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OCTOBER 2, 2001

## Treasures from a Madeira Cellar

*Our love for old Madeira* is well known, and so is our commitment to locating, and making available, these vanishing, and irreplaceable, wines.

We've been at it for almost 15 years, and as time goes on, it becomes harder and harder to find them. But occasionally we are able to unearth something really special.

The source this time is the venerable firm of Henriques & Henriques which—despite the Portuguese names—has been run for decades by members of the British Cossart family. The company was founded in 1850 by João Henriques, a major Cama do Lobos grower whose holdings included the famed Quinta do Serrado. Ninety

*Continued Next Page*

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### *A Message to Our Customers*

*The Rare Wine Co. family extends our deepest sympathies to those who lost friends or loved ones on September 11th in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.*

*We mourn those who perished, and we share the grief of their friends and families.*

*These terrible acts must not be allowed to kill our spirit or extinguish our love of freedom. As individuals, and as a nation, we may be forever changed, but our way of life will live on.*

*At the top of the World Trade Center's north tower was Windows on the World, which, for more than two decades, made a unique contribution to wine in America.*

*There were 79 people working in the restaurant at the time of the attacks.*

*The Rare Wine Co. will contribute 5% of all sales from this newsletter, shared equally between two charities: the Windows of Hope Family Relief Fund, to aid the families of lost Windows on the World staff, and the New York Police and Fire Widows' and Children's Benefit Fund, to aid the families of those courageous men and women who gave their lives to save others.*

## MADEIRA

# Treasures from a Madeira Cellar

*Continued from Page 1*

years later, in 1940, Peter Cossart joined the firm, eventually becoming managing director. On his death in 1995, he was succeeded in this position by his son John Cossart.

### A Vinous Legacy

But the Henriques legacy lives on in more than just name. Despite all odds, the firm has held on to several wines that date back to the early 1800's, each of them in very old bottles. No one knows the exact age of the wines; however, at the time of the firm's founding in 1850, they were already considered "old wines." In fact, John Cossart believes that some may actually date to the late 1700's.

We first learned of the existence of these wines in 1999 when we read the reverential tasting notes in Alex Liddell's fine book on Madeira. We were overdue for a trip to the island anyway and made arrangements to spend a day with John Cossart that fall. It was a great experience on several counts. As a lover of history, and the last Englishman still fully involved in the wine trade in Madeira, John represents an invaluable link to



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

Madeira's past. But there was more to be savored that day. We had our first chance to taste four incredible old Madeiras: W.S. Bual, Grand Old Bual, Sercial H.H. and the profound Malvasia Reserva.

We also were reintroduced to some amazing Henriques & Henriques vintages from the 20th century. It had been years since we visited the firm's cellars and had forgotten just how rich some of their later wines are.

### The Reward

Over the next few months, we negotiated with John Cossart to acquire some of

the wines we had tasted. It wasn't easy. Even the 20th century vintages are in very short supply. And as for the early-19th-century wines, the company is down to just a few dozen bottles, or less, of each wine.

Eventually, we succeeded in snaring a few bottles of each of the very old wines, along with two vintages from the 1950's that really impressed us: the 1954 Malvasia and 1957 Bual. Each of the wines, young and old, is a quintessential example of what great Madeira is all about.

## *America's First Wine.*

*No wine before or since, has enjoyed the special position that Madeira did in America from the dawn of Colonial times until after the Civil War. Few important works—commercial, political or artistic—were planned without a decanter of Madeira to inspire the imagination and create a sense of unity and purpose. Francis Scott Key wrote the Stars Spangled Banner sipping from a glass of Madeira and the signing of the Declaration of Independence was roundly toasted with the finest Madeira available. And any family who could afford it purchased a pipe of Madeira yearly, cherished as an heirloom, passed down from generation to generation.*

# MADEIRA

## The Wines

### Malvasia "Reserva"

**\$695.00**

Produced sometime around the beginning of the 19th century, this is one of the greatest old Madeiras we've ever been privileged to taste. Massively rich but beautifully elegant, decades in cask concentrated the wine to the point where there is an unheard-of 6.2% sugar.

Alex Liddell writes: "★★★★★+ (his highest rating). Recorked 1964. Very dark tawny, golden highlights, shot with olive green; 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, but controlled and uncloying sweetness; an exceedingly long, very intense and lingering finish. The quintessence of Malvasia and, for me, perfection."

### Bual "W.S."

**\$595.00**

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 mouthfilling, it seems slightly sweeter than the Grand Old Bual (the sugar is 2.8%), and with superb concentration. A fantastic, classic old Bual. Just five bottles are available.

### "Grand Old Boal"

**\$625.00**

Alex Liddell: "★★★★★ Old bottled; recorked 1927, 1955 and 1975. Darker than medium tawny, with orange tints and showing olive green towards the rim; 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."

### Sercial "H.H."

**\$495.00**

Recorked 1965, 1992 and 2000. The medium-golden color is closer to what one expects from Verdelho than Sercial, undoubtedly due to many decades in cask. There is a touch of green to the yellow rim. The bouquet is classic Sercial, delicate with a floral, toffee note. The palate is explosive, seeming to be at the same time dry yet gently sweet, with a burst of citrus-like acidity in the mid-palate. The finish is sensational: long, smooth and resonant. Only six bottles available.



### 1954 Henriques & Henriques

#### Malvasia

**\$145.00 bottle**

One of the most exciting "young" Madeiras we've had the pleasure of drinking. Reminiscent of the great Malmseys of the 19th century, it is very dark in color, with a classic nose of chocolate, coffee and caramel. The palate is immense for such a young Malmsey: thick, rich and creamy, yet with fantastic structure and penetrating, palate-cleansing acidity. On a day with so many memorable wines, this one stood out as one of the most exciting discoveries of all. Very limited.

**1957 Bual ..... 125.00**

Buals typically take 75 years or more to acquire the kind of power that this 44-year-old has. Big and mouthfilling, with an abundance of toffee in the lush fruit.

# A New Star on Center Stage

*A Rosso di Montalcino to Rival the best Brunellos*

For more than a century, the ancient town of Montalcino has been famous for one wine, Brunello. Before the world ever took Italian wine seriously, Brunellos were winning awards in Paris and London. Only Barolo could challenge it as Italy's greatest wine.

About ten years ago, however, Montalcino created a new wine, Rosso di Montalcino. At first, Rosso was seen as just a second wine for Brunello, a way of using the grapes from young vines.

But a few forward-looking producers saw the opportunity to produce a Rosso that would not need to live in Brunello's shadow. By skirting the wood-aging requirements for "Brunello," yet using the same Sangiovese Grosso clone, they could make a Rosso di Montalcino that was richer and, for many palates, more delicious and versatile.

## The Turning Point

The movement gained momentum in the late 1990's, getting its biggest boost when Agostina Pieri's 1995 Rosso di Montalcino won *Gambero Rosso's* coveted *Tre Bicchieri* award in 1998. The magazine's editors wrote:

*"The estate presented a great wine that was profound and complex yet absolutely delicious. Most of all, it was a very different wine from Brunello, without any of its austerity and evolution. It was, instead, supple, fascinating and concentrated, without excessive tannic harshness."*

With her sons Jacopo and Francesco, and consultant Paolo Vagaggini, it is no coincidence that Agostina Pieri has become the standard-bearer for great Rosso di Montalcino. She has spectacularly steep, south-facing vineyards in the village of Castelnuovo dell'Abate. And her cellar has been described by *Gambero Rosso* as "modern with no hang-ups about winemaking: casks of various sizes stand next to the barriques."

*Agostina Pieri was the first—and only—producer to win a Tre Bicchieri for a Rosso di Montalcino.*



## The 1999 Vintage

We first learned about Agostina Pieri—and her exceptional Rosso—three years ago. At the time, her cult following in Italy was so strong that not a bottle of Rosso was available for export. Finally, last year, we managed to get a small allocation of the 1998 vintage and we have just received our equally tiny allocation of the 1999.

As elsewhere in Tuscany, 1999 in Montalcino was of historic quality and may come to be regarded as the equal of 1997. Pieri's 1999 Rosso is nothing short of stunning—one of the great bargains of Italian wine.

## 1999 Agostina Pieri Rosso di Montalcino

**\$24.95** *limited*

There is no mistaking the amazing quality, and the enormous ripeness, of this wine. Its color is a brilliant, deep ruby-purple, its nose bursts with opulent scents of cherry, licorice and vanilla, and the palate is smooth, concentrated and long. This wine creates a new benchmark for what a top Rosso di Montalcino can be.

## Pieri's Rare Brunello

Pieri also makes a small amount of Brunello. It, too, is unique. It reflects her emphasis on richness and volume, but with the structure for aging.

Each year, she selects a few of her very best barrels to become Brunello, giving them the minimum time in wood to meet Brunello requirements. Like the Rosso, the Brunello is bottled unfiltered.

Her '96 is easily her finest Brunello yet—lush and concentrated with the arboreal aromas that mark great Brunello. Only 75 cases of this nectar made it to the United States. *A 6-bottle limit per customer.*

**1996 Pieri Brunello di Montalcino ..... 49.95**

# The Soul of Priorat

## *Another Superb Les Terrasses from Alvaro Palacios*

*So fashionable* have single-vineyard wines become that we could easily forget that some of the planet's most profound wines are a marriage of multiple sites.

Chapoutier makes fabulous single-cru Hermitages, but the essence of that noble appellation remains Chave's, always a blend of different parcels.

Australia's greatest wine, Grange, has forever been not just a blend of vineyards, but a blend of *districts* spanning more than a hundred miles. And in Champagne, Krug rules the roost blending the fruit from as many as 30 different *cru* to create the greatest of Champagnes.

### A Spanish Superstar

Which brings us to Priorato—or Priorat as it is known in native Catalan—where Alvaro Palacios has achieved superstardom with L'Ermita, made from a single vineyard of very old vines. Since its first vintage in 1993, L'Ermita has deservedly come to be considered not just one of the top two or three wines of Spain, but one of the great wines of the world.

Yet, the best measure of Alvaro's skill and perfectionism, could be his far more modestly priced Les Terrasses. What makes this wine so remarkable is not just its \$24.95 price, but that Alvaro creates it from more than 90 different vineyards—each with a different owner—spread throughout the mountainous 50-square-mile Priorat appellation.

### Ancient Vines

The quality of the fruit that goes into Les Terrasses is extraordinary, thanks to the fact that nearly half of the vines are between 60 and 90 years old. This gives Les Terrasses far more low-yield, old-vine character than the majority of Priorat's top wines (many of which are made from vineyards planted after 1985).

But to create an outstanding wine under such circumstances is not easy. He has a team of vineyard managers who work throughout the region, advising the growers and deciding when they should harvest. And

to insure that the grapes arrive at his bodega in perfect condition, he uses temperature-controlled trucks (unheard-of in his part of Spain). He also has a warehouse in each village, where the grapes can be kept cool while awaiting transport.

But it's in the cellar, where his skill really comes into play. He vinifies each village and each grape variety—Cariñena, Garnacha and a tiny bit of Cabernet—separately. He

also creates separate cuvées of old and young vines. These lots not only give him great latitude in creating the final blend; they have made him an expert on the different *terroirs* of Priorat.

Aging is all in French barrique, of which 20% are new. Bottling is without filtration.

The 1999 Les Terrasses has just been released and it's sensational. Unlike the more backward 1998, tasters are greeted by an avalanche of intense dark berry fruit. And while we can expect '99 Les Terrasses to continue to develop, and improve, over the next two or three years, it is fantastic for current drinking.

The 1999 Les Terrasses is not only a monumental bargain; it is one of those wonderful, unique wines that represents the best of the blender's art.

**1999 Alvaro Palacios**  
**"Les Terrasses"**  
**\$24.95 *bt.* \$275.00 *cs.***



Brilliant medium-dark ruby color with an explosive bouquet of blackberries, cherries, grilled bread, licorice, and vanilla. The palate is smoothly and richly textured, both concentrated and mouthfilling, with exuberant fruit and impressive length. There are few red wines in this price range from anywhere that come close to achieving this kind of quality.

**LES TERRASSES BIG BOTTLES**  
**\$52.95 *mag.* — \$110.00 *3-liter***



*One of the old Les Terrasses vineyards in mid-summer*

PIEDMONT

# Clarté

## *Elio Perrone's Top 2000 Moscato Cuvée Arrives*

*Moscato is one* of the world's most distinctive wines—unique for its lightness, luscious sweetness, extraordinary perfume, and carpet of fine bubbles.

Moscato is also unique for its versatility. Whether quaffed with brunch, a picnic, or to begin or end a meal, there is nothing in the world that can beat it.

Making great Moscato is an art. And one of the most gifted practitioners is Stefano Perrone, who manages the domaine named for his father Elio. His Moscatos are marked by an incredible perfume, an ambrosial sweetness but with a crispness and balance, as well as an ethereal delicacy, missing from many other Moscatos.

Each vintage, Stefano makes two Moscatos: Sourgal, released soon after the harvest, and Clarté—his best Moscato made from the richest juice—which is not fermented and sold until the following year. To maintain its freshness until fermentation, the juice for Clarté is kept in a sealed refrigerated tank.

*“Gorgeously fruity, pure ... reminiscent of a spring flower garden ... brilliant.”*  
Robert Parker

In July we offered Perrone's superb 2000 “Sourgal.” We can now offer 2000 “Clarté” not only in bottles, but in half bottles and magnums as well. The halves are handy in the fridge when the moment strikes, while the tall, sleek magnums are great for larger gatherings.

**2000 Elio Perrone  
Moscato “Clarté”**  
**\$14.95** *bt.* **\$7.95** *half bt.*  
**\$35.00** *magnum*



Robert Parker: “Readers looking for light-bodied, gorgeously fruity, pure sparklers with unobtrusive levels of effervescence should check out ... the 2000 Moscato Clarté .... reminiscent of a spring flower garden with honeyed apricot/peachy fruit characteristics. Fresh and zesty, it is the perfect breakfast wine.”

## Second Chances: Tuscany

### *Previously Sold-out Wines Just Reacquired*

**1997 Frescobaldi Lamaione**  
**96 Wine Spectator**  
**\$59.95** *bt.* **\$699.00** *cs.*

*Wine Spectator:* “A blockbuster Merlot ... Full bodied and almost Port-like just after bottling ... This wine has a long future ahead of it.”

**1997 Cortaccio (Villa Cafaggio)\* .....95.00**  
Robert Parker: “96 rating ... extraordinarily fat and juicy, with oodles of glycerin and concentrated fruit, full body, silky tannin, and a finish that lasts for 40+ seconds.”

**1997 Vigna d’Alceo (Castello dei Rampolla)\* .....195.00**  
*Wine Spectator:* “97 rating ... a blockbuster, yet it shows the backbone and structure of the finest Bordeaux ... This vineyard may be one of the greatest in Tuscany.”

**1997 Ornellaia Masseto\* .....295.00**  
Extremely limited.  
**1997 Solaja\* .....275.00**  
Robert Parker: “96 rating ... Perhaps the greatest Solaja yet made ... If a first-growth Pauillac were made in Tuscany, this would be it!”

### **2000 IL POGGIONE EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**

From the famed Brunello estate, this thick, green, and evocatively scented extra-virgin olive oil has been a staple in our kitchen for more than a decade. Our spring shipment of the 2000 sold out, but we’ve just gotten in a few more cases. Arguably Tuscany’s finest extra-virgin olive oil for the money.

**2000 IL POGGIONE EXTRA VIRGIN 1-Liter Bottle .. 24.95**

# Dal Forno

## *The Story Behind Amarone's Reigning Star*

A decade ago, Amarone was little-known, except to a few connoisseurs. Today, of course, Amarone is sexy and sought-after, thanks to the work of a handful of passionate growers, each with his own interpretation of what great Amarone is. Leading that list are Giuseppe Quintarelli, Tommaso Bussola and Romano Dal Forno.

While the octagenarian Quintarelli embodies the most "traditional" interpretation, and young Bussola represents Amarone's future, today's reigning star is Dal Forno. In less than 15 years, he has come out of nowhere to create a "new" expression of Amarone, but with a deep respect for tradition.

### Pushing the Envelope

The quiet, retiring Dal Forno has taken the basic elements of Amarone winemaking and extended what were previously considered their limits. He's not afraid to leave his wines in barrel for three to five years, even in new wood; yet, there is little evidence of oak on the nose or palate. He pushes the grape drying to achieve maximum concentration. And his vineyards in Illasi are located outside what was traditionally considered the best places to grow grapes for Amarone.

The result has been wines that are at once totally classical, yet, in the words of Robert Parker, reaching "new levels of extract and richness."

### The Dal Forno Trilogy

In addition to Amarone, Dal Forno produces two other important wines. One is Recioto, a sweet version of Amarone, which retains considerable residual sugar. Like his Amarone, Dal Forno's Recioto is massively rich and profoundly complex, yet unctuously sweet.

Dal Forno's other great achievement is his Valpolicella, which is perhaps his most individual wine. Early on, he adopted the *Ripasso* method that other growers

use, passing the Valpolicella juice over the skins left over from his Amarone. *Ripasso* produces an amazingly rich, complex wine, but still Dal Forno wasn't satisfied. He adds 10 to 20% of Amarone to the cuvée, resulting in a wine that is superb even in average years (like 1992) and mindblowing in great years (like 1997).

In *Barolo to Valpolicella*, Nick Belfrage summed up Dal Forno's impact better than anyone else has: "To Romano Dal

Forno must go credit for demonstrating how principles of modern oenology can be employed to enhance the properties of an ancient wine without in any way compromising typicity. Dal Forno's wines are profoundly revolutionary and yet profoundly Valpolicella. This is an approach that all Italian wines might do well to emulate: Yes to modernity; No to loss of soul."

*"These are products of a true genius."*  
Robert Parker

*"Try putting Dal Forno's Amarone up against the others. They're not even in the same ballpark."* Gambero Rosso

**1997 Dal Forno  
Valpolicella  
93 Parker  
\$65.00**



Parker: "An opaque purple color is accompanied by a thick, glycerin-imbued texture with immense concentration, fabulous purity and copious quantities of smoky, earth-infused, blackberry and cherry fruit. **This awesome effort must be tasted to be believed.**"

### ***The Great 1994 & 1995 Amarones***

**1995 Dal Forno Amarone .....195.00**

Parker: "98 rating ... nearly perfect. It is reminiscent of super-concentrated black berry liqueur infused with incense, smoke and minerals. Full bodied, dense and chewy, this huge offering possesses remarkable purity ..."

**1994 Dal Forno Amarone\* .....175.00**

Parker: "97 rating ... spectacular ... It oozes across the palate ... There are amazing quantities of truffles, smoke, black fruits and licorice present in this exquisite wine."

### ***Rare early examples of Dal Forno's gloriously rich Recioto ...***

**1990 Dal Forno Recioto .....165.00**

**1988 Dal Forno Recioto half bottle .....99.95**

# ALSACE

## Bargain-Priced Rarities

### Schlumberger's Splendid 1983 Grand Cru Gewürztraminers

We recently had the opportunity to purchase two 1983 Gewürztraminers from the private library of Alsace's Schlumberger estate. These were not just any Gewürztraminers; they are from the famous *grand cru* vineyards of Kitterle and Kessler. And with their extraordinary provenance, it's no surprise that the condition of both wines is stunning.



some of the finest *terroir* in Alsace and includes both Kitterle and Kessler.

Both wines show the awesome ripeness of the 1983 vintage (along with 1989, the decade's best). The wines offer huge mouthfeel and a soft texture, with the characteristic rose petal perfume of Gewürztraminer. They

are fantastic values.

While the Schlumberger family have been winemakers for 200 years, their estate blossomed in 1910 when they purchased much of the hillside that lines the northern side of Guebwiller. Consisting mostly of pink sandstone, with some limestone at the lower elevations, this slope has

- 1983 Schlumberger Gewürztraminer  
Kessler Grand Cru 750 ml .....29.95**
- 1983 Schlumberger Gewürztraminer  
Kitterle Grand Cru 750 ml .....32.50**

### Schlumberger's 1976 Cuvée Anne *One of Alsace's Legendary Wines*

Twenty-five years ago, in the historically ripe 1976 vintage, Schlumberger produced a cuvée that dessert wine lovers still talk about in awe: *Cuvée Anne*. We have a couple of precious cases—again, from the domaine's library—at a *great* price. Not to be missed.

**1976 Schlumberger Gewürztraminer  
"Cuvée Anne" 750 ml\* ..... 125.00**

Clive Coates in *The Vine*: "Ten stars (out of five)! Golden in color, complex, concentrated sweet wine of beerenauslese or even trockenbeerenauslese style. Quite magnificent. A privilege to drink!"

### Hommage à Georgette Trimbach *"A magnificent wine" Pierre Rovani*

An important special cuvée created by Trimbach for the 1996 vintage—offered in half bottles. Extremely limited.

**1996 Trimbach Tokay-Pinot Gris "Hommage  
à Georgette Trimbach" 375 ml\* .....24.95**

Rovani: "92+ rating ... a magnificent wine with huge potential. Its sublime aromatics reveal poached pears dripping with honey and a myriad of spices ... It is wonderfully ripe, impeccably balanced and satisfies both the hedonistic desire for opulence as well as the intellectual requirement for nuance."

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