

FOOD & WINE BEST WINE
2002 AMERICAN WINE AWARDS WINE IMPORTER

JAMES BEARD
SEMI-FINALIST
2008 & 2009



THE RARE WINE CO. NEWSLETTER

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Just-unpacked samples of olio nuovo from our November trip. See page 4.

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Coming Home

Châteauneuf-du-Pape's Fabulous 2010 Vintage

Two thousand ten was not only a great vintage for Châteauneuf du Pape, it was that rare year that captured a balance of ripe power, aromatic complexity and elegance in equal measure.

But, even more importantly, it gave the regions' top tradition-minded, *terroir*-driven growers the opportunity to fashion wines that are not only heroically rich and geworthy but also capture the soul of the southern Rhône.

In fact, 2010 vintage stands in vivid contrast to the other lavishly praised harvest of the past decade, 2007. While 2007 was the product of a hot summer, the 2010 growing season enjoyed moderate temperatures. The result is greater freshness and higher acidity in the '10s, with no lack of richness.

Greatness from Adversity

The factors that led to a superb vintage in Châteauneuf are not that different from the conditions that produced Burgundy's epic 2010 harvest. The year's magic stems from perfectly balanced fruit, a consequence of a crop drastically reduced by rain at flowering.

And as in Burgundy, there was a high proportion of tiny "shot" berries whose high solid-to-juice ratio resulted in fantastic concentration and complexity, creamy textures and very fine tannic structure.

The troubled flowering had a particularly profound effect on the size of the Grenache crop, which was 30-40% lower than average. For many of us, the intoxicating perfume and firm structure of Grenache make it the very definition of

Châteauneuf. And so, with its very low yields, 2010 will prove to be one of the greatest years ever for Grenache lovers.

Wines for the Ages

In the offer that follows, the featured producers have a majority of their holdings planted to ancient Grenache vines. The year's ultra-low yields—balanced by superb acidity and freshness—provided them with the chance to make the greatest wines of their careers.

Yet, it was their largely traditional handling of this perfect fruit that reveals the greatness of the vintage and of Châteauneuf's glorious *terroirs*.

Three of the estates—Vieux Donjon, Vieux Télégraphe and Domaine de Ferrand—made, as always, just one old-vine Grenache-based blend from their spread of *lieux-dits*.

Meanwhile Domaines Charbonnière, Bosquet de Papes and Côte de l'Ange made multiple wines: a blended *cuvée tradition* plus one or more special *cuvées*. These producers are not alone, of course, in travelling the special *cuvée* route, which has become a dominant trend in Châteauneuf du Pape.

But while some special *cuvées* may reveal more about the winemaker than the *terroir*, the *cuvées* selected for this offer stand out for their transparency and expressiveness. Each is a special selection of an estate's oldest vines, with the winemaking classically derived, and neutral barrels or tank used for the *élevage*. ▶

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Bosquet des Papes' Moment

Bosquet des Papes' roots in tradition come from 152 years of management by the Boiron family, with multiple generations involved at any given moment. For example, when we visited in 1999, there was Maurice, the winemaker; his father Joseph, then in his 76th year at the domaine; and his 28-year-old son Nicolas.

With a lineage like that, traditional values naturally pervade the family's philosophy. Consequently, its **Cuvée Tradition** remains a classic 5-varietal blend; **Chante Le Merle** still uses whole culsters, and **à la Gloire**

de Mon Grand-Père still undergoes a month-long fermentation.

The Boirons made a stunning set of wines of great clarity in 2010. In fact, Robert Parker called his tasting at Bosquet des Papes "the most remarkable" of all of his 2010 Southern Rhône tastings.

He gave the basic Cuvée Tradition an incredible 94 points for its lush richness. But the **à la Gloire de Mon Grand-Père** and **Chant Le Merle** offer old-vine power and texture, without the distraction of new wood that we find in some special cuvées.



2010 Bosquet des Papes "Cuvée Tradition"*

\$42.50 bottle

Parker: "94 rating ... may be the finest Tradition cuvée yet made at Bosquet des Papes ... sumptuous notes of balsam wood, roasted Provencal herbs/gar-rigue, sweet black raspberry and blackberry fruit and hints of truffles and lavender. This dense, full-bodied, amazing Châteauneuf is one of the top values of the vintage. Enjoy it over the next 15-20 years."

2010 Bosquet des Papes "Chante Le Merle"*

\$98.00 bottle

80% Grenache planted between 1915-1930, whole-cluster fermented and vinified 4-5 weeks. Parker: "99 rating ... aged primarily in foudres ... spectacular ... displays a confit of camphor, blueberries, blackberries, black raspberries, lavender ... Incredibly pure and remarkably intense, this is a tour de force ... It should drink well for two decades."

2010 Bosquet des Papes "Gloire Mon Grand-Père"*

\$89.95 bottle

98% Grenache from vines planted between the 1920s and 1940s. Parker: "98 rating ... 50% stems and is aged entirely in demi-muids. Close to perfection ... like drinking pure kirsch liqueur ... superb minerality, density, purity and texture build incrementally in the mouth revealing a blockbuster red with superb elegance, precision and purity"



Vieux Donjon

No one in Châteauneuf is more traditional than Vieux Donjon's Michel family, which continues to make just one cuvée from a range of sites. Though old-vine Grenache dominates, there are no fewer than six varieties in the blend. Aged in a mixture of tank and *foudre*, all of Châteauneuf's glory is here in the *cuvée classique*—a blend of prodigious proportions.

2010 Le Vieux Donjon CDP59.95

Parker: "96 rating ... a sweet bouquet of black olives, incense, blackberries, mulberries, black cherries and lavender ... perfumed, super-concentrated ... give it 3-4 years of cellaring, and drink it over the following two decades."



Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe

Founded in 1898 by Hippolyte Brunier, Vieux Télégraphe is among the greatest estates to still make its wines classically. Blessed with an unheard-of 135 contiguous acres on the fabled *Plâteau de la Crau*, the domaine produces a powerfully scented and rich Châteauneuf with the structure to for very long aging.

2010 Dom. du Vieux Télégraphe CDP*66.50

2010 Dom. du Vieux Télégraphe CDP* Mag.....139.95

Parker: "97 rating ... one of the all-time great Vieux Télégraphes ... a sumptuous bouquet ... incredible concentration"

More Measures of 2010's Greatness

Charbonnière

Charbonnière's Michel Maret makes four different Châteauneuf cuvées, all traditional. His top wine in 2010 is the stunningly pure and nuanced single *lieu-dit* Hautes Brusquières, made from old-vine Grenache and Syrah grown in Châteauneuf's northwest *quartier* and aged in neutral wood.

2010 Charbonnière "Hautes Brusquières" Cuvée Spéciale*

96 Parker

★★★★★ Livingstone-Learmonth

\$59.95 bottle



Parker: "... explodes from the glass ... Full-bodied with superb definition, massive fruit concentration and a long finish displaying dazzling purity, texture and length, this sensational wine is one of the finest wines Domaine de la Charbonnière has yet produced. It should age gracefully for two decades."

Usseglio "Mon Aieul"

The Pierre Usseglio domaine has been revered by both connoisseurs and critics since brothers Thierry and Jean-Pierre took charge a dozen years ago. With its ancient Grenache components, aged largely in cement tanks, **Cuvée de Mon Aieul** is consistently a masterpiece, but there is no greater example than the 2010.



2010 Usseglio "Mon Aieul"*

96 Parker

\$89.95

Parker: "... cropped at 12-16 hectoliters per hectare... from the estate's finest vineyards ... It is stunningly concentrated with great intensity ... Rich and full-bodied with slightly more freshness than their profound 2007, the 2010 Mon Aieul should age effortlessly for two decades."

Côte de l'Ange

Yannick Gasparri is one of traditional Châteauneuf's rising stars, drawing high praise in recent vintages for the classic perfume and structure of his wines. It's no surprise then that he nailed it in 2010 with both of his Grenache-based, old-cask-aged cuvées, the stunningly rich Vieilles Vignes from limestone and sand soil, and the complex, elegant Tradition from multiple sites.

2010 Côte de l'Ange Cuvée Tradition39.95

Livingstone-Learmonth: "★★★★." Parker: "93 rating ... a blend of 70% Grenache, 20% Mourvedre and 10% Syrah aged in a combination of cement and old wood foudres. The wine has a dense ruby/purple color and a classic nose of blueberries, blackberries, licorice, new saddle leather, roasted meats as well as pepper and spice ... impressive."

2010 Côte de l'Ange Vieilles Vignes59.95

Livingstone-Learmonth: "★★★★★." Parker: "96 rating ... If you can find any ... a full-bodied mouthfeel, loads of blackberry fruit, intense kirsch, oodles of licorice, lavender, and garrigue notes, this is layered, sumptuous, full-throttle wine with good acidity, sweet, moderate tannin, and a skyscraper-like mouthfeel and finish. Drink this sensational wine over the next 20-25 years. **It is one of the great wines of the vintage.**"

Domaine de Ferrand

Philippe Bravay has won a host of admirers for his single-cuvée approach, one of the few top producers content to do that. But his lone red reads like a special cuvée: 95% Grenache, some planted as long ago as 1904. The grapes are destemmed, but the no-wood aging in tank gives the wine incredible purity.

2010 Dom. de Ferrand

96+ Parker

\$59.95 bottle

Parker: "... exotic ... notes of black truffles, roasted meats, charcuterie, incense, blackberries and black cherry liqueur ... dense and as concentrated as the estate's extraordinary 2007, the spectacular 2010 needs 2-4 years of cellaring, and will age gracefully over the following two decades."

Nuovo Nectar

2012 Delivers the Most Exciting Olio Nuovo Crop in Years

The idea behind Olio Nuovo is simple: find the best new pressings of Tuscan olive oil, immediately bottle them, and put them on an airplane—capturing all of their color, richness, thickness, nuance and power.

But finding the right oils for Nuovo isn't as easy as it sounds. The first step, of course, is to visit the best estates in early November and secure their best pressings. But the abnormally warm, dry summers and autumns of recent years have yielded few oils worthy of Nuovo bottling.

A Miracle Harvest

Thankfully, 2012 has been different, yielding **the finest Nuovos in years**. But the year was very nearly a write-off. In fact, as of early September, we considered abandoning our annual visit to Tuscany.

As the Tuscan summer came to a close, not a drop of rain had fallen in many areas for three months, depriving trees of the ability to sustain their fruit. The oldest trees found some nourishment from underground reserves, but it wasn't enough to produce much oil. And so the olives clung to the branches, small, green and undeveloped, in dire need of water.

Fortunately, rain *did* arrive in September, along with cooler nights for flavor

and aroma development. Depending on the age of the trees and the microclimate, the olives were ready to harvest as early as early October and as late as mid-November—an exceptionally wide window for fine Tuscan oil.

The 2012 Oils

Having struggled through several years of scarcity at the top end of the quality ladder, we were like kids in a candy shop this November. We have yet to finalize our selections for the spring offering, but it will be *at least* a dozen outstanding oils.

And the timing couldn't be better. Given how little oil we considered worth offering last year, your pantry is surely in need of restocking. But while production was up from 2011's historically small crop, quantities continue to be limited, due not only to the summer drought but an epic freeze last winter.

The Nuovos are Here

Still, you don't have to wait until spring to experience the beauty of the 2012 harvest. On Friday, we put six of our favorite 2012s on a flight from Florence's Peretola Airport. All should be safely in Sonoma this week, in plenty of time for holiday drizzling, dunking and drenching—as well as for exciting holiday gifts.

2012 Vetrice “Olio Nuovo” 500 ml 25.95

Once again, Vetrice leads this trio of high-powered oils from the Grati family of Rufina. The high-altitude Vetrice *oliveto* is famous for its intense oils, and this 2012 *Nuovo* is true to form. Beautifully colored, artichoke scented, with a very long, peppery finish.

2012 Monte “Olio Nuovo” 500 ml 25.95

The Monte *oliveto* tends to produce a classic Rufina oil, though a touch softer than Vetrice. Everything about the 2012 Monte is both classic and marvelous. As always, one of the years best.

2012 Prunatelli “Olio Nuovo” 500 ml 25.95

Harvested slightly later than Vetrice and Monte, Prunatelli is classically green and thick, with a wonderfully grassy bouquet. Plenty of pepperiness on the finish bodes well for a long evolution (if you can resist).

2012 Selvapiana “Olio Nuovo” 500 ml 26.95

Faced with a tiny crop in 2012, there were only two pressings for us to taste in November, and we chose the earliest, from October 23rd. Medium green, with an evocatively grassy nose and very good color, this ranks with the best Selvapiana oils of recent years.

2012 Cagno Misto “Olio Nuovo” 500 ml 25.95

The Matteini family continues to impress with their beautiful oils from the heart of Chianti Classico. A preponderance of Frantoio olives is responsible for this oil's supreme elegance, great color and its peppery character.

2012 Cagno Leccino “Olio Nuovo” 500 ml 25.95

Luminously green, this Nuovo carries us back to the fabulous 2007 Cagno oil made entirely from low-yield Leccino olives. Intensely perfumed and explosively flavorful, you won't want to miss it.

Champagne's Other Icon

The Immortal Vintage Champagnes of Lanson



The world of Champagne is richly historic, yet oddly bi-polar. It is a liberal mix of great and indifferent winemaking, some of the world's best and worst viticulture and producers who deserve either much more or much less fame than they get.

And out of the mix emerges what to us is one of the most compelling producers of all: Lanson.

Echoes of The Big Three

In at least two respects, Lanson is eerily similar to three of the Greats: Salon, Krug and Bollinger. Like The Big Three, it has refused to drive its business with prestige cuvées, putting its best *grand cru* fruit and most classic winemaking into its normal vintage cuvée.

And, second, even more than Salon, Krug and Bollinger, it is famed for its impassioned commitment to blocking the malolactic fermentation.

This practice fights oxidation, giving Lanson's Champagnes astonishing longevity. The house's commitment to *no-malo* in *all* of its Champagnes is the legacy of winemaker Jean-Paul Gandon, who just announced his retirement after 40 years. But Gandon leaves behind some of the greatest Champagnes of our time.

The British Choice for Aging

Due to Lanson's decision a few years ago to concentrate on other markets, it has been off the radar of U.S. collectors—just as Philipponnat and its Clos des Goisses used to

be. But Lanson is revered in England, where collectors have long coveted its deeply structured, profoundly flavored and thrillingly ageworthy vintage Champagnes.

In fact, our love for Lanson stems from a quarter century of plundering UK cellars for amazing bottles and magnums of Lanson. Some of the greatest old Champagnes we've had have worn the Maltese Cross that's been Lanson's emblem since 1798.

The Future is Now

But Lanson is now back in the U.S., reconnecting in New York this April with a momentous tasting at Le Bernardin. At this unprecedented event, Gandon led journalists through six decades of Lanson vintages. We were the only merchants privileged to be there.

But there's more. For this fall, we were given sole access to three decades of its greatest vintages still lying undisgorged in Lanson's cellars: the **Lanson Vintage Collection (LVC)**. The bottles and magnums in the collection (which are disgorged for us to order) are unique examples of their respective vintages, just as DP Oenothèque and Krug Collection are.

You'll be hearing much more about this in the coming months. But for now, let's get started with the two greatest Lanson vintages of the past 20 years: **1996** and **2002**, along with a few rare magnums of the famous 1976—the keystone vintage of the LVC. Disgorged to our order in late November, just 36 are being shipped to the U.S. in December.

2002 Lanson Gold Label

\$65.00 *bt.* **\$385** *6-pack*

John Gilman: “**93+** ... stunning, as the ripeness of the vintage beautifully dovetails with the non-malo style of Lanson ... a deep and very pure bouquet ... On the palate the wine is deep, fullbodied, complex and beautifully balanced ... outstanding length on the classy finish ... really a superb bottle in the making.”

1996 Lanson Gold Label

\$95.00 *bottle*

According to Richard Juhlin (**94** rating), this is Lanson's finest vintage Champagne since 1982. Tom Stevenson writes: “The most definitive interpretation of one of Champagne's most extraordinary vintages.. **94** rating.” Gilman calls it “a very fine and still youthful example of this great vintage. **94** rating.”

1976 Lanson “LVC”*

\$795.00 *magnum*

With mags of the top '76 *vinotheque* releases from other houses *all* selling for \$2000+, this is a bargain. Just 36 mags for the U.S. disgorged in Nov. Juhlin: “**95** rating... a magnificently regal wine! So grand and powerful ... As deep as a well and at the same time elegant ... all that is needed is to find a moment when inspiration strikes.”

Silk Stocking Stuffers

Rarities for the Person Who Thought They Had Everything

9-Liters

1990 Vieux Télégraphe Châteauneuf du Pape* .2450.00

Imperiales (6L)

2007 Sassicaia* *AG95* 3250.00

2008 Sassicaia* *JS97-98*2950.00

3-Liters

1990 A. Conterno Barolo Bussia Soprana *RP95* . 950.00

2001 B. Giacosa Barolo Rocche Riserva *AG97* 1495.00

2007 G. Mascarello Barolo Monprivato *AG97* ...525.00

2004 G. Rinaldi Barolo Brunate-Le Coste *AG96+* 850.00

2007 Cerbaiona Brunello di Montalcino *AG97* ...725.00

Charles Heidsieck Réserve Privée [Mise 1987].. 495.00

1996 Deutz Cuvée William *Juhlin 95*695.00

Magnums

1988 A. Conterno Barolo Granbussia Rsva *RP95+* 495.00

2004 G. Conterno Barolo Monfortino *AG100*1450.00

2005 B. Giacosa Barbaresco Asili *AG95*249.95

1996 B. Giacosa Barolo Falletto Rsva *RP98/AG97* 1095.00

2006 Bartolo Mascarello Barolo *AG96*245.00

1986 Bartolo Mascarello Barolo *AG95*795.00

2007 Cerbaiona Brunello di Montalcino *AG97* ... 345.00

2004 G. Rinaldi Barolo Brunate-Le Coste *AG96+* 265.00

1999 Pol Roger Winston Churchill *Juhlin 95*350.00

2005 Chandon de Briailles Corton-Bressandes *BH92* 199.00

2009 Roty Charmes-Chambertin T.V.V. *BH95/ST94* 825.00

1996 Penfolds Grange *WS97*895.00

2006 Penfolds Grange *WA98* 1395.00

3.78 Liters

1971 G. Mascarello Barolo Bussia Soprana ... 2295.00

1971 Mastroberardino Taurasi Riserva1095.00

Sets

Trimbach Clos Ste. Hune1650/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 1990, 1995, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2005.

G. Mascarello Barolo Riserva Ca' d' Morissio 2250/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 1993, 1996, 1997, 2001, 2003, 2004.

Dal Forno Amarone2750/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 1990, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004.

Soldera Case Basse2595/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 1988 and 1990 Brunello + 1 bt. each of 1995, 2001, 2004 and 2006 Brunello Riserva.

Mastroberardino Taurasi475/6 bt.

1 bt. 1990 Taurasi Radici; 1 bt. of 1999 Centotrenta Rsva; 1 bt. 2004 Villa dei Misteri (Pompeii); and 1 bt. each of 1997, 1998 and 1999 Taurasi Radici Riserva

Valentini Trebbiano d'Abruzzo 795/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 1990, 1994, 1998, 2007, 2008, 2009.

Pingus "Amelia": The First 6 Vintages 1500/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.

Ancient Vega Sicilia Unicos 5950/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 1942, 1948, 1951, 1953, 1957, 1958.

Marcassin Pinot Noir "Estate" 1795/6 bt.

1 bt. each of 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007.

Coulée de Serrant 995/12 bt.

3 bts. each of 1995, 1996, 1997 and 1998.

2005 Produttori Barbaresco Rsva Magnums . 675/6 mag.

2 MAGNUMS ea. of Rabajà, Ovello and Montestefano.

Bottles

1961 Borgogno Barolo Riserva *R Jennings 93* ..165.00

2004 Cappellano Barolo Pié Rupestris..... 89.95

1967 Giacomo Conterno Barolo *JG95/AG94*295.00

2002 G. Conterno Barolo Monfortino *AG98* 379.95

1971 Gaja Barbaresco 295.00

1982 Gaja Barbaresco Sorì San Lorenzo 375.00

1989 B. Giacosa Barolo C. Rionda Rsva *AG100*.1495.00

2004 Biondi-Santi Brunello Riserva *GR100* 450.00

2000 Philipponnat Clos des Goisses Rosé *BH96* 425.00

2002 Jacquesson Avize Champs Cain *Juhlin 97* 245.00

1998 D'Angerville Volnay Clos des Ducs *BH92* ..149.95

1991 Ponsot Clos St. Denis V.V. *RP97*995.00

1996 Rousseau Gevrey Clos St. Jacques *ST92* ..575.00

1990 Vogue Musigny V.V. *RP96* 795.00

2002 Bouchard Corton-Charlemagne *BH96* 195.00

2007 Comtes Lafon Meursault-Charmes *BH94* .. 225.00

2000 C. Lafon Meursault-Perrières *BH94/JG95* . 345.00

2009 Guy Roulot Meursault-Charmes *AG96* 295.00

1990 Gruaud Larose [ex-château] *RP96* 245.00

1989 Haut Brion *RP100* 1495.00

1990 Lafite Rothschild *RP96* 950.00

2008 Cayuse Widowmaker *WA97* 195.00

1834 Barbeito Malvasia Madeira *RP98*695.00

1900 D'Oliveira Moscatel Madeira

Family Reserve *WS97*595.00

NV Henriques & Henriques Inauguration Madeira

Neal Martin 97 195.00

Percarlo, a Tuscan Legend

“The complete vertical of Percarlo left me speechless.” Galloni



Since 1985, San Giusto a Rentennano’s Percarlo has proven itself one of the world’s noblest expressions of pure Sangiovese, a marvel of power and intensity allied with nuance and finesse.

The secret is a providential *terroir* in the Tuscan village of Monti, known by the cognoscenti as the source of Chianti Classico’s most powerful and long lived wines. No wonder Percarlo is considered by some the greatest pure-Sangiovese wine outside Montalcino.

It is also considered one of the greatest, and most collectible, of all Super Tuscans, a point clearly made in Antonio Galloni’s vertical tasting report in April.

Find Out for Yourself

But you needn’t be satisfied experiencing Percarlo vicariously through Galloni’s tasting notes. You can do it first-hand, thanks to this extraordinary offer.

It features three beautiful, and now rare, Percarlos from the 1990s, along with a trifecta of three young legends-in-the-making.

Regardless of their level of maturity, each of these vintages showcases the power and long life conferred by the estate’s steep, south-facing hills of poor galestro soil, while expressing the unique character of the vintage. When will you have another chance?

2008 Percarlo

\$69.95 *bt.* **\$149.95** *mag.*

Galloni: “**96** rating. The 2008 Percarlo is holding back serious power in reserve. A tightly wound core of fruit hits the palate as this energetic, vibrant wine shows off its taut personality. The 2008 needs time to resolve some of its inner tension, but it is strikingly beautiful just the same. Anticipated maturity: 2018-2033.”

2007 Percarlo

\$79.95 *bottle*

Galloni: “**96** ... flows across the palate with tons of depth and richness ... There is plenty of Sangiovese nuance in this large-scaled, voluptuous wine ... the wine should drink well earlier than some of the more powerful surrounding vintages, namely 2006 and 2008. Anticipated maturity: 2015-2027.”

2006 Percarlo*

\$225 *bt.* **\$475** *mag.*

Galloni: “**99** ... one of the all-time legendary wines from San Giusto ... possesses dazzling richness and intensity, all supported by its considerable structural heft. Layers of black cherries, licorice and spices wrap around the muscular, potent finish. This is an absolutely breathtaking showing ... in my view the greatest Percarlo ...”

1999 Percarlo*

\$79.95 *bottle*

Galloni: “**94+** ... bristles on the palate with tons of energy. This is a medium-bodied Percarlo laced with vibrant red cherries, freshly cut flowers and spices. The 1999 still has good depth, but it is not an eternal wine, so it is far from a crime to be drinking it today. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2019.”

1998 Percarlo*

\$79.95 *bottle*

Galloni: “**94** ... very beautiful ... a wine that still impresses, mostly for its overall sense of harmony ... it has more than enough depth and sheer pedigree to continue to drink well for another decade or so. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2023”

1994 Percarlo*

\$89.95 *bottle*

Galloni: “**94** ... very, very pretty. It is easily one of the surprises of this tasting. Sweet red cherries, herbs and licorice are some of the notes that emerge from the glass ... Shades of the 1989 and 1996 come through in the wine’s substantial energy and vibrancy. Anticipated maturity: 2012-2024.”

Guardian of Rioja's Old School

La Rioja Alta's Glorious Viña Ardanza and Reserva 904

La Rioja Alta is a traditional icon—for more than a century, one of Rioja's greatest producers. And in recent decades, it has been an ardent defender of the methods responsible for one of the world's most distinctive and long-lived styles of wine.

Only López de Heredia surpasses La Rioja Alta as a staunch defender of Rioja traditionalism.

Upping the Traditional Ante

In fact, La Rioja Alta is even more traditional now than they were three decades ago. In the 1980s—when other bodegas were rushing to embrace more modern methods—La Rioja Alta was actually *increasing* time in both barrel and bottle for their entire range.

La Rioja Alta even has its own cooperage, to maintain its stock of more than 40,000 American oak barrels, many of them old.

Since its founding by five growers in 1890, La Rioja Alta has been located in the *Barrio de la Estación*—the neighborhood around Haro's railroad station that is home to fellow giants López de Heredia and CUNE. The firm continues to be owned by the same families today.

Two of La Rioja Alta's top wines are the rich, spicy **Viña Ardanza Reserva**—named after one of the bodega's founders—and the **Gran Reserva 904**.

Viña Ardanza—which comes in a Burgundy-style bottle—is about 80% Tempranillo with the balance Garnacha. The more elegant, perfumed Gran Reserva 904, in its Bordeaux-style bottle, is almost all Tempranillo with a bit of Graciano. It is both more structured and longer-lived than Ardanza.

We are pleased to offer three classic examples of these cuvées from the decade of the 1990s. While all three wines are entering maturity and are drinking superbly now, each has a long and brilliant future in store.



1994 La Rioja Alta Gran Reserva 904

93 Richard Jennings

\$49.95 *bt.* **\$285** *six-pack*

Richard Jennings: "... maturing, tobacco, cigar box, licorice nose; tasty, maturing, cigar box, tobacco, dried cherry, sandalwood palate with firm, sweet tannins; should go 15+ years ..."

1997 La Rioja Alta Gran Reserva 904

92 Steve Tanzer

94 Jay Miller

\$49.95 *bt.* **\$110.00** *magnum*

Jay Miller: "... alluringly perfumed. Aromas of dried herbs, tobacco, incense, and assorted black fruits."

Tanzer: "Seductively perfumed impressively long..."

1995 La Rioja Alta Viña Ardanza Rsva

93+ Richard Jennings

\$42.00 *bottle*

Richard Jennings: "... cedar, cigar box, dried cherry nose; tasty, youthful, elegant, classic, tart cranberry, tart cherry, cedar palate with medium acidity; good now and should go 15-20 years"

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