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NOVEMBER 14, 2006

CHABLIS

Raveneau in Magnum

Holy Grail Times Two

We *have* long worshipped at Raveneau's throne, reveling in the glory of their transcendent Chablis. The wines have always been scarce, but until two years ago, you could at least find—and afford—them.

But as we reported last year, the frenzy for the 2002s had a dramatic—and we expect lasting—impact on Raveneau's stature. The unprecedented demand seemed to instantly mythologize Raveneau—an effect shared by such fellow countrymen as Jean-François Coche, Claude Dugat and Anselme Selosse. Wines that were once within reach are now eerily elusive, and prices are soaring.

Les Clos & Magnums

Of course, even today, not all of Bernard and Jean-Marie Raveneau's wines inspire equal lust among collectors. The domaine's most coveted wine surely is still Les Clos, which long ago was recognized as the jewel in its crown. Thus, it enjoys a position like that of Corton-Charlemagne for Coche, Substance for Selosse or Griottes-Chambertin for Dugat. It is the first among equals, an epic wine crafted from just a half hectare of vines, and parceled out to France's very grateful three-star restaurants. Outsiders are rarely permitted to purchase even a bottle.

Yet, at least one other trophy looms large in Raveneau's portfolio, and it cuts across the vineyards: it's the domaine's rarely seen magnums. Many collectors have never seen a Raveneau wine in magnum, and some might even be surprised that they exist.



Chez Raveneau.

But they do exist and can be counted among Raveneau's greatest prizes.

The closest parallel is to Grange, whose magnums are famous for selling for three to four times the bottle price. Just as Penfolds does with its marquee wine, Raveneau makes only enough

magnums to frustrate collectors.

And perhaps as a tribute to their ageworthiness, Raveneau seems happy to accord only two of its wines the honor. One, of course, is Les Clos, and the other is the non-pareil *premier cru* Montée de Tonnerre. We once saw a magnum of 1989 Valmur, but never Blanchots, Butteaux or Chapelot. Such are the ways of the Raveneau brothers.

This Offer

On page two, we are privileged to offer two deservedly famous Raveneau wines in magnum. One is Montée de Tonnerre from the great 2000 vintage. The other is arguably the most sought-after Raveneau wine ever made: the 2002 Les Clos. We offered bottles of it a year ago for \$395; not only did it sell out in a heartbeat, we have sourced only a handful of bottles since. If we were to estimate a current market price, it would easily top \$500 a bottle.

Also on page two, you will find what promises to be our *only* offering of the highly sought-after 2004s—a year with all the earmarks of a classic, long-lived Raveneau vintage—and to top it off, a small sampling of past Raveneau gems at amazingly low prices. ►

CHABLIS

Raveneau Legends in Magnum

2000 Montée de Tonnerre
92 Tanzer 94 Wine Spectator
\$245.00 magnum



2002 Les Clos
98-100 Rovani
\$1195.00 magnum



Steve Tanzer: “Deep, complex nose melds grapefruit, powdered stone, apple and mint. A step up in concentration and texture from the foregoing premier crus. Thick, suave and seamless; dry, classy and rich. Finishes very long, with a flavor of wet stone. Will be a superb bottle.” *Extremely limited.*

Pierre Rovani: “Off the charts ... a personality of awe-inspiring intensity, depth, and concentration. Pure, dense, muscular, exceptionally well-balanced, this brilliant wine boasts a complex flavor profile of salty pears, earth, flint, and hints of candied lemons. Wow!” *One magnum limit.*

The Superb Raveneau 2004s

Two thousand four is shaping up to be a classic Chablis vintage—with predictably stunning wines from Raveneau. In fact, Allen Meadows (*Burghound*) compares them to the great 2000s. Superbly structured, with great ripeness, they should age—like all top Raveneau vintages—for upwards of two decades.

Since the 2004s began to appear in early summer, prices on the world market have increased markedly—demonstrating that 2004 intends to pick up where 2002 left off. Fortunately, we bought our wines early, allowing us to offer the following at very attractive prices. Quantities are very limited, however.

2004 Raveneau Premier Cru Butteaux* 75.00

Burghound: “90-92 rating ... plenty of minerality on the impressively intense and persistent finish. I quite like the balance here and this should be capable of 5 to 8 years of improvement. 2010+.”

2004 Raveneau Premier Cru Montée de Tonnerre* . 79.95

Burghound: “90-93 rating. A ripe nose of orchard fruit, citrus and a lovely stony character highlights the big, powerful and intense flavors that possess excellent depth of material and perhaps the best complexity of any of these 1ers. This is a racehorse with firm acidity and terrific focus and it can compete with the grands crus in 2004.”

2004 Raveneau Grand Cru Les Clos* 245.00

Tanzer: “92-95 rating. Discreet, complex nose hints at grapefruit, quinine, anise, white flowers and powdered stone. Saturates the palate with liquid stone and white grapefruit. A grand cru with great precision, energy and lift. Finishes extremely long and pure, with notes of grapefruit and crushed stone. **An early candidate for wine of the vintage.**”

2004 Raveneau Grand Cru Blanchots* 145.00

Tanzer: “91-94 rating ... wonderfully intense, with captivating flavors of crystallized lemon peel, grapefruit, crushed stone and spring flowers. This offers a terrific mineral/acid/sugar balance and impressive and outstanding generosity of flavor and texture for the vintage.”

2004 Raveneau Grand Cru Valmur* 145.00

Wine Advocate: “91-94 rating ... soars from the glass with a panoply of minerals and quartz. This wine possesses an intense inner core of minerals that are laced with salt, sea shells, and flint. Pure, concentrated, deep, and ethereal, it is gorgeously focused and immensely long in the finish.”

Past Glories at Great Prices

Even as demand for Raveneau climbs, we can offer three earlier wines at truly amazing prices. Very limited.

2002 Raveneau Grand Cru Blanchots189.95

Rovani: “93-95 rating ... thick, immensely rich ... massive depth, purity, and length.” Tanzer: “Knockout soil-inflected nose ... Wonderfully ripe and lush ... The great, mounting back end displays powerful minerality and great elegance.”

2000 Raveneau Grand Cru Valmur169.95

Tanzer: “93+ rating ... precise and powerful ... a cool, mineral character and plenty of inner-mouth perfume. Round and chewy ... lovely mineral backbone.”

2003 Raveneau Premier Cru Forêt54.95

Burghound: “A very ripe nose ... round, sweet, sappy and dense flavors that offer impressive intensity and fine length ... should drink well early.”

Ambrosial Amarone

Bussola's Incredible 2001 Amarone "TB"


A strong case can be made for Tommaso Bussola having joined the mighty Romano Dal Forno and Giuseppe Quintarelli to form a Holy Trinity for Amarone lovers.

Like Dal Forno and Quintarelli before him, Bussola created a new expression of this ancient wine. In contrast to Dal Forno Amarone's unbridled richness, and Quintarelli's noble classicism, Bussola's wines stand out for their profound purity and intensity of fruit, as well as their surreal balance and texture. Tasted side-by-side with Quintarelli and Dal Forno, one is struck by how graceful and long Bussola's Amarones are, without giving an inch in opulence.

Vigneto Alto

Apart from his skill as a winemaker, the secret to the transcendent quality of Bussola's Amarone is a vineyard: *Vigneto Alto*. This 2-acre parcel of old vines boasts a lofty elevation and three ancient low-yielding clones rarely found in one place these days: Rondinella, Corvina Grossa, and Corvinone. Bussola believes that this last, very rare variety gives his Amarone its extraordinary depth, density, richness and perfume.

In some years, Vigneto Alto is bottled on its own, but in 2001 the Vigneto Alto fruit went entirely into the

 "Bussola's wines are beautifully intense, with gorgeous purity, powerful ripe fruit flavors, yet a freshness and harmony that make them stand out."
Robert Parker

flagship Amarone TB, resulting in a wine of monumental richness and complexity.

The 2001 Amarone TB is cut from the same cloth as the great 1998 Amarone TB—a wine that also included the entire production of Vigneto Alto. We are pleased to offer this important wine at a mindbogglingly low price. (One need only compare this price with those of Dal Forno's and Quintarelli's Amarones

to appreciate what a bargain it is.) Hurry.

2001 Bussola Amarone "TB"
95 Daniel Thomases
95 Tanzer's Internat'l Wine Cellar*
\$89.95 750 ml



A wine of majestic size and profound complexity that explodes from the glass with scents of licorice, road tar, blackberries, truffle, woodsmoke and cassis. The palate is enormously concentrated, powerful and breathtakingly long, with a texture of pure, liquid velvet. Throughout Amarone's ancient history, there have been few wines as great as this one. Don't miss it.

*Ian d'Agata in Steve Tanzer's *International Wine Cellar* March 2006. For the record, in the same issue d'Agata gave Dal Forno's 2000 Amarone an identical 95 points and Quintarelli's 1997 Amarone 94 points.

In the New Wine Advocate: *Giacosa's 2001 Barbaresco Rabajà Riserva*

In recent decades, there have been few better guarantees of greatness than a red label, denoting "Riserva," on a Bruno Giacosa wine. History has been full of monumental Giacosa red labels, and the latest example is the 2001 Rabajà Riserva.

In his first time writing for Robert Parker's *Wine Advocate*, Antonio Galloni surveys Piedmont's great 2001 vintage, giving the Rabajà his highest score. If you haven't bought the wine yet, grab it now; its price is sure to go higher and higher.



2001 Barbaresco Rabajà Riserva
98 Antonio Galloni
\$229.95

Antonio Galloni in *The Wine Advocate*: "...massively endowed ... fully captures the essence of the Rabajà vineyard in its explosive, deeply spiced balsamic nose, layers of sweet dark fruit and big, imposing structure ... a profound, breathtaking wine"

Mon Aïeul at Beaugravière

The Heroic 2003 Finds its Culinary Paradise

“The tart of ceps was made from a paper thin Parmesan cheese-based crust layered with sliced sautéed ceps, a hint of black truffles, and a touch of foie gras. This was decadence and richness at its best. Moreover, it was a spectacular match with the nearly perfect 2003 Usseglio Cuvée Mon Aïeul ... It appears to be getting better with each tasting, revealing tremendous black raspberry, blueberry, garrigue, white pepper, and spice characteristics. Like the finest wines of this erratic year, it is voluptuous and rich. 98 points.” Robert Parker 9/06

If at anytime over the past 30 years you’ve made a food and wine pilgrimage to the Southern Rhône, the food side of your brain is probably dominated by memories of Guy Jullien’s revered restaurant, Beaugravière. Guy is regarded as *the* master of classic local cuisine and ingredients, so not surprisingly his food scales its greatest heights when paired with the area’s most richly evocative wines.

To go with Guy’s sublime tart of ceps, one could not imagine a greater wine than Thierry and Jean-Pierre Usseglio’s coveted Cuvée Mon Aïeul. Gently vinified

from three ancient vineyards and aged with *no* influence of new oak, it is the purest quintessence of old-vine Grenache—dazzling as a companion to classic Southern Rhône dishes.

We have just secured a small parcel that has been in perfect storage since release 18 months ago. The price is nothing short of amazing. Hurry.

2003 Cuvée Mon Aïeul*
98 Parker (Hedonist’s Gazette)
\$89.95 bt. \$995.00 case



Parker: “One of the vintage’s most profound wines ... Amazingly opulent, even voluptuous, with extraordinary purity, a huge tactile impression on the palate, but not heavy by any means, this is a stunning Châteauneuf du Pape from ancient vines ... what one gets is the essence of the three separate terroirs it comes from—Les Serres, Guigasse, and La Crau.”

— And an Incredible Bargain —

2003 Usseglio Châteauneuf du Pape29.95

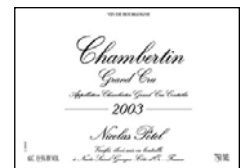
Parker: “92 rating ... outstanding ... oozes the character of Provence with its notes of lavender, herbes de Provence, and sweet black cherries and raspberries. Some licorice, saddle leather, and salty sea breeze notes also make it into the character of this full-bodied, concentrated wine which is silky enough to be drunk now or cellared for 10-12 years.”

Nicolas Potel’s Monumental 2003 Chambertin

One of his generation’s greatest winemakers, Gérard Potel made Domaine Pousse d’Or’s reputation; he also trained his son Nicolas to follow in his footsteps. Potel died suddenly at age 58, but Nicolas was fully prepared to go it alone, having absorbed his father’s prodigious gifts as well as his core beliefs in traditional winemaking.

Working on his own since the late 1990s, Nicolas made the wine of a lifetime with his 2003 Chambertin, likened by Tanzer to an old-style 1940s burgundy. A wine for the ages, it should not be missed by anyone who loves red wine of great nobility. Only 120 cases were made, so hurry.

2003 Nicolas Potel
Chambertin
95 Tanzer
\$195.00 bottle



Tanzer: “Headspinning, expressive nose ... this incorporates all the Chambertin food groups. Hugely thick, sappy and sweet, with outstanding volume and breadth. Wonderfully dense flavors of raspberry, menthol, five-spice powder and underbrush. Finishes with broad, noble tannins and unflagging persistence ... A no-brainer for those lucky enough to find a bottle: I thought I was drinking an old-style Burgundy from the ‘40s.”

DESSERT WINES

A Magical Tokaji

Tokaj Classic's Incredible 2000 "6-Puttonyos"


The *renaissance* that swept Tokaji in the 1990s brought a flood of outside investment: France's big insurer AXA (owner of Ch. Pichon Baron); Spain's Vega Sicilia and a British investment group led by Hugh Johnson.

But one of the most remarkable projects has been home-grown: a Hungarian classical musician, Andreas Bruhacs, has restored a 400-year-old estate in the historic town of Mad, including some famous vineyards classified in the 18th century. He calls the estate *Tokaj Classic*.

Like Tokaji's other elite projects, the emphasis is on the region's mythic sweet wines—restoring a tradition dating back to the 1600s. Bruhacs makes a line-up similar to other producers, but he also makes something special: a **six puttonyos** bottling that offers mindboggling richness, complexity and balance.

A Remarkable Wine

Tokaji's *puttonyos* designation refers to the number of tubs (*puttonyos*) of botrytised grape paste added to a standard cask of about 140 liters. A wine containing only one or two *puttonyos* of botrytised grapes will be semi-sweet and a wine with seven *puttonyos* is nectar, qualifying as Aszu Eszencia.

 "Tokaji is today's most underappreciated truly great wine."
Matt Kramer

But sweeter isn't necessarily better. For Bruhacs, Aszu Eszencia (which would have sold for over \$100) was well within reach; but he made the difficult decision to add only six *puttonyos* of botrytised grapes, replacing the seventh with an equal amount of superb unbotrytised must. The wisdom of this decision is reflected in the transcendent quality of this wine.

In fact, in the *Wine Spectator's* October 2006 reviews of current Tokaji releases, this cuvée came out comfortably on top. It bested even Royal Tokaji's pure eszencia at \$500/500ml and Oremus' at \$360/375 ml.

This is an otherworldly dessert wine *and* an astonishing bargain. Don't miss it.

2000 Tokaj Classic Tokaji
Aszu 6 Puttonyos
96 Wine Spectator
\$59.95 500ml



Wine Spectator: "Racy, concentrated and tightly wound. Displays terrific balance between the sweetness and acidity. Flavors of orange marmalade, preserved lemon and dried apricot get a lift from the vivid structure. Comes in waves, ending in a long, complex finish. Drink now through 2030."

Coming Up: Australia

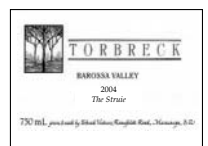
The new *Wine Advocate* (issue 167) contains an exhaustive review of new Australian releases. We will be offering a number of highly rated wines in coming issues, but to get started, here are two particularly compelling buys.

2005 Kaesler The Bogan*
96 Parker
\$49.95



Parker: "... from 25- to 105-year-old vines ... an exuberant nose of toast, blackberries, cassis, cherries, and damp earth. It is full-bodied and powerful with fabulous purity and texture as well as a blockbuster finish. This is a classic example of Barossa Shiraz at its finest. Enjoy it over the next 12-15 years. **\$65 retail.**"

2004 Torbreck The Struie*
96 Parker
\$49.95



Parker: "... 40-60-year old and 120-year old vineyards ... An exotic bouquet of blackberries ... full-bodied, powerful, rich ... great purity as well as focus, a laser-like precision, huge intensity, and a blockbuster finish that lasts nearly a minute. It ... should last for two decades."

WINE ANTIQUES

Antique Wine Decanters

Each holiday season since 1993, we have offered a range of antique English and Irish wine decanters from the 18th and 19th centuries. As a direct result of this tradition, beautiful and rare decanters now grace the tables of many of our customers and their friends, enhancing their enjoyment of fine food and wine.

As always, each item is an original antique, representing one of the classic styles of the 18th or 19th centuries.

Each decanter is accompanied by a letter of authentication signed by Andrew Burne, one of England's foremost experts on early English and Irish glass.

The decanters shown here are just ten of the more than 30 decanters available for delivery the week of December 11th. Photographs of the others are available on our website www.rarewineco.com, or by fax or e-mail on request. Decanters are 750ml bottle size unless noted.



K1. George III Decanter with scalloped disc stopper, taper shape, flat finger flutes to shoulder, engraved tulip band, fine finger flutes to base. English c. 1770. \$950



K2. George III Decanter with lunar scalloped lozenge stopper, taper shape, 3 rows of facets at neck, single large stars to body, fine finger flutes to base. English c. 1770. \$975



K8. George III Decanter with lozenge stopper, 4 rings on neck, flat finger flutes to shoulder, fine finger flutes to base. English c. 1790. \$825



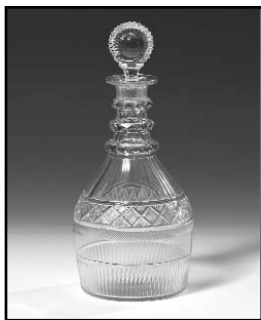
K11. George III Decanter with lozenge stopper, 3 plain neck rings, plain body. English/Irish c. 1790. \$850



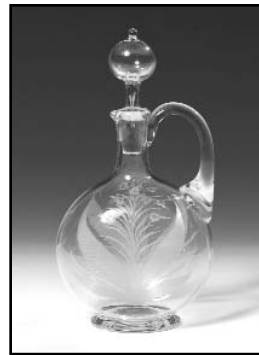
K12. George III Decanter with bull's-eye stopper, 3 plain neck rings, plain body. English/Irish c. 1790. \$825



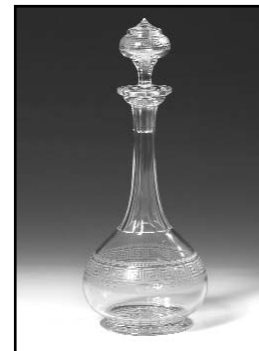
K16. Regency Decanter with mushroom stopper, 3 cut neck rings, flat flutes, broad band of diamonds above vertical fine prisms to base. English/Irish c. 1810. \$695



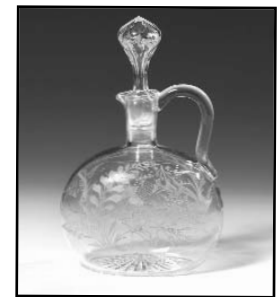
K17. George IV Decanter with prism bull's-eye stopper, 3 cut neck rings, flat flutes to strawberry diamonds, slanting fine prisms, fine finger flutes at base. English/Irish c. 1820. \$750



K22. Victorian Claret Jug, hollow ball stopper, plain loop handle, flattened ovoid body engraved lily of the valley, flanged plain foot. English c. 1870. \$650



K21. Victorian Decanter, pinnacle stopper, wide ogee lip engraved beneath, tall fluted neck to spreading body with engraved key pattern, egg bordered, flanged star cut foot. English c. 1880. \$595



K25. Victorian flagon, hollow pinnacle stopper cut and engraved, plain loop handle to flattened bun body engraved with ferns and floral sprays, on reverse a swallow, engraved later with the dates 1858-1908, star cut base. 600ml size. English c. 1890. \$595

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SPAIN & CHAMPAGNE

Pétalos del Bierzo

An Astonishing Value from Alvaro Palacios

Bierzo has emerged as one of Spain's most exciting wine regions, its mountainous, century-old vineyards once again producing glorious red wines.

The man behind this revival is Alvaro Palacios. Since his first Bierzo vintage in 1999, Alvaro has crafted a number of riveting wines. But his latest *cuvée*, Pétalos, is arguably his most important Bierzo wine yet.

Having discovered Bierzo's perilously steep slopes and ancient Mencía vines in the late 1980s, Alvaro waited a decade to realize his dream of making wine here. But by the late '90s, working with his nephew Ricardo Pérez, he began acquiring the region's best old vines.

Their first vintages created a sensation, and their elite single-vineyard *cuvées* became among the country's most collectible wines. However, Alvaro understood from his Priorat experience that not everyone can afford (or find) such trophies.



Alvaro Palacios looks on as a precipitous Mencía vineyard is worked by mule.

With Pétalos, he created a wine not only affordable to everyday drinkers, but rich and complex enough to satisfy lovers of great wine. Modeled after Alvaro's hugely successful Priorat red, Les Terrasses, Pétalos captures all of Bierzo's magic at a compellingly low price.

The 2005 Pétalos—from a fabulous Bierzo vintage—offers characteristic Mencía black fruits along with a seductive minerality. **It is a screaming value.**

**2005 Pétalos
del Bierzo**
\$18.95 bt. \$225.00 cs.



Josh Reynolds in Steve Tanzer's *IWC*: "Peppery, vibrant scents of dark cherry, cassis and tobacco. At once fleshy and focused, with sweet red and dark berry flavors showing a refreshing bitter quality and tangy acids providing lift and focus. This has excellent structure, with fine-grained tannins in balance with the fruit."

Le Mesnil

An Incredibly Priced Champagne from a Mythic Cru

A century ago, when Aimé Salon set out to make Champagne's first great mono-*cru* and mono-varietal *cuvée* from Chardonnay, he chose the village of Le Mesnil-sur-Oger to produce his wine.

Of the Côte de Blanc's three great *grand crus*, Le Mesnil has long—in the words of Richard Juhlin—"been regarded as the best of all." The essence of Côte des Blancs Chardonnay, Le Mesnil's unique clone offers a penetrating floral and mineral perfume to complement its uncommon richness.

So, when we decided last year to create a *terroir*-based Champagne under our own label, we, too, went straight to Le Mesnil, where the local grower's organization—the Union des Propriétaires-Récoltants—not only controls much of the village's vineyards, but enjoys one of France's highest reputations for quality.

Our collaboration resulted in a Blanc de Blancs Champagne of unique depth and perfume. Beautifully nuanced now, it will develop even greater complexity with further aging. A phenomenal bargain.

**Le Mesnil Grand Cru
Blanc de Blancs**
The Rare Wine Co.
\$29.95 bt. \$330.00 cs.



A joy from start to finish. The nose is already expressing the toasty, brown butter notes of aged Blanc de Blancs, while the palate offers quintessential Le Mesnil green apple fruit, chalk and apple blossoms. The palate is creamy and generous, but with excellent balancing acidity and the complexity normally found only in top vintage Champagne. Simply an extraordinary value.

Born to Immortality

With the Profound 2003, Merus Continues Its Ascent

If Merus had been launched five years earlier, it would have been part of the inner circle: the mythic first generation of Cult Cabs that included Harlan, Bryant, Araujo, Colgin and, of course, Screaming Eagle.

But Merus missed the go-go years when \$75 bottles became \$400 jewels overnight. Not only was it born into the teeth of the dot-com downturn, the first release was from the difficult 1998 harvest (when it was arguably the wine of the vintage).

Now, six years later, Merus has come to define the second generation of Cult Cabernets, smaller in number, and somewhat less lofty in price, yet every bit as limited in their production as they are dazzling in their quality. It was even chosen to share the spotlight with Harlan in the famous *New York Times Magazine* article "The Cult" (12/23/2001). And it is high on the *Wine Spectator's* short list of "Rising Stars of Napa Cabernet" (11/15/2006).

2003 Merus

In each of its first three incarnations—1998, 1999 and 2000—Merus was among the Cabernets of the vintage. But these early efforts were just a prelude to the awe-inspiring wines made in 2001 and 2002. Winemakers Mark Herold and Erika Gottl took full advantage of extraordinary weather to produce wines



"What an inspirational story this small garage (literally) winery is ... The Merus offerings ... are among the most exciting new reds to come out of Northern California in the last several years."
Robert Parker

of extravagant richness and wondrous concentration. Yet as amazing as both wines are, they could be surpassed by the unreal 2003.

In a year of blockbuster Cabernets, the 2003 Merus looms large. Not only does it deliver imposing ripeness, size and intensity; it also possesses the trademarks of all Merus vintages—surreal texture and an ethereal balance that is improbable for a wine so powerful.

Availability of Merus continues to be difficult, and the wine seldom appears in retail channels. But we have supported Mark and Erika's work from the start, and each year we receive a prized allocation not only of bottles, but of rare magnums.

The 2003 Merus is among the great ones; you won't want to miss it.

2003 Merus

95 Parker

\$159.95 bt. \$425.00 mag.



Parker: "The 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon ... boasts an inky/purple color along with a rich bouquet of creosote, blueberries, blackberries, sweet earth, and smoky, spicy oak. With full body, abundant fruit, glycerin, and sweet tannin, a multilayered mouthfeel, and stunning upside potential, it is accessible enough to be drunk in 2-3 years, or cellared for two decades."

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FOOD & WINE BEST WINE
2002 AMERICAN WINE AWARDS IMPORTER

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