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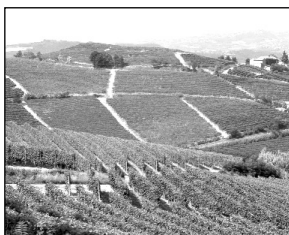
## A MOMENT IN TIME

# The Soul of its Terroir

## *Burlotto's Magical 2004 Barolo Monvigliero*

*This article is the second in a year-long series on Piedmont's great traditional wines.*

Today, single-vineyard wines are king, but it was not always so. As recently as the early 1980s, "estate" wines were the gold standard, but these were more about common land ownership than the magic of a particular piece of soil.



*Monvigliero*

In Champagne, blends ruled—except of course for the iconic Clos des Goisses and Bollinger Vignes Françaises. Even in Burgundy, only the most famous vineyards earned their own bottlings; virtually everything else went into village or regional *cuvées*.

No longer. Wines from single sites have flooded the world market. Many are better than the blends of a generation ago, yet if they fail us, it's in not delivering the special character we associate with a single site.

Barolo is a case in point. It was once an article of faith that blending was a key to great Barolo; yet, today single-*cru* bottlings have eclipsed that tradition. Each year hundreds of *cru* Barolos emerge from Langhe cellars, but how many rise to greatness? And how many could be picked out in a blind tasting?

One that qualifies on both counts is Burlotto's Barolo Monvigliero. In vintage after vintage, its aromatics are unlike any Barolo we've ever experienced. Its astonishingly intense, and instantly recognizable, perfume of Provençal black olive tapenade, cedar and truffle is nothing short of hypnotic. And it could come from no other place on earth.

Burlotto's Monvigliero has been made as a single-vineyard wine since 1982, but for a century before ►

## *Blended versus Cru: A Look Back*

Nowhere has the trend towards single vineyard wines been stronger than in Barolo, where as late as the 1940s *all* important wines were blends. The man who can claim to have changed the Langhe's thinking is Bepe Colla, who as early as 1961 made marvelous *cru* Barolos at Prunotto. (We'll never forget tasting with Colla in 1988; more than a dozen Barolos, almost all single-*cru*, said all we needed to know about his gifts.)

Other traditionalists followed in the 1960s—including Bruno Giacosa, Giuseppe Rinaldi, Vietti and Marcarini. In 1970, a young Mauro Mascarello broke with family tradition to create the noble Monprivato, and in 1978 Giovanni Conterno made his first Barolos from Cascina Francia. As for the modernists, few know a world other than that of *cru* Barolo, having come of age in the 1980s and 1990s.

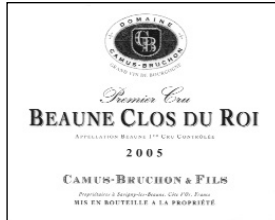
Today, only one iconic blended Barolo remains. It is made by Maria Teresa Mascarello, whose father Bartolo insisted to his dying breath that great Barolo is a marriage of vineyards.



# 2005 Camus-Bruchon

*“There is a refined elegance and perfumed precision to the Camus-Bruchon wines ... I cannot recommend (them) highly enough.” John Gilman, View from the Cellar*

Burgundy's 2005 vintage was a once-in-a-lifetime showcase for the region's red wine producers. Growers at all levels seized the opportunity—and a number of little-known *vignerons* made wines that rival some big names in quality.



“Lavières” are on the slopes of the Bois de Noël on the north side, and the wine from here is about elegance, minerality and finesse.

Finally, Camus-Bruchon has old vines in Beaune 1er cru “Clos du Roi,” where the thin topsoil and steep slope produces full-

bodied, firmly structured wines of great character. Here, as in his other top *crus*, Camus prunes for low yields and optimum aeration. All grapes are sorted at the vine to avoid contact of the good with the bad.

## Perfectionist in the Cellar

No less painstaking in the cellar, Camus strives for balance and precision in his winemaking to allow the *terroirs* to shine. After a week to ten days of cold maceration, the wine ferments for about three weeks, with one to three punchdowns and one pumpover per day for measured extraction. The wines then age on the lees for up to sixteen months in *pièce*, only 15% new. The wine is not racked until bottling.

Camus-Bruchon's wines are among the finest examples of how special the 2005 vintage is. They clearly demonstrate that, with meticulously tended old vines and great care in the cellar, profound wines were made even by little-known growers. It's a privilege to be able to offer these beautiful 2005 Burgundies from an emerging star.

One such small grower was Lucien Camus, whose old vines in the best crus of Savigny-les-Beaune and Beaune produced wines of heroic quality. As noted by John Gilman, Camus-Bruchon's '05s "are precise, focused and reflective of their underlying *terroir*, with great sappiness and depth." They are also profoundly reflective of the vintage, with great concentration of fruit and site expression, and decades of development ahead.

## Very Old Vines

The key to Camus-Bruchon's quality is the great age of the vines—which gives naturally low yields of concentrated, aromatically complex fruit and great site expression. The vines are also very well placed: in Savigny-les-Beaune, for example, Camus has *premier crus* on opposite sides of the appellation's valley, providing a compelling study in *terroir*.

His 57-year-old vines in “Narbontons” are on Savigny's south side, on Mont Battois, and the wine exhibits the round, earthy and *sauvage* character of this part of Savigny. In contrast, his 43-year-old vines in

**2005 Beaune 1er Cru  
“Clos du Roi”  
92 Gilman  
\$54.95**

Gilman: “... a lovely, ripe and broad-shouldered example of Beaune ... black cherries, plums, chocolate, earth, violets, fresh nutmeg ... the wine is deep, full-bodied and plush on the attack, with fine mid-palate depth, moderate tannins, and a long, supple and potentially velvety finish. Just a classic bottle of Beaune in the making.”

**2005 Savigny 1er Cru  
“Lavières”  
93 Gilman  
\$49.95**

Gilman: “By Camus-Bruchon standards, the vines in les Lavières are relatively youthful, only being forty-three years of age ... a classy and perfumed nose of cherries, red plums, cocoa, gentle soil tones, woodsmoke, fresh nutmeg and a delicate topnote of violet. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and strikingly transparent ... Another superb premier cru.”

**2005 Savigny 1er Cru  
“Narbontons”  
94 Gilman  
\$64.95**

Gilman: “... from 57 year-old vines ... The bouquet is deep and displays superb nascent complexity in its blend of black raspberries, cherries, coffee, woodsmoke, pigeon, and a myriad of stony soil tones ...the wine is full-bodied, pure and transparent, with a rock solid core of fruit, great minerality, and a very, very long, ripely tannic finish.”

# A Tribute to a Friend

## *Memories of John Cossart and a Remarkable Malmsey*

A very special old Madeira makes its first appearance this month. The Rare Wine Co.'s Imperial Malmsey is not only an amazing wine, it has the rare ability to carry us back in time. Yet our excitement is leavened with sadness, as this wine was a collaboration with John Cossart, our good friend and Chairman of Henriques & Henriques, who passed away in February—far too young at the age of 63.



*John Cossart at Reid's Hotel, Dec. 31, 2007.*

John had been groomed by heredity and fate to be a Madeira merchant. Four generations of his ancestors managed Cossart Gordon. And when his father Peter—the previous Henriques & Henriques chairman—died in 1991, John was called in to keep the ship afloat. He ran H & H for seventeen years with wisdom, grace and, above all, an unwavering belief in this most historic of wines.

### **A Profound Heritage**

Of the thousands of British subjects who, over the past three centuries, made and shipped wine on the island, John was the last. He represented a tradition that began in the 1600s, when the first Englishmen arrived to build a market for Madeira. In the 18th century, they transformed a modest white table wine into the luxurious fortified wine that captivated Americans for most of our early history. And in the 19th century, the few remaining British merchants insured Madeira's survival during times of epic hardship.

John was the last of these Englishmen—believing in both the wine and its legacy. He remained committed to his ancestors' traditional winemaking, and he insured Henriques & Henriques' survival as one of the last independent houses at a time when few remained.

John Cossart was also our friend. We cherish memories of our frequent visits and we will be forever thankful to have shared his last New Year's Eve in December on the terrace at Reid's, awed by the massive display of fireworks for which Madeira is famed.

Over the years we made several purchases from H & H's small stock of some of the island's finest old vintages.

Here and there, we bought multiple cases of these wines, along with a few of the firm's surviving bottles from the early 19th century. (See next page.) John also let us have the last of his prized "Inauguration Wine," a half-century-old treasure that had been chosen to launch Henriques & Henriques' new lodge in 1994.

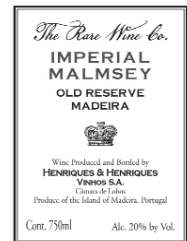
### **Imperial Malmsey**

But there was one more project to be done. For several years, we had worked with John to come up with a special Rare Wine Co. bottling from the firm's old stocks. Finally last year we chose a superb old Malmsey. It was a classic H & H wine—its texture and aromatics reminding us of the wines the English shippers turned out with startling regularity 75 to 100 years ago, when they still had access to very old wine.

We gave John our order for the wine at New Year's, but his death prevented the bottling from being completed until late Spring. It has now arrived, each bottle carrying a back label that honors John Cossart.

With its gloriously rich palate and explosive bouquet, "Imperial Malmsey" is a throwback to the great Malmseys once shipped by loyal British merchants to their best customers around the world. What better tribute to the last member of this noble tradition?

**The Rare Wine Co.**  
**"Imperial Malmsey"**  
**Old Reserve Madeira**  
**\$125.00**



This wine is magical: as seductive for its astonishing complexity as it is for its gorgeous balance and texture. Its color is a glowing light mahogany and like any great Malmsey, it perfectly balances sweetness with acidity, leaving the palate refreshed. But it is the aromas and flavors that are most dramatic. Its nuances are of a very old wine, profoundly complex and deep, with explosive notes of figs, mocha, coffee, caramel and smoke. Both classic and compelling—if you're like us, you'll return to this wine again and again.

## MADEIRA

# The Final Treasures

## *Henriques & Henriques' Pre-Phylloxera Rarities*

*John Cossart* was very protective of Henriques & Henriques' old wines, but none more so than three ancient Madeiras of obscure origin. Dating from the very early 1800s, if not before, they are among the few survivors of the Golden Age—the time before Phylloxera when Madeira ruled much of the English-speaking world.

These three wines came to the firm in 1850, when it was founded by João Henriques, a Cama do Lobos landowner. At the time, they were already several decades old. Today, the bottles still bear very old labels that give their names: Grand Old Bual, W.S. Bual and Malvasia Reserva.



*No one knows the exact age of the wines ... in 1850 they were already considered 'old wines.' In fact, John Cossart believed that some may actually date to the late 1700's.*

Little is known about the wines' origin, and we can only speculate as to their age. For his part, John believed that some might even date to the late 1700s. But what we do know is that they are among the most remarkable old Madeiras still in existence.

The firm has managed to keep these wines in its inventory for more than 150 years through parsimony: only good customers get *any*, and the quantities sold are never more than a few bottles. The last time we were able to assemble enough for an offering was in 2001.

Now, seven years later, we can again offer these treasures: three of the most ethereal wines you will ever taste. Needless to say, quantities are *extremely* limited.

### **Malvasia "Reserva"** **\$1195.00**

Alex Liddell: "★★★★★+ Complex, nutty and fudgy, ethereal bouquet, redolent of age and maturity, totally captivating; hugely concentrated, many layered wine with an explosive entry and almost chewy consistency; ravishing, intense ... an exceedingly long, very intense and lingering finish. The quintessence of Malvasia and, for me, perfection."

### **W. S. Bual** **\$950.00**

Transferred from demijohn to bottle in 1927. Beautiful copper color with yellow-green rim denoting great age. Fresh nose, floral, with grilled nuts, toffee, leather and a hint of marzipan. Big and mouth-filling, it seems slightly sweeter than the Grand Old Bual (the sugar is 2.8%), and with superb concentration. A fantastic, classic old Bual.

### **Grand Old Boal** **\$995.00**

Alex Liddell: "★★★★★ recorked 1927, 1955 and 1975 ... very rich and pungent on the nose ... mature fudgy aromas—Bual at its most typical; rich, concentrated, with vanilla predominant, but balanced; wonderfully focused long finish, persistent black treacle aftertaste, going on and on, but nevertheless dry. A lovely wine. Classic."

## *Do we have your email address?*

If you're a longtime customer, you know that The Rare Wine Co. boasts wines that no one else has. But you may not know that in addition to the rarities appearing in our acclaimed newsletter, some offers appear only by email. To have access to these important offers as well, please make sure that we have your email address.

Wines may be sold and delivered only to persons who are at least 21 years old. All wines are sold in California and title passes to the buyer in California. We make no representation to the legal rights of anyone to ship or import wines into any state outside of California. We are not responsible for typographical errors. All items and prices subject to availability. Request a copy of our terms of sale or read them at [www.rarewineco.com](http://www.rarewineco.com). An \* indicates pre-arrival. Issued 16 times yearly. © 2008 The Rare Wine Co.

## CHAMPAGNE & RHONE

# An Emerging Icon

## *Billecart-Salmon's 1996 Clos Ste.-Hilaire*

As we noted on page one, single-vineyard Champagnes were virtually nonexistent until recent years. In fact, even today very few Champagnes come from a solitary parcel of vines.

Obviously, this is partly due to the producers' commitment to the idea that Champagne is best made by blending disparate sites. But Champagne's variable weather—and the reality that few sites on their own can produce great Champagne year after year—is also at play.

### Just Five

Today, one can count on one hand the number of prominent single-vineyard Champagnes: Krug's Clos de Mesnil and Clos Ambonnay; Philipponnat's Clos des Goisses; Bollinger's Vieilles Vignes Françaises and the subject of this offer, Billecart-Salmon's Clos Sainte-Hilaire.

Alongside Clos Ambonnay, Clos Sainte-Hilaire made its first appearance in 1995. The Clos is a one-hectare, enclosed parcel of old Pinot Noir vines that has long

Cru	hectares	hectolitres	hectolitres
Avize	198	9	
Azy	22	10	
Chaully	638	29	
Chaully	22	10	
Chaully	154	7	
Mesnil	418	19	
Mesnil	22	10	
Mesnil	462	21	
Azy	136	9	
Azy	136	9	
Clos Sainte-Hilaire	44	20	
Manville	66	30	

Billecart's crus—including Clos Ste.-Hilaire—in chalk.

belonged to the Billecart-Salmon family. The wine is made on site, fermented in barrels previously used for Montrachet, and disgorged without dosage. Only 300 to 600 cases can be made in any vintage.

Clos Sainte-Hilaire has the hallmarks of becoming one of the great collectibles of Champagne. Needless to say, the 1996 has particular promise, given the stature of this vintage and the high prices being fetched by the year's superstars.

We have secured a very small amount of this legend-in-the-making which we can offer at an attractive price.

**1996 Billecart-Salmon  
Le Clos Sainte-Hilaire\***  
**\$395.00** *very limited*



Richard Juhlin on Clos Sainte-Hilaire: "The character ... lies somewhere between its neighbor, Clos des Goisses, and Bollinger Vignes Francais ... will soon become a cult item much in demand."

## Châteauneuf—Big Names, Small Prices

For those of us who love great Châteauneuf du Pape, there are no more reliable names than Beaucastel and Vieux Télégraphe. Both are old estates that led the movement towards domaine bottling in the 1960s and 1970s, and they still make their wines classically. Each of these great properties enjoys fabulous *terroirs* and consistently produces wines of

great generosity, balance and soaring perfume.

Two recent vintages for these great estates have tended to be overlooked: Beaucastel's 1999 and Vieux Télégraphe's 2003. Both wines offer remarkable purity and richness, with the balance we expect from these perfectionist producers. We are pleased to offer them at prices you won't want to pass up.

**1999 Ch. de Beaucastel\***  
**92+Tanzer**  
**\$69.95**



**2003 Vieux Télégraphe\***  
**93 Wine Spectator**  
**★★★(\*) Livingstone-Learmonth**  
**\$45.00**

Steve Tanzer: "Highly complex nose combines black fruits ... truffle, road tar, licorice and leather. Very intense and spicy ... one already senses the incipient complexity. Finishes with building tannins, a note of caramel and terrific persistence ...."

James Molesworth: "... quickly picks up steam in the glass, with dark cherry, plum, tobacco, pepper, mineral and hot stone notes pumping through the long, fruit- and terroir-filled finish. Really fleshes out..."

# AUSTRIA

## Seduced by Stone

### *The Cult of Austria's Great Dry Rieslings & Gruners*

The best dry whites of Austria's Wachau Valley are changing how the world thinks about white wine. Grown on steep stony slopes above the Danube River, the finest Rieslings and Gruner Veltliners have brilliantly defined personalities—their



*The Wachau*

richness and complexity coming almost entirely from the grape and the soil.

Leading this revolution has been a small group of growers, including Pichler, Knoll, Prager and Hirtzberger. We're pleased to offer a selection of their top *cuvées* at far below market prices.

#### **F.X. Pichler**

*"Given Pichler's tiny yields ... and his minimal interventionist wine-making philosophy, it is not surprising that he is considered a genius."*

*The Wine Advocate*

FX's wines possess massive concentration, on top of all the other usual descriptors. A great FX wine has a magic that cannot be described, only experienced. His annual release in February causes a frenzy, with collectors vying for their meager allocations. At these prices, count your blessings ....

#### **2002 Pichler Gruner Veltliner Smaragd "M" ..... 54.95**

The coveted "M." *International Wine Cellar*: "Smoky, peachy, mocha-coffee aromas. Enormously rich and meaty in the mouth, with ripe, incipiently caramelized peach .... The minerality is sublimated or subsumed here, but the overall effect is certainly imposing. **\$90 retail.**"

#### **2002 Pichler Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Kellerberg .. 49.95**

*International Wine Cellar*: "Grilled pineapple, peach, mango and banana aromas suggestive of enormous, roasted ripeness ... Creamy, voluminous and rich, with a tactile sense of sizzling peppercorn, tart but well-integrated fruit skin flavors, and salty mineral extract. **\$89 retail**"

#### **Prager**

Prager's Rieslings are second to none, displaying a precision and sense of *terroir* that few producers on the planet can imagine. Many people, particularly in the U.S., believe that this is Austria's—and possibly the world's—greatest source of dry Riesling.

#### **2004 Prager Riesling Smaragd Achleiten ..... 49.95**

*Wine Advocate*: "94 rating ... flowers, salt, and citrus in the nose ... rich and expansive ... The overall impression here is of deep, rolling waves of fruit capped with bright citrus and packed with fruit, nut and mineral matter. I could taste the tide crashing in the finish a minute or more later."

#### **Emmerich Knoll**

*"Stunning Wines." The Wine Advocate*

Knoll was another of the Wachau's founding fathers and has a following only exceeded by F.X. Pichler's. Knoll's wines offer the best of both worlds: they are effusively rich in their youth—with a luscious red fruit quality—and they live forever. Packed and concentrated, with brilliant acidity, with time they reveal the "essence of Wachau" minerality that is so compelling.

#### **2004 Knoll Riesling Smaragd Loibenberg .....45.00**

*International Wine Cellar*: "92 rating ... Intensely flavored, compact and light on its feet, with vibrant acidity giving elegance to the wine. Pure stone fruits and spicy garden herbs from entry to lingering aftertaste ...."

#### **2004 Knoll Riesling Smaragd Schutt .....47.50**

*International Wine Cellar*: "93 rating ... enticing notes of vineyard peach and pineapple. Crisp and lively, with a lemony acidity that seems to dance on the tongue ... rather powerful ... expect it to gain complex exotic fruit components to go with the grapefruit zest and mineral flavors that currently dominate. Very long on the finish."

#### **Hirtzberger**

At Spitz, in the western end of the Wachau Valley, cool mountain air reinforces the minerality and delicacy of Hirtzberger's stunning wines. Franz Hirtzberger is obsessive about quality, enforcing strict yields and rigorous selection, using natural yeasts, and aging his Rieslings in acacia wood barrels.

#### **2002 Hirtzberger Riesling Smaragd Hochrain ..... 59.95**

*Wine Advocate*: "94 rating ... compelling, fresh, lively ... complex wine, elegant and pure, with tremendous focus and depth. Extremely long and harmonious finish."

#### **2004 Hirtzberger Riesling Smaragd Hochrain ..... 54.95**

*Wine Advocate*: "94 rating ... a finish of enormous, graceful length ... a model of the ability of Austrian Riesling to amass sheer fruit and mineral density without sacrificing elegance or interplay of flavors."

# The Miracle of Alyce

## Hansel's Top Pinot & Chardonnay Soar in 2005

Stephen Hansel's first commercial releases—from the 1996 vintage—quickly put the Hansel name on the map for Russian River Valley wines of wonderful quality and breathtaking value.



Steve Hansel

That vintage, and the year that followed, saw just a straight Russian River Valley *cuvée* made. But in 1998, Steve began to appreciate the possibilities of culling out particularly expressive barrels. And so in that year, he created something called Cuvée Alyce, which was a selection of the Pinot Noir and the Chardonnay that were the richest in character.

Steve named the wine for his larger-than-life mother, Alyce, who turned 90 last year. A few years ago, he

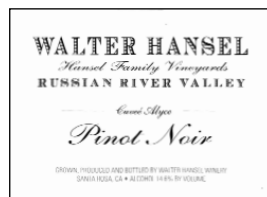
*"This estate is on fire."*  
Robert Parker

explained that "in her honor I select the most expressive (albeit sometimes the most stubborn, opinionated 'over the top') barrels" for Alyce. Though we've never met Steve's mom, we've always suspected that the parenthetical description could just as easily, and lovingly, be applied to her.

In recent years, Steve has created several compelling single-vineyard Pinots and Chardonnays. But Cuvée Alyce still gets those barrels most demanding—and deserving—of their own audience.

The 2005 releases continue the "Alyce" tradition of delivering great opulence and personality at a mind-bogglingly low price. Though little was made of these two wines in 2005, we were honored again to receive a prized allocation. Don't miss either one.

**2005 Hansel Pinot Noir**  
**"Cuvée Alyce"**  
**91 Parker**  
**\$35.95**



**2005 Chardonnay**  
**"Cuvée Alyce"**  
**94 Parker**  
**\$35.95**

Robert Parker: "... shows strong pomegranate notes intermixed with red currants, earth, spice box, and underbrush. It is deep ruby with a purple tinge, shows sweet fruit, medium body, and elegance in an almost Morey St.-Denis premier cru-like style. Drink it over the next 5-7 years."

Robert Parker: "A selection of the best barrels and named after Stephen Hansel's mother, exhibits more honeysuckle, poached pear, and sauteed, buttery citrus. The wine has gorgeous fruit, terrific acidity, and underlying minerality and depth. This is a superb wine that should age nicely for 7-8 years."

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