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Cuvée No. 728

MAY 4, 2004

WHITE BURGUNDY

Chablisian Glories

René & Vincent Dauvissat's Extraordinary 2002's

A strong case can be made that, of all the places where Chardonnay is grown, Chablis produces the most distinctive wines. Even "village" wines from good producers have a unique charm and minerality. But in the hands of a true master, working with old vines and elite vineyards, Chablis can scale heights unknown to other Chardonnay makers.

Such is the case with the 2002's of René & Vincent Dauvissat. Along with François Raveneau, Dauvissat is unquestionably Chablis' greatest producer, owning some of the oldest and best vineyards, including prized sections of the *grand crus*, Les Clos and Les Preuses. From these two sites—as well as the superb *premier cru* La Forest—Dauvissat's 2002's are among the wines of the vintage.

Better to be North

If you were a European grower, the best place to be in 2002 was in a northern-tier area like Chablis. As in Champagne and Germany, Chablis enjoyed appreciably more summer sun than areas father south; and, with its later harvest, it was able to capitalize on the

extraordinary Fall weather. In particular, late September's dry north winds concentrated Chablis' grapes and raised both sugar and acidity levels. The result was some of the finest wines in recent history.

This was particularly the case at Dauvissat, where conditions at harvest were, in the words of Vincent Dauvissat, "absolutely ideal." The wines have great richness, but also an intense stony character and lively acidity. It was, in short, a year to make great Chablis.

Classic Winemaking

It was also a perfect vintage to showcase Dauvissat's inspired, traditional winemaking. Although father René has handed over the reins to son Vincent, little has changed here. The practices are still classic and remarkably similar to those used at the other Chablis great, Raveneau.

For two decades, Dauvissat has naturally farmed its vineyards, using vine treatments sparingly, if at all. The fruit is harvested by hand and not destemmed; fermentation is in 80% stainless steel and 20% wood, and all aging is in barrels, only a few of which are ►



At left: an old photo of René Dauvissat in the cellar, and the same cellar today; at right: Chablis' unique limestone soil and a panorama of the vineyards.

WHITE BURGUNDY

new. Malolactic fermentation occurs spontaneously and the winter cold is used to precipitate tartrates. *Burghound* has quoted Vincent Dauvissat as saying that, for them, “*terroir* is everything,” explaining the family’s desire to allow everything to happen as naturally as possible.

This Offer

Production of Dauvissat’s best wines is small; for example, their holdings in Les Preuses are just 1 hectare and Les Clos 1.5 hectares. Thus, in an

acclaimed vintage like 2002, it is a challenge to get reasonable quantities of the best wines.

We’ve worked hard over the past four months, staking out not only the precious Clos and Preuses but attractive quantities of the splendid *premier crus* La Forest, Vaillons and Sechet and the fantastic village Chablis. At prices that are about half of Raveneau, we feel that Dauvissat’s *premier crus* are perhaps today’s greatest values in white Burgundy. □

————— *Dauvissat’s Monumental 2002 Grand Crus* —————

2002 Les Clos*

95-98 Tanzer

\$95.00 *bt.* **\$49.95** *half bt.*



Tanzer: “A painful young Chablis of extraordinary power. At once silky and dusty, with powerful mineral and stone flavors, lemon and spices. Shows an exhilarating sweet/tart note of lemon candy. Tightly wound and bracing throughout, dominated by its mineral side. This will be a 20-year wine, at the least. Here the vines are about 47 years old, vs. 32 for the Preuses.”

2002 Les Preuses*

94-98 Tanzer

\$95.00



Tanzer: “Estery aromas of spiced apple, wet stone, spring flowers, smoke, violet and menthol. Tightly wound and sharply defined; with its great cut, this is almost painful today. A pure palate-saturating mineral bath, offering great finesse. Remarkably solid and long on the aftertaste; all powdered and liquid stone. This is likely to require at least seven or eight years of aging.”

————— *The Great 2002 Premier Crus at Spectacular Prices* —————

2002 La Forest*

92-95 Tanzer

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

Tanzer: “A pure mineral expression in the mouth: precise and very intense, with great energy and grip. And yet it’s utterly silky too. Pristine flavors of *tilleul*, acacia flower and powdered stone. Superbly tactile, dusty finish builds and lingers. Leaves behind a scent of peach in the empty glass. This will be a knockout.”

2002 Vaillons*

91-93 Tanzer

\$34.50

Tanzer: “Spicy, nuanced nose combines acacia honey, pear, apple, talc and mint. Juicy and brisk in the mouth; has the sucrosity of the best 2002’s perfectly balanced by sappy acidity ... Utterly thirst-quenching finish shows palate-staining length.”

2002 Sechet*

89-92 Tanzer

\$31.95

Tanzer: “... pure aromas of apple and white flowers. Spicy and tight, with its volume currently hidden by acids and minerals. Extremely backward today ... This is not high in acidity, notes Dauvissat; it’s the wine’s minerality that gives it its youthful austerity.”

*An
Amazing
Value*

2002 René & Vincent Dauvissat Chablis*22.50

Steve Tanzer: “89-92 rating. More complex aromas of spices, lemon and fresh herbs. Sweet and ripe on entry, then stony and tight in the middle, with a firm core of fresh fruits and stones given clarity by perfectly integrated acidity. Finishes subtle and long. A superb village wine in the making.”

NORTHERN RHONE

On the Edge

René Rostaing's Remarkable Les Lézardes

Until Marcel Guigal achieved acclaim in the mid-1980's, Côte Rôtie was largely an "insider's" wine. In fact—due to limited demand and the difficulty of cultivating its steep slopes—the number of acres had steadily dwindled for more than a century.

Guigal's success soon reversed that trend, and by the beginning of the '90's Côte Rôtie was back on top. Demand for grapes surged; however, worries about overplanting led the INAO, in 1993, to pull in the appellation's boundaries. This deprived many former Côte Rôtie vineyards of the use of the name—and, of course, drove down their value.

An Opportunity

One of the appellation's best growers, René Rostaing recognized the opportunity and began searching for such parcels with classic *terroir*. He acquired about two hectares in Lézardes, on the appellation's northern edge. Soon, Rostaing's "Les Lézardes" had a cult following for its unmistakable Côte-Rôtie nuance and character.



Even in the 1940's when this Côte Rôtie map was published, Les Lézardes was a recognized cru.

The newest Les Lézardes is from the outstanding 2001 vintage.* Vinified and aged in much the same way as Rostaing's great Côte Rôties, it will be better than half the 2001's bearing the Côte Rôtie name and price tag. It is one of the great bargains of the northern Rhône ... don't miss it.

René Rostaing
Les Lézardes Rouge
\$24.95 bt. \$295.00 cs.



The nose is marked by vibrant, classic Côte Rôtie aromatics—minerals, dark fruits, and game. In the mouth, it shows abundant fruit; a rich, creamy texture and excellent weight. A unique opportunity to enjoy Côte Rôtie quality at a bargain price.

**However, you will not find a vintage on the label. It is a peculiarity of French law that the labels of non-AOC vins de table may not bear a vintage.*

Rostaing's Beautiful 2001 Côte Rôties

A classic year—*très Côte Rôtie* in the words of René Rostaing. With their magical perfume—and pure essence-of-Syrah fruit at the core—the 2001's are, for Rostaing, quintessential Côte Rôtie's . . . approaching the



splendor of his great 1991's. All three 2001 Rostaing Côte Rôties are intensely aromatic and exquisitely balanced wines; and each has the potential to become even more magical with time in the cellar.

2001 Rostaing Côte Rôtie
"Classique"
\$59.95

Parker: "The 2001 Côte Rôtie Cuvée Classique exhibits aromas of tapenade, honeysuckle, black fruits, minerals, and wood in its perfumed bouquet. Medium-bodied, with excellent fruit, purity, and overall symmetry, it will be at its finest between now and 2012."

2001 Rostaing Côte Rôtie
"La Landonne"
\$79.95 very limited

Parker: "The 2001 Côte Rôtie La Landonne reveals a roasted espresso character along with licorice, pepper, scorched earth, and dense blackberry and cassis fruit. Firm, tannic, and masculine as well as aromatic ... it requires another 2-3 years of cellaring, after which it should last for 7-8 years."

2001 Rostaing Côte Rôtie
"Côte Blonde"
\$95.00 very limited

Parker: "A wine of great intensity and lushness ... Sweet aromas of caramel, honeysuckle, black cherry liqueur, raspberries, currants, and ... a plump, well-textured, opulent finish. I adore this cuvée of Côte Rôtie, and it's a shame more is not produced."

Making History

The 2003 Sauternes Are the Richest in Decades

Throughout the 2003 growing season, Bordeaux's record heat led to rampant speculation about the historic wines that would be made. But while most of the speculation focused on the great reds, Sauternes was on its way to making some of its most extraordinary dessert wines in the past century.

The best 2003 Sauternes are wines that offer glorious richness and sweetness, with all the *botrytis*-induced complexity imaginable. Most observers are comparing 2003 to 1990 and 1983—two classic years known for their lavishly rich Sauternes. But others—like David Peppercorn writing in *Decanter*—have dug deeper, pointing out that you have to go back to 1929 to find Sauternes of such opulence.

Priced to Seduce

But there's more good news coming from Sauternes: a highly welcome bout of sanity when it comes to pricing. For the second year in a row, the major châteaux have lowered their opening prices. As a consequence, we are seeing 2003 prices 10% below 2002 and 25% beneath the high-water mark of 2001. Two châteaux—Rieussec and Coutet—are leading the charge here, with prices that have stunned the market.



"While 1990 produced residual sugar levels in the finished wines of between 120-135 grams, and 2001 saw levels around 140g, in 2003 levels of 150g up to 200g were recorded. One would need to look at 1929 for any comparison." David Peppercorn in Decanter

The low prices are having the desired result. Within a day of opening, it was virtually impossible to find a bottle of 2003 Rieussec on the Bordeaux market. (It had all been snapped up.) La Tour Blanche, with its small 2003 production, also quickly disappeared. Other châteaux with top-rated wines are selling out quickly; soon, these 2003's will only be available at prices that are 15-25% higher.

This Offer

With the exception of d'Yquem and Climens, all of the top châteaux released prices the week of April 19th. We were ready and waiting. At the opening bell, we grabbed what we could of five wines that are among the vintage's elite: Rieussec, La Tour Blanche, Suduiraut, Lafaurie-Peyraguey and Coutet. Significantly, each of these estates was a First Growth in Sauternes' 1855 Classification.

We also focused on half bottles. For many buyers, halves are the most desirable format for Sauternes; as a consequence, they become extremely difficult to find later on. But we have bought bottles, too, and larger formats may be available on request.

On the next page, we are delighted to offer these ►

How it Happened

In September 2003, the gods smiled on the Sauternais. The month began with the region's grapes already near historic sugar levels—the result of the record-breaking summer heat. Now, what the producers needed was rain to spawn *botrytis* (aka "noble rot"). And they got what they wanted in spades.

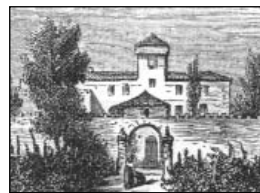
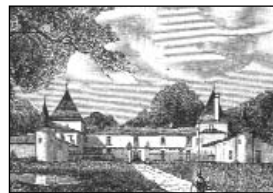
First, between September 6th and 10th, Sauternes received twice as much rain as the rest of Bordeaux. Then, on September 11th, the hot, dry weather

returned, providing the one-two punch needed to ignite the *botrytis*. Within three days *botrytis* had exploded throughout the vineyards, bringing the harvesters into the vines in force. Normally, this is only the beginning of a series of pickings that can drag on for a month or more. But the rain-heat combination spread the *botrytis* like wildfire, infecting nearly every bunch and every grape. Within ten days most châteaux were finished, concluding the shortest harvest in the region's history. ◻

WHITE BORDEAUX

The Great 2003 Sauternes

Five Historic Châteaux Combine to Make History Again



From left, 19th-century engravings of Coutet, Rieussec, La Tour Blanche, Suduiraut and Lafaurie-Peyraguey.

Continued from previous page

five great Sauternes at prices that seem like anachronisms today. This is one opportunity that dessert wine lovers dare not pass up. Delivery early- to mid-2006.

2003 Ch. Rieussec*
95-100 Wine Spectator
\$22.50 half bt. \$42.95 bt.



Wine Spectator: "This is a bodybuilder of a wine. Massive. Full-bodied, very sweet, yet you don't feel it ... Ginger and honey. Fantastic wine."



2003 Ch. La Tour Blanche*
95-100 Wine Spectator
\$20.95 half bt. \$39.95 bt.

Wine Spectator: "Loads of botrytis and honey character and hints of lemon rind and citrus fruits. Full-bodied, very sweet, with loads of peach tart, spice and a long, honeyed finish ... Fantastic."

2003 Ch. Lafaurie-Peyraguey*
95-100 Wine Spectator
\$20.95 half bt. \$39.95 bt.



Wine Spectator: "This is amazingly long, with loads of coconut, apple, peach and honey character. Incredible. Full-bodied, very sweet. Truly wonderful. One of my favorites. A wine you must buy."

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2003 Ch. Coutet*
95-100 Wine Spectator
\$18.95 half bt. \$35.95 bt.



Wine Spectator: "White peaches and mace with plenty of botrytis. Full-bodied, very sweet but extremely delicate. Long and exciting. Continues on the palate for minutes ... Very fresh."



2003 Ch. Suduiraut*
95-100 Wine Spectator
\$24.50 half bt. \$47.50 bt.

Wine Spectator: "This is subtle yet powerful. It's full-bodied, with loads of honey and licorice character. Racy and refined. Sweet yet delicate ... a very complex wine."

Yquem, de Fargues & Climens

As we finish writing this issue on April 23rd, Ch. d'Yquem and Ch. Climens are the only major Sauternes châteaux that have not opened. Climens is expected any day, so please inquire.

As for Yquem, the château has sold only one other vintage as futures: the 2000. However, word is that the 2003 will also be offered *en primeur*. Stay tuned.

Finally, this afternoon 2003 Ch. de Fargues opened. Yquem's famed sister estate makes a wine that can rival Yquem itself. In 2003, there are only 2000 cases, and the opening price is a bargain. Hurry.

2003 Ch. de Fargues* half bottle28.95
2003 Ch. de Fargues* bottle 56.95

Robert Parker on de Fargues: "When it is tasted blind, many tasters, including most experts, usually judge it to be Yquem." The 2003 is sure to be coveted.

CHAMPAGNE

A Champagne Revolution

Jacquesson's Cuvée No. 728

Vintage variations challenge vintners to make good wine in poor years and great wine in average years. They combine with *terroir* to create the diversity that makes wine so compelling. And of all the world's major wine regions, only Champagne, through its non-vintage cuvées, tries to "iron out" these differences.

Thus, the influential small house of Jacquesson created a stir last fall announcing that its 150-year-old non-vintage Perfection label would be retired and replaced with a numbered, vintage-based cuvée that would change annually.

Jacquesson's innovation has been viewed by many in the region as radical. After all, non-vintage Champagnes are judged by their consistency; Jacquesson's new wine will be reevaluated each year, just as vintage Champagnes are. And, as British Champagne specialist Tom Stevenson has pointed out, "such a dramatic change could only have been carried off by a small quality house."

Cuvée No. 728

If the first release is any guide, Jacquesson need not worry. Cuvée No. 728—made up 2/3 of 2000 vintage and 1/3 older reserve wines—offers the weight and complexity of a vintage Champagne. Also contributing to the wine's power are a high percentage of Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir and no filtration.



Jacquesson's famous 1920's advertising poster.

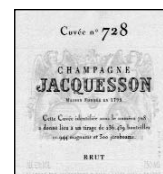
Of course, no one who has followed Jacquesson's recent work will be surprised by the quality. Jacquesson is Champagne's most serious viticulturalist, and its cellar practices—including barrel fermentation—are no less dedicated.

The number "728", by the way, deserves some explanation. In 1898, Jacquesson began to number its bottlings (*tirages*), beginning with "1." The 2000 vintage—on which this wine is based—is the 728th *tirage*. Next year's release, Cuvée No. 729, will be based on the 2001 vintage (the 729th *tirage* since 1898).

Throughout its portfolio, Jacquesson strives to produce wines of unusual weight, density and complexity. Here's more evidence of why this is one of the most exciting small producers in Champagne today.

Jacquesson "Cuvée No. 728"

\$38.50 bt. \$83.95 mag.



Tom Stevenson: "Very floral on the nose, extremely elegant and fresh Meunier on the palate, but also rich, with seductive, vanilla-dusted fruit on the finish. It's a Champagne that can be aged and with the numbering, I suspect that it will indeed be cellared by Jacquesson aficionados."

1986 Paul Bara "Special Club"

The Club de Viticulteurs Champenois—a group of 50 small Champagne producers—was founded in 1971. The club is best known for its "Special Club" cuvées and the distinctive club-shaped bottle reserved for these wines.



For a Champagne to qualify as Special Club, it must pass two rigorous blind tastings. The wine must also be made under strict viticultural guidelines.

In 1986, 23 members were approved to make a

Special Club bottling. Paul Bara's is one of the best of these. With a high percentage of Pinot Noir in the blend, the wine is rich and concentrated, with an intense and spicy bread dough nose. Now close to 20 years old, it has

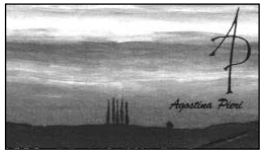
become hedonistically creamy, yet it easily has another decade of life left. We are pleased to offer some beautifully cellared bottles at a great price.

1986 Paul Para Special Club 65.00

TUSCANY

1999 Brunello According to FT

Jancis Robinson Anoints Agostina Pieri



Now five months into the 1999 Brunello campaign, reviews have been slow in coming. In the U.S., only the *Wine Spectator* has published broadly on the subject; Parker and Tanzer have not been heard from at this writing.

But in the UK, the *Financial Times'* Jancis Robinson actually beat all American writers to the punch, posting notes on sixty-five '99 Brunellos in late February. Her top three wines with scores of 18.5/20 were Argiano, Fuligni and Agostina Pieri—beating out the likes of Fanti, Valdicava and Siro Pacenti.

1999 Agostina Pieri Brunello di Montalcino*

18.5/20 Jancis Robinson

\$47.50 limited

Jancis Robinson: "Very exciting, penetrating, ripe nose. Very full and round and gorgeous, with tannins very fine underneath ... Already charming ... very impressive considering the youth of this estate, established only in 1994."

A Rising Star

The smallest of Jancis' three top-scoring estates, Pieri makes half as much Brunello as Fuligni and 1/20th of Argiano. However, this newcomer is rising fast and winning a devoted following for not only its Brunello, but also its remarkable Rosso di Montalcino. In fact, Pieri's Rosso is the only one ever to have won the coveted *tre bicchieri* from *Gambero Rosso*. (It did so in 1995.)

Only tiny quantities of Pieri's superb 1999 Brunello and excellent 2002 Rosso were made available to the United States. It's a pleasure to offer both.

2002 Agostina Pieri Rosso di Montalcino*

\$24.95 bottle \$285.00 case

The finest Pieri Rosso since the legendary 1995. A wine of enormous purity and definition—textbook Montalcino Sangiovese. The aromatics are beautiful, featuring black cherry fruit accented by spice, licorice and vanilla. The palate is precise and harmonious, with fine length. Pieri has produced another benchmark for Rosso di Montalcino.

First Offer: 1999 Grange

On the heels of the great 1998, Penfold's has just released the 1999 Grange which is sure to spark a controversy: which is the greater wine. In fact, this monumental pair is likely to surpass both the 1962-63 and 1990-91 as the greatest back-to-back Granges ever.

One Australian insider has already gone on record as preferring the 1999. Andrew Caillard, author of the new edition of *Rewards of Patience*, which reviews every Grange ever made, wrote: "100 rating. While I admired the 1998 ... I preferred the 1999 vintage (by a whisker). Indeed it is an astonishingly lovely wine ... The palate is deeply concentrated with ... superb flavour length ... This is certainly great Grange."

With the market already stoked by the enormous suc-

cess of the 1998, the 1999 Grange is sure to rival its predecessor in price. So, we were delighted to pick up a few very attractively priced cases. Not to be missed.

1999 Grange*
94-96 Parker
\$225.00



Parker: "The 1999 Grange is superb. It boasts an inky purple color as well as unformed but gorgeously sweet notes of blackberries intermixed with smoke, licorice, and roasted meats. A wine of great intensity, sweet tannin, voluptuous texture, and a spectacularly long finish, it will be at its finest between 2007-2025."

PIEDMONT

1997 Granbussia

A Great Vintage Produces an Important New Barolo

Barolo's single greatest wine? Some would say that it is Aldo Conterno's Granbussia. Aldo creates Granbussia by setting aside the best barrels from his finest Barolo vineyards—all located on the blessed upper slope of Bussia. He also only makes this wine in the best years; in the twenty-eight vintages between 1971 and 1997, he made it just ten times: 1971, 1974, 1978, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1995, 1996 and 1997.



Bussia

Production is less than 800 cases. The *assemblage* for Granbussia occurs three years after the vintage; but the wine is not released for a further three years.

The 1997

The newest Granbussia has now been released—the 1997—and it is destined to become one of the defining examples of this venerable cuvée. Reflecting this historically ripe year, it is a wine of great richness and opulence. As the years unfold, it will undoubtedly be compared to the great 1985 and 1990 Granbussias.

If you're a Granbussia fan—and you know how rare the vintages from 1990 and before have become—you'll want to snap up this legend-in-the-making at our low opening price.

Earlier Classics — Extremely Limited

1996 Aldo Conterno Barolo Riserva "Granbussia" ...145.00

Steve Tanzer: "95+ rating. Great subtly sweet aromas of redcurrant, plum, spice cake, minerals, dried fruits and marzipan; a wine of compelling perfume ... Very youthful and long, finishing with great thrust and buns of steel. A tightly coiled wine with a long future, perfectly representative of this great vintage. 'This will last 30 years without any problem,' promises Aldo."

1995 Aldo Conterno Barolo Riserva "Granbussia" ...119.95

Steve Tanzer: "92+ rating. Knockout perfumed nose combines cherry, dried flowers and tar; classic Barolo aromas. Powerfully structured, dense and sweet ... already extremely aromatic in the mouth, with subtle hints of dried flowers and dried herbs ... **This may well merit a score in the mid-90s with more time in bottle.**"

1997 Aldo Conterno Granbussia Barolo Riserva 95 Wine Spectator

\$129.95 limited



Wine Spectator: "Thought-provoking. Masses of leather and spice, with very ripe fruit on the nose. Full-bodied, with superrich fruit and loads of vanilla and ripe fruit character. As decadent and rich as the best chocolate mousse. Goes on for minutes. An exaggerated, almost in-your-face style for Aldo Conterno."

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