

THE RARE WINE CO.
21481 EIGHTH STREET EAST
SONOMA, CA 95476
email: sales@rarewineco.com



1-800-999-4342
1-707-996-4484
Fax: 1-707-996-4491
1-800-893-1501

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JUNE 7, 2005

CALIFORNIA

Pax's Great 2003's


More Magnificent Syrahs from a California Superstar

Following its virtual extinction after Prohibition, Syrah has enjoyed an explosion of interest in California—particularly in the state's warm microclimates. But until Pax Mahle, few Californians had attempted to capture the magic of the Northern Rhône, crafting great Syrah from relatively cool sites.

Making successively more exciting wines in each of his first four vintages (2000 to 2003), Pax has emerged not only as a pioneer of high-altitude, cool-climate Syrah; he has also come to symbolize the arrival of a new collecting genre: Cult Syrahs. With minute production—Pax makes twelve different Syrah *cuvées* ranging in size from 100-550 cases—his 2003's are not only nearly unobtainable on the retail market, they have already become sought after as auction fodder.

Origins

Pax—formerly a Dean & DeLuca wine buyer—had long dreamed of making Syrah like those of his favorite Hermitage and Côte Rôtie growers. His dream became a reality in 2000 when he learned, by chance, that Stu Bewley's Alder Springs Vineyard in Mendocino County contained a small section of Syrah. Not only was it the right microclimate, but Pax was intrigued by Bewley's obsessive vineyard management, reportedly using *tweez-*

 "Pax Mahle looks to be a 'natural' ... he is fashioning some of northern California's most remarkable Syrahs."
Robert Parker

ers to cull bad berries from bunches.

Bewley let Pax have a ton of Syrah for his first vintage (2000), and with time the young winemaker added other extraordinary sites, including Walker Vine Hill in the Russian River Valley, the rock-covered Obsidian in Knight's Valley and Griffin's Lair in the Petaluma Wind Gap.

Pax has also shown himself to have Chave-like skills as a blender, creating three multi-*cru* *cuvées* where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts: Keltie, Christine and Moriah.

The 2003's

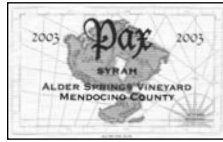
Last Spring we were privileged to do a major offering of Pax's superb 2002's. But as exciting as the '02's were, the 2003's are a step up—taking advantage of not only the year's ripeness, but also Pax's growth as a winemaker. The 2003's are his most expressive and "transparent" wines to date, revealing incredible site-specific nuances. He has also increased his use of whole clusters and scaled back the amount of new wood, allowing the fruit to speak even more clearly.

Wines of great richness and personality, these are among the finest Syrahs yet made in the Western Hemisphere. Don't miss them. ►

CALIFORNIA

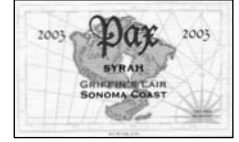
Pax: The Single-Vineyard 2003 Syrahs

2003 Alder Springs
93 Spectator 92 Tanzer
\$65.00

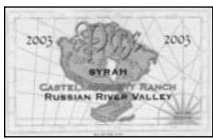


There are just 207 cases of 2003 Syrah from Alder Springs, a site whose August temperatures range from 40°F at night to 100°F during the day. Tanzer: "Broad and supple but not at all sweet despite its chocolatey richness. Large-scaled and mouthfilling ... A big boy, finishing with major, horizontal tannins and strong, fresh black fruit flavors." *Wine Spectator*: "An amazing Syrah."

2003 Griffin's Lair
93-94 Tanzer
\$59.95

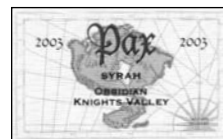


The second vintage for this wine from a southwest-facing site in the Petaluma Wind Gap. Steve Tanzer: "... exotic aromas of blackberry, violet, gunflint, cured meats and black pepper; very Syrah. Then smoky, pliant and creamy-sweet ... offers lovely inner-mouth aromatic character and enticing sappy fruit ... Finishes long and ripe."



2003 Castelli-Knight Ranch
93-94 Tanzer
\$54.95

Castelli-Knight Ranch's orange soil produces Syrah of astonishing concentration. Tanzer: "Knockout pungent aromas of black olive tapenade, Tellicherry pepper, crushed rocks and iron; like a blend of Cornas and Côte Rôtie. The flavors of liquid rocks and black pepper are framed by integrated acidity and mount impressively toward the back. A wine of building power ..."

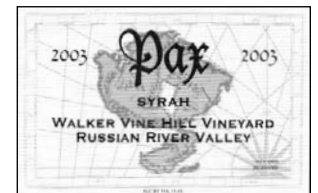


2003 Obsidian
93+ Tanzer
\$54.95

Tanzer: "... from a high, rocky vineyard rich in volcanic deposits from Howell Mountain ... features blackberry, purple flowers, flint, tar, licorice and smoke ... the sweetness of the powerful, deep black fruit is almost shocking. This has terrific depth of flavor and an exotic, liqueur-like aspect ... may be even better than the excellent '02 release."

2003 Syrah
Walker Vine Hill
94-96 Parker
\$69.95

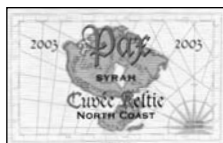
The finest version yet from this cool Sonoma microclimate. Parker: "... a stunning, enormously concentrated 2003 ... A saturated purple color is accompanied by a massive blast of blackberries, cassis, and white flowers in this full-throttle, super-concentrated effort. There is a meaty-like richness in the mouth, as if one were chewing the wine rather than drinking it."



The Cuvées

With his brilliant Keltie, Christine and Moriah, Pax shows his skill as a master blender.

2003 Syrah "Cuvée Keltie"
94-96 Parker
\$79.95



Parker: "Made from 100% whole clusters, the most backward and dense of this portfolio ... It offers up scents of chocolate, blackberries, new saddle leather, flowers, and earth in its Northern Rhône-like personality. Concentrated, with good structure as well as loads of tannin and extract, this beauty needs 2-4 years of bottle age; it should keep for 10-15 years."

2003 Syrah "Cuvée Christine" 59.95

A blend of four of the most concentrated Syrahs from Pax's 2003 harvest. Parker: "... it possesses 15.6% alcohol ... vibrant and well-delineated, it offers up notes of black fruits, flowers, and earth." Tanzer: "... concentrated flavors of black raspberry and dark chocolate ... finishes with big but soft tannins that coat the entire palate."

2003 "Cuvée Moriah" 59.95

A brilliant *hommage* to Châteauneuf-du-Pape, crafted from Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, etc., aged in just 10% new oak. Parker: "... it possesses a southern Rhône-like character filled with notes of kirsch liqueur, underbrush, and pepper. This fragrant, seductive red is best consumed during its first 4-6 years of life."

PIEDMONT

Vietti's Powerhouse

The Rare Barolo Villero Riserva

Of all the elite vineyards of Barolo, Villero may produce the fewest single-cru wines. The reason is simple: this Castiglione Falletto vineyard needs perfect weather to produce a great wine; in less than ideal years, it tends to produce a big, burly wine lacking in nuance. And so growers have traditionally paired it with the juice from other sites (notably Rocche), to produce a Barolo with power and finesse.



The 1997, 1989 and 1990 Vietti Barolo Villero Riservas.

a single-cru Villero; he decided to make it Vietti's marquee wine, the only Riserva of this great house. But as a seasoned *Barolista*, he understood Villero's limitations: he committed to only making the wine in the dry, sunny years that favor Villero (12 times since 1971). In all other years, he would use the fruit in his blended Barolos.

In fact, of the top producers, only Giacosa, Mauro Mascarello and Vietti have attempted to make an outstanding mono-cru Barolo Villero. Giacosa's was made between 1978 and 1996, and only occasionally (1990, for example) did it soar. Mascarello's Villero has been dependable, but it never approaches the magic of his Monprivato. This has left Vietti's Alfredo Currado to truly test Villero's potential.

Beginning in 1971, Currado not only chose to produce

To further distinguish the *cuvée*, Currado has commissioned a noted artist to produce each label (*à la* Mouton Rothschild). The labels, the transcendent quality, and production as low as 150 cases in some years have long combined to make this Vietti's most sought-after Barolo. This is despite the fact that the wine now retails at \$150+ on release.

Over the past few months, we have rounded up several classic examples of this wine, which we are pleased to offer at well below-market prices. Quantities are very limited, however.

1996 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva
94+ Tanzer 97 Spectator
\$119.95



1997 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva
97 Wine Spectator
\$119.95

Tanzer: "Knockout perfume ... Brilliantly delineated ... strong but thoroughly buffered acidity giving the sweet flavors uncanny penetration and cut. Very dense and very long ... a great example of this classic vintage."

Wine Spectator: "Licorice and berry aromas ... Full-bodied, with silky and caressing tannins and an after-taste that goes on for minutes ... A very special wine."

1985 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva175.00
1985 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva Magnum350.00

Wasserman: "★★★★ rating. Tartufo and woody aroma, raspberry and leather components; powerful yet with class and elegance ... rich, open and concentrated, a lot of structure, very long; great class."

Wine Spectator: "Loads of tobacco, earth and prune character that turns to flowers and freshly sliced fruit. Full-bodied, with silky tannins that build on your palate and turn to the finest cashmere. Long and caressing. This is one of the greatest wines of Piedmont, a beauty."

1990 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva159.95

A mythic Barolo—never reviewed in the U.S.—that upon release in 1996 immediately vanished into the cellars of a few fortunate collectors and restaurants. A wine of brooding power, but with the opulence of the vintage. A classic, rare Villero.

1989 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva159.95

1989 Vietti Barolo Villero Riserva Magnum325.00

A legendary wine from a profound Barolo vintage. Wasserman wrote: "★★★★(★) rating. Great extract and concentration; loads of tannin and structure, robust but with style and length."

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CALIFORNIA

Hudson & Hyde

Ramey's Spectacular 2002 Single-Vineyard Chardonnays

David Ramey is known for making Chardonnays that combine New World richness with the refinement and complexity of *premier* or *grand cru* white Burgundy. Several Ramey cuvées have contributed to this reputation; but the greatest credit must go to the limited-production Hyde and Hudson bottlings.

Ramey's Hyde Chardonnay was first made in 1996, and Hudson was introduced in 1997; each has performed brilliantly every year since. But Chardonnay lovers may need to find a new measuring stick once they've tasted the 2002's.



The Hudson Vineyard.

Ramey sources the fruit for these two wines from vineyards situated just two miles apart on the north side of Highway 121 in Carneros. The sites have similar southern exposures and cool microclimates, and are farmed by legendary growers, Larry Hyde and Lee Hudson.

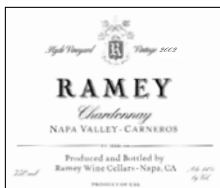
Ramey's 2002 Hyde and Hudson capture the opulence of the vintage, while showcasing the nuances we associate with these vineyards. And as beautifully as they're drinking now, both wines will get even better with cellaring.

It's an honor to be able to offer these uniquely compelling Chardonnays in both bottle and magnum.

2002 Ramey Chardonnay "Hyde Vineyard"

95 Tanzer

\$49.95 bt. \$110.00 mag.

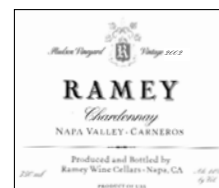


Tanzer: "Knockout nose combines lime blossom, soft citrus notes, pear and white flowers. Sweet, juicy and penetrating, with highly complex flavors of soft citrus fruits, lime, peach, nectarine, flowers and mint. At once solid and vibrant. Finishes with palate-staining persistence and terrific grip. A great California Chardonnay."

2002 Ramey Chardonnay "Hudson Vineyard"

92+ Tanzer

\$49.95 bt. \$110.00 mag.



Tanzer: "Lower-toned aromas of iodine, minerals and smoke. Fat, dense and rich, but less showy today than the Hyde and not yet showing the lift of that bottling. But this layered wine is in a mute state today."

Tardieu-Laurent's 1999 Northern Rhône Blockbusters

In 1999, Côte Rôtie and Hermitage produced wines of epic power and richness. In terms of the sheer size of the wines, one must go back decades to find wines even remotely like the top 1999's.

Michel Tardieu is among those who made staggering wines in these appellations in 1999. Yet, finding these wines today is next-to-impossible. This could be your only chance.

1999 Tardieu-Laurent Côte Rôtie

95-97 Parker

\$125.00



Parker: "... flirts with perfection ... a glorious nose of over-ripe blackberries, cassis, violets and vanillin. Unctuously textured, unbelievably fat and dense, with a texture and richness not dissimilar from some of the profound 1947 Pomerols ..."

1999 Tardieu-Laurent Hermitage

95-98 Parker

\$150.00

Parker: "... astonishing ... with outstanding richness, layers of extract and glycerin ... this monster wine (crammed with creme de cassis, licorice, liquid minerals and smoke) will need 8-10 years of cellaring, and will keep for 35 years."

CHAMPAGNE

Showstopper

1990 Charles Heidsieck Brut Millésimé

Champagne's 1990 vintage was nothing short of magical. The year's perfect weather produced dozens of great wines. But the *Wine Spectator* has singled out two as the vintage's best. One was expected: Krug. The other was a shocker: Charles Heidsieck's Brut Millésimé.

The *Wine Spectator's* love affair with 1990 Charles Heidsieck dates back to 1998, when the wine came out on top in its annual Champagne tastings. In fact, in that year the magazine tasted some 226 Champagnes blind, including such notables as Cristal, Cuvée Winston Churchill, Grande Dame, Dom Perignon (Brut and Rose), even 1976 Krug Collection. Charles Heidsieck's 1990 not only got the highest score (97), it also earned the following praise:

"This dazzling brut from the powerful 1990 vintage marries the forceful fruit flavors and firm texture of the vintage with the Charles Heidsieck house style of fine-beaded effervescence and enticing flavor complexity. It will be fine for the millennium, but given its vibrancy and lingering finish you could just as well save it to ring in 2010."

Yet, Charles Heidsieck wasn't done making noise in the pages of the *Wine Spectator*. Three years later, in



2001, the 1990 was tasted again, this time earning an even higher rating: **98** points.

A Meteoric Rise

The 1990 Charles Heidsieck's Brut Millésimé symbolizes the dramatic turnaround at one of Champagne's most historic houses—following its purchase in 1985 by Remy Martin. The Cognac producer spared no expense in raising the quality of Heidsieck's wines, and the superb 1990 can be viewed as the first shot across the

bow. With its preponderance of Pinot Noir, this wine offers marvelous richness, combined with real elegance.

We have just secured a small, pristine lot of this legendary Champagne at a great price. Don't miss it.

**1990 Charles Heidsieck
Brut Millésimé
98 *Wine Spectator*
\$79.95**

Wine Spectator: "Seamless from start to finish. An elegantly woven tapestry of fruit blossoms, citrus, honey and vanilla, creamy and pliant, finely integrated with the firm structure. This really sings today."

Renaudin Encore

More Great Mature Champagne at Give-Away Prices

Last fall, we delighted our Champagne-loving customers by offering a marvelous 1985 brut and magnums of a knockout 1986 rosé from one of the oldest houses in Champagne, Renaudin. The prices were *incredible*.

We sold every bottle and magnum we could get and thought that we'd never see these monumental Champagne bargains again. But then this spring we learned that the house miraculously had a few cases left of both wines. They were soon on their way to us.

If you are looking for superb older Champagnes for drinking this summer and fall, don't delay.

1985 Renaudin Brut Réserve Spéciale "CD" 45.00

A 75/25 Chardonnay-Pinot blend produced from Renaudin's best vineyards, this special 1985 bottling once won the Mondial du Vin in Brussels. Today, the wine is even more impressive, with scents of toast and minerals, a full, rich palate and creamy mousse. Amazing value!

1986 Renaudin Rosé "L'Espiègle" Magnum79.95

An even more incredible value ... 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.

2001 Finca Dofi

The Greatest Vintage Yet for a Spanish Benchmark

Alvaro Palacios is widely considered the finest Spanish winemaker of his generation. Today, his projects in Priorat, Bierzo and Rioja produce more than a dozen wines, including such trophies as L'Ermita and the extraordinary single-vineyards of Bierzo.

But the wine that displays the full range of Alvaro's gifts is the one he made first: Finca Dofi. Alvaro purchased the Dofi vineyard in 1990 as a small plot of vines just a few years old. Over time, as he planted more vines, the original vines matured, and so did his winemaking. Today, Dofi produces a wine that many feel is second only to L'Ermita as Priorat's best.

There have been a number of superb Dofi's made; but the 2001 is shaping up to be the finest yet. It has all of the polish, depth and finesse of previous vintages, but with an extra dimension of richness. *Very limited.*

2001 Finca Dofi
\$59.95 *bot.* **\$145.00** *1.5L*
\$325.00 *3-liter*



Steve Tanzer: "92 rating. Very ripe but fresh aromas of black cherry, licorice and flowers. Dense, sweet and lush but also suave and penetrating, with black fruit, violet and lead pencil flavors nicely framed by firm acidity. This really mounts on the back end and lingers. ... a Priorat wine of atypical finesse."

Parker: "93 rating .. appears to be the finest vintage of this *cuvée* I have yet tasted ... a sweet nose of *crème de cassis*, blackberries, minerals, and a hint of acacia flowers ... intense, opulent"

Domaine des Deux Roches

The Last of the Great 2002's ... Plus the Superb '03 Terres Noires

Of all the Domaine des Deux Roches wines we've offered over the past decade, we have to go back to 1990 to find a vintage as magical as the 2002's. In fact, when we found out this winter that the domaine had a few unsold cases of 2002 St. Véran Vieilles Vignes and 2002 Pouilly Fuissé La Roche, we grabbed them all.



Like each of the cuvées, the Pouilly Fuissé La Roche is made from very old vines.

But we also made sure to reserve some of Deux Roches' superb 2003 St. Véran Terres Noires, a wine that marries the vintage's massive richness with a sleek minerality. Like so many of Deux Roches' wines, it is one of the great values of white Burgundy.

2002 St. Véran "Vieilles Vignes"

\$18.95 *bot.* **\$225.00** *case*

With its Meursault-like qualities, this opulent white Burgundy tastes twice as expensive as it is. The vines are more than 50 years old and on a south-facing plateau. Michel Bettane has written: "vinified in new oak, it is a great white Burgundy of concentration and power."

2002 Pouilly-Fuissé "La Roche Vieilles Vignes"

\$19.95 *bot.* **\$239.00** *case*

La Roche comes from a remarkable *terroir*, on top of a massive limestone rock. It's a tiny section of very old vines, south-facing, from which just 500 cases are made a year. This wine offers loads of racy, juicy, mineral fruit, with crisp acidity and a touch of oak. Delicious and will age superbly.

2003 St. Véran "Terres Noires"

\$16.95 *bot.* **\$9.95** *half bt.*

Terres Noires is produced from predominately old vines on a south-facing, limestone-covered slope. Terres Noires is deliberately made to reveal every nuance of its origins, and the 2003 is a gem: quite rich and buttery, but with a strong underlying minerality. A sensational value.

PIEDMONT

2003 Mongovone

A 70-year-old Vineyard Yields a Barbera of Historic Richness

When the 2003 Barolos and Barbarescos are released two or three years from now, we will be hearing a lot about the vintage's off-the-charts richness. But Nebbiolo wasn't the only grape to luxuriate in the year's sunshine. Many are saying that Barbera enjoyed its greatest vintage ever. And if you want to experience one of the year's masterpieces, grab Stefano Perrone's heroic 2003 Barbera "Mongovone."



and 2001, but made no Mongovone in the difficult 2002 vintage. With 2003, the cuvée reaches a new level, offering more of everything. It is one of the most spectacular Barberas we've ever tasted.

With just 400 cases produced, quantities are extremely limited. Hurry!

2003 Perrone Barbera d'Asti "Mongovone"*

\$29.95 bottle \$350.00 case

This is just the third vintage for this remarkable Barbera, made from 70-year-old vines. Acquired by Perrone in 2000, the 1.3-hectare Mongovone vineyard was planted in 1932 and boasts a precipitous southwest-facing slope. In other words, Mongovone offers not only very old vines, but *perfect* drainage and exposure.

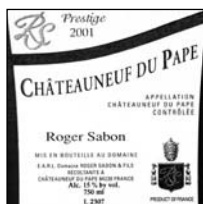
Perrone produced amazing Mongovones in both 2000

This is even richer and more opulent than the 2000 Mongovone that Robert Parker called "spectacular." The supercharged '03 offers surreal depth of color, an explosive nose of roses, cherries, smoke and tar; and a hugely rich, lavishly textured palate that goes on and on. A fabulous wine, and an incredible value.

Roger Sabon's 2001 Cuvée Prestige

Roger Sabon is among Châteauneuf's most respected growers—and owner of some of its oldest vineyards. He is perhaps best known for his painfully expensive **Le Secret de Sabon**, of which just 100 cases are made. But a better measure of his brilliance is **Cuvée Prestige**, made from *very* old Grenache vines. We are pleased to offer the superb 2001 at a fantastic price.

**2001 Roger Sabon
Châteauneuf du Pape
"Cuvée Prestige"
94 Parker
\$49.95**



Parker: "... a wine of impressive intensity and thickness. Aromas reminiscent of liqueur of roasted herbs intermixed with meaty, game-like smells, black cherries, ground pepper, beef blood, and garrigue are followed by a wine of noteworthy stature, complexity, and mouthfilling generosity."

Caprai's '98 "25 Anni" at an Amazing Price

After a decade of being an icon in Italy, Marco Caprai's **25 Anni** is now a superstar in the U.S.—thanks to Daniel Thomases' appointment to *The Wine Advocate's* Italian "chair." In 1999, Thomases called **25 Anni** "Italy's best single red wine of the 1990's." And in his years of reviewing for Italy's *Veronelli* guide, he has consistently rated this wine in the high nineties.

One **25 Anni** particularly admired by Thomases is the 1998, which he rated a lofty 97 points in the 2002 *Veronelli* guide. Recently, we had the opportunity to buy a perfectly cellared parcel at a breathtakingly low price. We jumped at the chance; so should you.

**1998 Sagrantino
"25 Anni" Riserva*
97 Daniel Thomases
\$79.95**



Frédéric Magnien

Sensational 2002's from a New Burgundy Star

It's a story that's been repeated time and again. Born into a Morey-St. Denis winemaking family, Frédéric Magnien went to enology school in the early '90's, and then worked abroad, in California and Australia. His new ideas competed with those of his father's, and so he began to make his own wines, using the fruit of selected small growers.



Frédéric Magnien

Pushing his growers to lower yields, and to achieve greater ripeness from their oldest vines, he had become, by the late '90's, known to insiders as the source of red wines with an abundance of fruit—but with a real sense of *terroir*. In fact, his wines

had become so impressive that his father buried his pride and asked him to make the family's wines as well.

And by the great 2002 vintage, Frédéric had catapulted to the top of the Burgundy hierarchy—revered throughout France, his wines coveted by Michelin-starred restaurants. By minimizing both rackings and the use of SO₂—and leaving the wines on their fine lees for extended periods—he produced a number of 2002's that rank among the vintage's finest. Despite their growing scarcity, we are pleased to offer several of the best of these.

2002 Charmes Chambertin 94-96 Rovani \$110.00

Rovani: "Enthralling aromas of red cherries, spices, and flowers ... This sweet, deep wine of great breadth offers candied red and black fruits, freshly cracked black pepper, and spices ... Concentrated, seamless, and hedonistic"

2002 Nuits St. Georges "Les St.-Georges" 69.95

Rovani: "93-95 rating ... Hugely broad, spicy, and plush, this is a wine of power, nobility, and complexity. Innumerable red and black fruits are intermingled with roasting spices in its dense, suave core. In addition, this outstanding beauty possesses a long, supple finish."

2002 Chambolle-Musigny "Charmes" Vieilles Vignes 69.95

Rovani: "93-94 rating. Juniper, smoked bacon, jammy black cherries, and spices ... a deep, concentrated, plush, broad wine, it slathers the palate with sensual waves of red and black fruits that linger"

2002 Chambertin Clos de Bèze 94-96 Rovani \$135.00

Rovani: "... from a parcel located high on the hillside. Its hugely spicy, rich, blackberry and dark cherry-scented nose leads to an ample, ripe, powerful personality ... highly concentrated, and noble, its character is crammed with a myriad of dark fruits, cola, and licorice ..."

Magnien's Bargain

2002 Chambolle-Musigny Vieilles Vignes 32.95

Burghound: "From 55 to 65 year old vines ... Quite deeply colored though not black. Wonderfully intense black fruit with complex, sweet and very sappy flavors ... The old vine intensity of the fruit shines here."

Pierre Rovani: "Violets, blackberries, roses, and chocolate ... exquisite, expressive aromatics ... This wine has excellent depth, purity, focus, and length."

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e-mail: sales@rarewineco.com

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2002 AMERICAN WINE AWARDS IMPORTER

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