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History in the Making

Dominio de Atauta's Incredible 2002's

On May 24, 1976, a 1973 Stag's Leap Cabernet won a highly publicized blind tasting in Paris, stunning the professional French tasters who thought it was a Bordeaux. Forever after known as "The Paris Tasting," it shattered the belief that France's winemaking superiority was unassailable, showing that equally great wines could be made elsewhere.

Though thousands of similar tastings have been held over the past 29 years, one of the most interesting took place late last year, again in Paris. This time, the man Robert Parker has called France's finest professional taster, Michel Bettane, joined with Spain's top critic Jose Peñín to blind-taste 31 of those countries' leading wines. The line-up included such luminaries as 2000 Ch. Latour, 2001 Comte Lafon Meursault Genevrières, 2001 Chave Hermitage, 2000 Laville Haut Brion, and, from Spain, the mythic 1994 Vega Sicilia Unico.

When the dust settled, the established greats had all done well, with scores well into the 90's, but there was one shocker: Dominio de Atauta's 2002 Llanos del Almendro, rated 98 points by Bettane and 96 by Peñín. As Peñín wrote, "we were sure that some of our wines would surprise, but finally there was but one: Atauta."

Since its first vintage in 2000, Atauta, with its incredible terroirs and old vines, has been regarded by many as, potentially, one of Spain's great domaines. This tasting not only adds considerable weight to this view; it also proves that a profound wine could be made in 2002, a year that was generally difficult in Spain.

Haves and Have Nots

For European wine, 2002 was a year of contrasts.



Dominio de Atauta

Burgundy enjoyed a great vintage, while less than 200 miles to the south Châteauneuf-du-Pape was a washout. At harvest-time, the Tuscan hills were buffeted by rain, while the Tuscan coast was largely spared. And in Spain, rain was heavy in some areas, and light just a few miles away, spelling the difference between a soggy vintage and a superb one.

Nowhere was this more true than at Atauta. The rains that plagued down-river Ribera del Duero almost entirely skipped Atauta, which is a good hour up-river and at a significantly higher elevation. The summer was cool and sunny, and the additional three weeks of hangtime that Atauta gets (and down-river Ribera does not) allowed for full flavor and aromatic development. By virtue of the estate's extraordinary vineyards and the growing mastery of winemaker Bertrand Sourdis, Dominio de Atauta's 2002s have few equals in Spain.

In fact, in 2002, Atauta made several incredible wines, from its flagship cuvée, "Atauta," through its three single vineyard wines, La Mala, Valdegatiles, and Llanos del Almendro—highlighting three unique exposures and tempranillo clones that have evolved here for a century. The wines were bottled separately—the first time that each vineyard has been offered in one vintage, and the first year ever for La Mala. We are proud to offer these profound examples of old-vine Tempranillo. ►

RIBERA DEL DUERO

Atauta's Great 2002's

La Mala

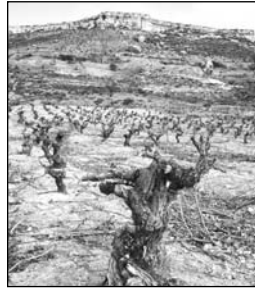


The 100+ year old vines in La Mala appear to be a unique clone of Tempranillo. No one knows for sure the origin of the name ("the bad"), but it probably relates to the compact, dense grape clusters, which must have been a nightmare for 19th-century *vinicultores*. But for a skilled modern winemaker like Bertrand Sourdis, it's a dream: the miniscule yields producing intensely concentrated, superbly balanced-fruit that is nearly black in color.

2002 La Mala
\$110.00

In its first vintage, just 75 cases of La Mala were made—but what an incredible wine it is! The gnarled old vines yielded a wine that is the blackest of this group, with the greatest density. The flavors are intense and powerful, but with the marvelous perfume, and superb backbone characteristic of all Atauta wines. A singularly great wine. *One-bottle limit.*

Valdegatiles



Valdegatiles was made once before, in 2000. Grown mostly on sand, the vines range in age from 80 to 160 years old and are all ungrafted. Such vines—combined with Atauta's unique microclimate—produce a wine of unparalleled depth. Just fifty cases were made in 2002.

2002 Valdegatiles
\$110.00

The 2002 Valdegatiles resembles the 2002 Atauta in its blackberry flavors, but then takes the aromatic and flavor complexity to an entirely new level. Ample acidity buttresses the fruit, giving it breathtaking definition and focus. Lush, weighty, and persistent, all that is left to be desired is a larger production, as only a handful of cases made it to the U.S. *One-bottle limit.*

Llanos del Almendro



Llanos debuted as a single-vineyard cuvée in 2001 and Bertrand believes that it is the finest *terroir* in the valley. The soils contain more limestone and clay, and this gives the wines the density of La Mala, but with even more aromatic intensity. In many ways, this is a perfect synthesis of the other wines' styles. A very great wine.

2002 Llanos del Almendro
\$135.00

This fabulous 2002 Llanos was rated **98** points by France's Michel Bettane and **96** by Spain's José Peñín. The two critics write: "In the nose, elegant, profound, distinctive, black fruits, a Ribera del Duero of *terroir*. In the mouth, expansive, flavorful, complex, rich in expression." *Two-bottle limit.*

2002 Atauta: A Monumental Achievement



A fitting counterpoint to the domaine's incredible single-vineyard offerings is Atauta's traditional wine, a mosaic from ungrafted 80-160 year-old vines. The product of the same non-interventionist winemaking, 2002 Atauta offers profound depth of fruit and incredible concentration, but with the elegance and complexity that is uniquely Atauta. Left in an open decanter for 24 hours, the wine became even richer and more explosive. The finest Atauta yet.

2002 Atauta 35.95

CHABLIS

Dauvissat's Brilliant 2003's

With the warmest growing season in a century, it's no surprise that the 2003 Chablis are atypical, evoking comparisons to 1947 for the richness of the wines. But Chablis is ultimately about balance and complexity, not sheer size. Only a master like Vincent Dauvissat is likely to convert the extravagant raw materials into something sublime. And so he has done.

Talking with *Burghound's* Allen Meadows, Dauvissat acknowledges the comparison to 1947, but says that "2003 is uniquely 2003, and that's as it should be." Despite the weather, he says his vines did not suffer heat stress; he had cut their surface roots, forcing the



Vincent Dauvissat's father René in the old days.

mother roots to probe deeper for water.

Dauvissat's real problem was the spring frost that cost him 50% of his crop. But with so little fruit on the vines, this translates into lower yields and greater concentration.

This Offer

Production of Dauvissat's elite cuvées is small; they own just 1 hectare in Les Preuses and 1.5 hectares in Les Clos. Even in a normal year, the wines are scarce. In a low-production year like 2003, they will be rare. We are pleased to offer René & Vincent Dauvissat's top four 2003's at below-market prices.

The Grand Crus

2003 Les Clos*

92-95 Tanzer

\$79.95 *bt.* **\$41.95** *half bt.*

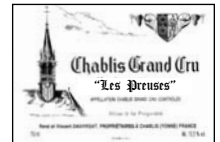


Tanzer: "Subtly spicy aromas of candied grapefruit peel and crushed stone, with some oaky high tones ... almost painfully intense, with taut flavors of pineapple, grapefruit, powdered stone and minerals, complicated by notes of cinnamon, vanilla, lichee and exotic fruits. Extremely dry and classic...one can feel the wine's size and power ..."

2003 Les Preuses*

93-96 Tanzer

\$95.00 *bottle*



Tanzer: "Crushed stone, raw pineapple and licorice on the bracing nose ... covers the palate with liquid stone. Extremely dry and backward. With its powerful minerality, this is as chewy as a solid on the back half, finishing with a whiplash of flavor. Can there be a better Preuses than Dauvissat's version?"

The Top Premier Crus at Spectacular Prices

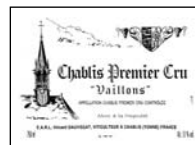


2003 La Forest*

90-93 Tanzer

\$35.95 *bt.* **\$19.95** *half bt.*

Tanzer: "... powerful, penetrating flavors of grapefruit, marginally ripe pineapple, stone and spices. The Vaillons is much flashier today, but this is ultimately more important, and makes a beeline for the salivary glands. Mounts slowly on the back half and dusts the palate with grapefruit, spices, licorice and stone."



2003 Vaillons*

90-92 Tanzer

\$35.95 *bt.* **\$19.95** *half bt.*

Tanzer: "Sweet fruit aromas of pineapple and grapefruit, complicated by smoke, spices, iodine and gunflint; very sexy and showy today ... dense in the mouth, with superb palate coverage. Complex flavors ... A real mouthful of stones and minerals on the very long finish. A superb early showing for this wine."

The Superb '03 Village Wines

Dauvissat's village wines are in a class of their own. Grab the 2003's at these low prices.

2003 René & Vincent Dauvissat Chablis***24.95**

Tanzer: "Pure aromas of grapefruit and flowers ... rich and very persistent ..."

2003 René & Vincent Dauvissat Petit Chablis***18.95**

Tanzer: "Fresh, juicy ... as always, this Petit Chablis ... transcends its appellation."

CHAMPAGNE

The Revolution Continues

Jacquesson's Cuvée No. 729

Eighteen months ago, Jacquesson created a stir by announcing that its 150-year-old non-vintage Perfection label would be retired and replaced with a new sequentially numbered, vintage-based cuvée released each year. Such a move was unprecedented in Champagne.

The inaugural release, Cuvée no. 728, was applauded by both critics and consumers. And now that its successor, Cuvée no. 729, is on the market, we can begin to understand what Jacquesson has accomplished.

Both cuvées are stunningly complex, yet different in style and make-up. Cuvée 728 was made 2/3 from the 2000 vintage and 1/3 from reserve wines; 729 is 58% 2001 vintage and 42% reserve wine. The grape blend has changed little, still about 1/3 each of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Sixty percent of the cuvée was barrel-fermented, and there is no filtration.

The soaring quality of these wines is a reflection of Jacquesson's widely publicized viticultural innovations as well as its quest to make wines of unusual weight, density, complexity and aging potential. We have no

doubt that these cuvées will age with the grace of Jacquesson's vintage-dated wines.

Our allocation of Cuvée 729 bottles (disgorged May 2004) has just arrived. Magnums are scheduled to arrive later this spring. Don't miss this exceptional Champagne in either size.

Jacquesson
"Cuvée No. 729"
\$38.50 bt. \$83.95 mag.



Jancis Robinson in the *Financial Times*: "17 points out of 20. Quite a deep colour. Dense, intellectual wine" (Her next highest scoring NV Champagne was Krug at 16.5.)

A superb young Champagne. Cuvée 729's nose is hypnotic: extremely floral, with a provocative minerality. The palate is soft, finely moussed and long. There are notes of brioche and vanilla (from the oak fermentation), and a pronounced chalky minerality gives the wine its strong individuality. It's rare to find a young Champagne that is so complete and so complex.

Jacquesson's 1996 "Vauzelle Terme"

"Very much like 1996 Bollinger Vieilles Vignes Francaises" Richard Juhlin

Jacquesson has also been an innovator in mono-cru Champagnes. Following the trail blazed by Philipponnat's Clos des Goisses in the 1930's and Krug's Clos de Mesnil in the 1970's, its single-vineyard cuvées are challenging century-old assumptions about how Champagne should be made.

Jacquesson's newest mono-cru, the 100% Pinot Noir "Vauzelle Terme," looks to become legendary. Produced in the great 1996 vintage from a 3/4-acre site in Aÿ, and vinified in *demi-muids*, just 100 cases were bottled without filtration.

As for the quality, Richard Juhlin's comparison to Bollinger's rare Vignes Francaises speaks volumes. A strict one-bottle limit.

1996 Jacquesson
"Vauzelle Terme"
98 Richard Juhlin
\$125.00 bt. \$275.00 mag.



Richard Juhlin: "An exceptional wine ... distinct similarities with the heavenly champagne Deutz made from Aÿ in 1975. In other words, the gamey flavours are toned down in favour of a mineral-sparkling chalky finesse. I blind-tasted the wine, but had no difficulty recognizing Jacquesson's personal chocolate cask tone. Those that claim that great champagne must always contain Chardonnay should taste this absolutely brilliant wine. Very much like 1996 Bollinger Vieilles Vignes Francaises." *One bottle limit.*

Milestones

A Marvelous 1955 Bual & 1905 Malvasia from Barbeito

Because of its perfect climate, Madeira's south coast always laid claim to making Madeira's greatest wines. From Caniço at the eastern end to Ponta do Pargo at the west, the south coast is dotted with dozens of villages known for the wines they produced. One of the westernmost of these villages was Jardim do Mar.



Jardim do Mar

While today Jardim do Mar is best known for its fabulous surfing, from the late 1700's until the 1940's the village was known for its wines, produced from steep, terraced hillsides overlooking the Atlantic.

In 1995, Barbeito discovered two such wines, a 1955 Bual and a 1905 Malvasia, belonging to an old Jardim do Mar landowning family, Araujo de Barros. Both wines were produced from the same vineyards, were vinified on the estate, were found in the same Funchal cellar, and now, after decades of life, are superb. But as is so often the case in Madeira, there the stories diverge.

The 1955

As was typical of many big estates on the island, the Araujo de Barros property was occupied by dozens of tenant farmers, each of whom tended vineyards. The Barros family had several warehouses scattered around the estate, the largest of which stored agricultural

products on the ground floor and wine on the warmer upper floor.

For 39 years the 1955 Bual slumbered on this upper floor—in a cask slightly larger than a barrique, the warmth concentrating the wine's flavors and increasing its sugar level. Finally, in 1994 the family sold the estate, and the cask was moved to a private cellar in Funchal.

The 1905

While the 1955 spent most of its life in a warm upper floor, the 1905 spent its life in a cool cellar. Soon after it was made, a single 400-liter cask of the wine was moved to one of Funchal's oldest cellars, on the Rua do Torrinha. It remained here for 90 years, when it was purchased by Barbeito.

From this point on, the wines' stories converge. When Barbeito bought the wines in 1995, the balance was so perfect, that the firm put both wines into demijohn. This slowed down their development, assuring that when they were bottled they would be much as they were then. The wines were bottled in late 2002. The number of bottles available for the world is minute.

In time for 50th and 100th anniversary and birthday celebrations this year, we are pleased to offer a small quantity of each wine.

1905 Barbeito Malvasia

\$235.00

Beautiful medium mahogany color, with a greenish yellow rim. The nose draws you in with heavenly scents of chocolate, cinnamon, clove, allspice and fruitcake. The palate is smooth and velvety, ethereal in texture, with warm overtones of aged Calvados. Typical of Malmsey, the residual sugar tops 4%, but the delicious tang of acidity gives the wine its compelling elegance. Should live for a century more.

1955 Barbeito Bual

\$175.00

Luminous mahogany color, with a distinctly yellow rim. The nose is powerful and evocative: bitter chocolate, caramel apple, nuts, smoke and toast. Given the warm aging conditions, the palate, not surprisingly is dense and concentrated, but with palate-refreshing acidity. Thanks to nearly four decades of evaporation, the sweetness is elevated to near-Malmsey range, but the finish is long and dry. Marvelous!

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Collina Rionda Redux

Massolino reclaims a Legendary Barolo Vineyard

For almost thirty years, Collina Rionda was Bruno Giacosa's greatest Barolo, and possibly his greatest wine. There were a number of monumental vintages; but with their overpowering richness, the 1978, 1982 and 1989 stand out as the greatest of all.



Vigna Rionda

The last vintage for Giacosa's Collina Rionda was 1993. Giacosa never owned the vineyard, relying on an obscure grower named Aldo Canale for the fruit. And when Giacosa walked away in a dispute over the price of grapes, lovers of great, classically styled Barolo mourned.

Vigna Rionda

While Giacosa called his wine Collina Rionda ("round hill"), the vineyard's recognized name is Vigna Rionda ("round vineyard"). It is one of Serralunga's elite *cru*: a perfectly curved, southfacing site 1,000 feet above sea level. Like all Serralunga vineyards, it produces Barolo of great structure and longevity; but with its sunny exposure, Vigna Rionda wines are capable of achieving amazing richness as well.

The 25-acre vineyard is divided among several growers. Now that Giacosa is gone, the greatest example is

Massolino's Barolo Vigna Rionda Riserva. The Massolino family has been in Vigna Rionda for more than a century, and since 1982 they have produced a single-vineyard Barolo from the site. But it has only been in the past decade that this wine has come into its own: a magnificent expression of Vigna

Rionda's power and richness.

Our Offer

Three generations are involved in the winemaking at Massolino, and the influence of each can be seen. The signature wine, Barolo Vigna Rionda, remains totally classic, aged in large neutral *botti* for three years and then another three years in bottle. As for the family's other two *cru* Barolos, the Margheria is classically styled, *botti*-aged, while the Parafada sees some barrique.

To date, the two greatest Vigna Rionda's have been the 1996 and 1997. We are pleased to offer both wines—along with the excellent 1999 Margheria and Parafada. All are highly recommended.

**1997 Massolino Barolo
Vigna Rionda Riserva
96 Wine Spectator
\$69.95**



**1996 Massolino Barolo
Vigna Rionda Riserva
95+ Gambero Rosso
\$69.95**



Wine Spectator: "Incredible aromas of crushed plums, fresh flowers and hints of cappuccino. Full-bodied, with big velvety tannins in rich and wonderful fruit. Glorious finish. A triumph for this producer. Best after 2007. 900 cases made."

Gambero Rosso: "All the complexity, elegance and intensity that Nebbiolo can give and even more ... prodigious balance of tannins, fruit, and acidity. The finish, vibrant and exciting, leaves no doubt that this wine will have a very long life."

1999 Massolino Barolo Margheria49.95

Wine Spectator: "93 rating ... I love the aromas of roses, spices, and fresh strawberries and plums. Full-bodied, with velvety tannins and a long, long finish. This is gorgeous."

1999 Massolino Barolo Parafada49.95

Wine Spectator: "92 rating ... Almost Porty with hints of spices. Full-bodied, with big velvety tannins and loads of fruit. Round and rich. Long. This is even better than the outstanding 1998."

RED BURGUNDY

Historic 2002's from Groffier

"Robert Groffier is self-effacing, somewhat shy and gentle, and the wines are like the man himself: not rugged blockbusters, but pure, intense, understated and elegant." Clive Coates

In 2002, Robert Groffier celebrated his 30th anniversary of making domaine-bottled Burgundy. Fittingly, it was a great vintage for this revered *vigneron*.

In 1960, Groffier inherited the famed *grand cru* and *premier cru* sites that had belonged to his father, but

in those days few domaines bottled their own wine. By 1972, times were changing, and Groffier changed with them, gradually building a reputation for fine domaine Burgundy. By the early 1990's, he had become an elite producer, known for his obsessively managed yields, late harvests and careful selections.

The 2002's are sensational here; in *Burghound* Allen Meadows called them "perhaps the best vintage" he had ever tasted from cask at Groffier. We are pleased to offer the following selection of the most sought-after cuvées.

2002 Bonnes Mares* 93 Rovani \$159.95



Rovani: "Raw meat, black fruits, and spices can be found in the profound aromas of the 2002 Bonnes Mares. Medium to full-bodied, thick, and concentrated, this is a structured yet lush effort, crammed with stony black fruits."



2002 Chambertin Clos de Bèze* 96 Pierre Rovani \$195.00 1-bottle limit

Rovani: "... gorgeously powerful ... expansive, intensely concentrated ... appears to have loads in reserve."

2002 Chambolle Musigny "Les Amoureuses*" 94+ Pierre Rovani \$159.95 limited



Rovani: "... possesses awesome layers of thick, dark fruits. While dense and concentrated, it is also fresh, well-balanced, and exhibits a long, superb finish."

2002 Chambolle-Musigny "Les Sentiers"*79.95

Rovani: "92 rating ... muscular, masculine ... displays a nose of violets and black fruits. Medium-bodied, concentrated, deep, and structured, it exhibits black cherry, blackberry, cassis, and notes of charred oak."

2002 Chambolle-Musigny "Haut Doix"*79.95

Rovani: "91 rating... lovely depth in the dark fruit-laden, aromatic profile ... delights the palate with its black cherry and toasted oak flavors ... outstanding finish."

A Châteauneuf Superstar

Vatican's luxury cuvée has reached a new level in 2003. It's a monumentally rich Châteauneuf-du-Pape that must be tasted to be believed.

2003 Cuvée de Vatican "Réserve Sixtine" 93-96 Parker \$49.95



Parker: "... brilliant ... Aged in both barrel (30% new) and foudre, it represents approximately one-fourth of the vintage's production ... Yields averaged 17-25 hectoliters per hectare. The 2003 is an atypically powerful, concentrated effort ... It boasts a dense purple color as well as copious quantities of black raspberries, cherries, cassis, licorice, smoke, scorched earth, and hints of Provençal herbs as well as subtle wood. This broad, substantial, powerful effort possesses fabulous concentration and awesome potential ..."

A New Cabernet Star

Hestan's Stunning 2002 Debut

Hong-Kong born, Stanley Cheng has, over the past two decades, built up one of the world's biggest cookware empires, controlling such brands as Kitchenaid, Farberware and Anolon. In 1996, he moved his world to Napa, buying a 127-acre ranch, much of which he devoted to vineyards.



The Hestan Vineyard

For the first few years, he was content to sell his fruit to Clos du Val, but his life as a Napa Valley grower changed in August 2001, when he took his wife Helen to the French Laundry for her birthday. That night, he asked the sommelier to pick the best new Cabernet on the list, regardless of price. His choice: 1998 Merus.

Stanley was blown away by the wine and quickly asked to be put on Merus' mailing list. But another idea began to brew: hiring Merus' winemaker Mark Herold to make wine from his best grapes. To lure this rising star, he gave Mark *carte blanche*: the freedom to choose only his best fruit and to spare no expense in his wine-making. Mark accepted in the spring of 2002.

That first year, Mark went through the ranch block by block, selecting those with the potential to produce great Cabernet. As harvest approached, he looked on as Clos du Val brought in their fruit, but waited another three weeks to harvest his, when the grapes were truly ripe. He ended up harvesting only about 5% of the ranch's total production; of that, only one-third finally made it into the *grand vin*—a mere 275 cases of lavishly rich, hedonistic Cabernet.

Stanley also entrusted a small Chardonnay vineyard to Mark. The winemaker pulled out all the stops, producing a boldly flavored Chardonnay that's a fitting counterpart to the 2002 Cabernet. Only about 200 cases were made.

Of course, Hestan became red-hot when Robert Parker reviewed the Cabernet in February. But with such tiny production, few collectors could have hoped to find the wine. Fortunately, we received a small allocation of not only the Cabernet, but also the Chardonnay. Here's your chance; don't miss it.

2002 Hestan Cabernet

95 Parker

\$79.95

Parker: "Hestan's 2002 is a 275-case cuvée of very impressive Cabernet Sauvignon. This dense, opaque blue/purple-colored offering's smoky, graphite, black currant, and berry-scented nose is gently infused with notions of toast and spice box. Full-bodied, opulent, pure, and expansive, this layered wine exhibits a seamless integration of wood, acid, and tannin. Anticipated maturity: 2007-2018."



2003 Hestan Chardonnay

\$47.95

This is the first Chardonnay we've ever tasted from Mark Herold, but with its great opulence, we'd recognize it as his. Mammothly proportioned, Mark gave it the full treatment: barrel-fermentation using only free-run juice, 100% malolactic, *sur lie* aging with *batonnage* every two weeks, and unfiltered bottling. The result is a wine of Burgundian styling, but with the size that will thrill lovers of big California Chardonnay.

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2002 AMERICAN WINE AWARDS IMPORTER

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