's* Mark Squires Bulletin Board referred to us as the "House of Dauvissat."



La Forest

We are constantly on the hunt for well-cellared older vintages, assembling them into offers that cast a unique perspective on this great domaine. Sometimes it's an encyclopedic vertical, other times it's about the vintage and occasionally it's about a particular *cru*. But this time we are going through the domaine, *cru* by *cru*, focussing on each in sequence.

La Forest

And so we begin the series with La

For a complete profile on Vincent Dauvissat, visit our website:
www.rarewineco.com

Forest, the *premier cru* that most closely rivals Dauvissat's *grand crus*. Not only does La Forest regularly achieve *grand cru* levels of expressiveness, weight and depth, it boasts a pronounced forest floor and anise seed nuance that comes with age.

These qualities come from a high percentage of old vines (up to 60-years-old); a perfect southern exposure; and a classic Kimmeridgian soil that is—like the great *grand cru* Les Clos—mostly clay. Such soils are cool and they retain less heat. Thus, they are vulnerable to reduced yields when Chablis suffers its frequent spring frosts; but in warm, sunny years, they achieve *grand cru* complexity and richness.

Nearly as coveted as Dauvissat's Clos and Preuses, it is always a challenge to find older vintages of La Forest. This makes the offer that follows quite extraordinary.

- 2005 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest54.95
- 2005 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest Half bt. *...34.95
Tanzer: "91-93 rating ... a superb *premier cru* in the making"
- 2004 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest49.95
- 2004 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest Mag.145.00
- 2004 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest Half bt.29.95
Tanzer: "91+ rating ... an uncanny combination of elegance and thrust" *Burghound*: "91 rating ... definitely one to buy and cellar"
- 2003 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest**39.95
- 2003 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest Mag. 110.00
Tanzer: "91 rating ... powerful, penetrating flavors."
- 2002 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest89.95
- 2002 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest Half bt.49.95
Tanzer: "93+ rating ... precise and very intense, with great energy and grip ... will be a knockout"

- 2001 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest59.95
Tanzer: "90+ rating ... superb length ..."
- 2000 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest **89.95
Tanzer: "93+ rating ... *grand cru* size and cut" J. Gilman: "93+ rating ... the greatest white Burgundy value out there."
- 1997 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest**59.95
Wine Spectator: "... wonderfully balanced ..."
- 1996 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest**95.00
- 1996 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest Mag.275.00
Burghound: "91 rating ... Terrific, beautiful Chablis and entirely classic."
- 1995 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest89.95
John Gilman: "92 rating ... tastes like a "baby Clos" ... will drink well for another 15 years. Lovely juice."
- 1989 R & V Dauvissat Chablis La Forest225.00
Legendary and rare. *One-bottle limit*.

**Dauvissat-Camus label. As noted by both Tanzer and *Burghound*, bottles with this label are *identical* to what appears under the more familiar Dauvissat label. Vincent Dauvissat farms and makes the wines from all of his family's vineyards, but since some of the vines are owned by different family members, both labels are used for the same cuvées.

*Great Whites:
A Legend in the
Making*

2003 Guigal Hermitage Blanc Ex-Voto* • 179.95 very ltd.

Parker: "96 rating ... the quintessential white Hermitage ... licorice, quince, marmalade, and truffle notes ... great purity and richness, and a profound mouthfeel and length ... one of the most profound dry whites I ever tasted."

RIBERA DEL DUERO

Two from Alejandro

2004 Pesquera & 1995 Alenza show that the Old Man still has his touch.

Alejandro Fernandez is the father of Ribera del Duero wine as we know it today. Before he founded Pesquera in 1972, Vega Sicilia was the region's only exporter. But Fernandez's meteoric rise in the 1980s, as well as his fierce loyalty to the native Tempranillo grape, inspired dozens of small wineries to emulate his success.

Despite the competition, Fernandez remained *the* source when it came to wines that are a traditional expression of local *terroirs* and the Tempranillo grape.

In 1986, Fernandez expanded his work, purchasing a south-facing site on the Duero River that he believed had even better potential than his original Pesquera

vineyards. He named the project "Condado de Haza," making his first *crianza* wines in 1993. Then, in 1995, he made his first prestige cuvée: Alenza, a wine intended to rival his esteemed Pesquera "Janus."

This Offer

A few weeks ago, we acquired attractively priced parcels of two of Fernandez's best wines of recent years. One is the 2004 Pesquera Tinto, which is certainly the finest version of this wine since the fabled 1994. The other is the important first vintage of Alenza, a wine that has already become scarce and collectible.

We are pleased to offer both of these outstanding wines at compellingly low prices.

2004 Pesquera Tinto

93 Jay Miller 92 Josh Reynolds

\$24.95 reg. \$30.00



Jay Miller in *The Wine Advocate*: "... lead pencil, earth, black currants, and blackberry liqueur ... a sexy wine" Josh Reynolds in the *IWC*: "... vibrant blackberry and cassis flavors, notes of minerals and licorice ... striking purity and finesse ... A wonderful vintage for this wine."

1995 Alenza*

94 Steve Tanzer

\$67.50 reg. \$90.00



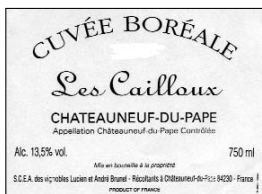
Steve Tanzer: "Incredibly sweet aromas of crystallized dark berries, iron, blood and pepper. Fat, ripe, huge and deep; very deep, rather Graves-like flavors include crystallized dark berries, earth, smoke, tobacco and iron. Very solidly structured."

Cuvée Boréale: Cult Châteauneuf-du-Pape

Andre Brunel is best-known for his legendary old-vine Cuvée Centenaire. But it is not widely known that he makes another rare Châteauneuf: Cuvée Boréale.

Made entirely from Syrah, sightings are rare; in fact, the last time we were able to get any for sale was the 1995 vintage. However, we have just acquired a small amount of the superb 2000 Boréale.

This wine has acquired a cult following, not only for its rarity but for its remarkable quality. We noted on a



Danish website the report of a tasting of elite Syrahs in which the 1996 Cuvée Boréale tied 1990 La Chapelle for first place with 96 points, edging out 1995 Chave.

Yet, Boréale has a very different style from Northern Rhône Syrahs, given it's Châteauneuf du Pape origins. It seems riper, with remarkable sweetness, and its aromatics and flavors spring straight from its native Provençal soil.

There can't be more than a few hundred cases of this made, so we're delighted to be able to offer this rarity at a great price.

2000 Les Cailloux "Boréale" Châteauneuf 49.95

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BRUNELLO & CHAMPAGNE

1975 Biondi-Santi Riserva

& Other Great Early Brunellos

Biondi-Santi is Brunello's most venerated name. It symbolizes its origins, having been the first Brunello made commercially in the 19th century. It also symbolizes its potential for ageability and greatness, and wines like the 1891, 1955 and 1975 Riservas are the closest thing to Holy Grail wines that Tuscany has yet made.

**1975 Biondi-Santi
Brunello Riserva**
\$450.00



Sheldon Wasserman in *Italy's Noble Red Wines*:
"★★★+ rich and mouthfilling, real class and concentration ... a fine wine by any standard ..."

Clive Coates: "Quite splendid colour, like a Latour 1961 ... sumptuous creamy-rich fruit, very distinguished ... Very complex. Ample, aromatic, great length and depth of character."

Recently, we were fortunate in acquiring some pristine 1975 Biondi-Santi Riserva from a European cellar. We are pleased to offer it, along with a selection of mature Brunellos from other classic vintages and producers. Each wine speaks volumes about not only Brunello's nobility, but also its ability to age with extraordinary grace.

- 1981 Biondi-Santi Brunello Riserva** 225.00
- 1982 Biondi-Santi Brunello Riserva** 325.00
Wasserman: "★★(★) richly flavored ..."
- 1983 Biondi-Santi Brunello Riserva** 275.00
Wasserman: "★★(★)+ packed with flavor ... real class ..."
- 1975 Barbi Brunello di Montalcino*** 95.00
A beautifully nuanced example from a giant of early Brunello.
- 1982 Il Poggione Brunello di Montalcino** 95.00
- 1985 Il Poggione Brunello Riserva** 125.00
- 1990 Il Poggione Brunello Riserva** 110.00

These fantastic bottles from revered vintages are testaments to Poggione's century-long greatness.

Renaudin: Last Chance for a Great Champagne Buy

We find mature Champagnes uniquely seductive, and so we're always on the prowl for well-cellared examples. At the top of our list are, of course, old Krug, Salon and Clos des Goisses. But we also look for lower profile—but still high-quality—Champagnes offering the richness of age at less painful prices. With the explosion of interest in these wines, our search has become much harder, and more costly, but still we persevere.

One of our most exciting finds, a few years ago, was a 1986 rosé in magnum from the little-known house of Renaudin. One of Champagne's oldest producers (founded 1724), Renaudin's obscurity can be explained by their not having sold Champagne under their own label until 1970. At that time, they also began a program of laying down their best wines, undisgorged, for further aging deep in their cellars.

This rosé came from this stock. We raided their supplies twice, in 2004 and 2005, and then laid low for a



Renaudin's ancient estate.



couple of years. Finally, this spring we returned for one last bite, purchasing the remaining magnums in their cellars.

If you were one of those lucky people who bought this wine earlier, you know how incredible it is. But even if you weren't, you won't want to miss out. Hurry, quantities are extremely limited.

1986 Renaudin Rosé
"L'Espiegle"
\$99.95 magnum



A luscious blend of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, we are blown away by this wine. The color is a beautiful light salmon and the nose is expansive, packed with scents of nutmeg, allspice and fresh strawberries. On the palate, the texture is wonderfully crisp yet delicate; the mousse is creamy, and the fruit is vibrant, concentrated and focused. A sensational rosé at an even more sensational price. Unbelievable!

Born to Allure

The Maybachs Bring their Dazzle to Napa Valley Cabernet

Just above Screaming Eagle on the eastern flank of Napa Valley, a new Cabernet of potentially epic stature is emerging. In fact, so strong has the buzz been that the first vintage, 2004, completely sold out before release *and* before samples could go out to the press.



*Left photo: Karl (L) & Wilhelm Maybach (R).
Right photo: an early Maybach motorcar.*



Wilhelm's son Karl retained the monopoly for Zeppelin engines into the 1930s, while his motorcars were the ultimate in luxury. In fact, so lustrous was the Maybach nameplate that in 2002 Daimler-Chrysler rolled out a new line of Maybach motorcars selling for up to \$475,000.

Chris Maybach's Materium Cabernet is stirring up the market in part because it's being made by the red-hot Thomas Rivers Brown (Schrader Vineyard) and because it's 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from a *single parcel*—a rarity these days and a challenge to any winemaker who attempts it.

Materium also boasts a providential site: the Weitz Vineyard, one of the Valley's great *terroirs*, 1,000 feet above the valley floor next to Phelps' Backus Vineyard. Weitz is more rock than soil—and capable of producing Cabernet of surreal complexity.

But there's one more reason this wine has "blue chip" written all over it: the family making it. For more than a century, the Maybachs have been famed for making products that are coveted by the only people who can afford them: the very, very rich.

An Automotive Icon

The Maybach legend was born with Wilhelm Maybach, the founding engineer at Daimler in the 1880s and designer of the first automobile, the first high-speed engine, the first Mercedes (a handmade racing car), and all the engines that powered Count Zeppelin's early airships.

Back in the Saddle

Eventually, the Maybachs settled in San Francisco, where Wilhelm's great-grandson Chris became a filmmaker. But Chris wanted to reestablish his family's luxury goods legacy. Cars were out (Daimler-Chrysler owns the Maybach name), but wine was not, and so Maybach Family Vineyards was born.

Chris appears to have achieved his goal right out of the box. Simply on the strength of the buzz (before a single review was published), he sold all 380 cases of his first vintage (2004) at \$110 a bottle.

We were among the earliest to taste the wine and jumped at the chance to secure a parcel. Materium is one of the most distinctive Napa Cabs we've tasted in a long time, with a striking minerality and mintiness that reminds us of 1970s-era Cabs. But such things will come as no surprise to anyone who knows the Weitz Vineyard. Hurry.

**2004 Maybach Materium
Cabernet Sauvignon**
\$110.00 limited



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