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# THE RARE WINE CO. NEWSLETTER

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In the Pacific fog: the old Joseph Swan winery. *See Page 1.*

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# THE RARE WINE CO.

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## An Historic Moment

*From the Library of Joseph Swan: a Three-Decade Offering of  
"Trenton Estate" Pinot Noir ... and the last of its kind we'll see.*

For nearly 50 years, Joseph Swan has symbolized early California Pinot Noir, in the same way Heitz Cellars embodies Napa Cabernet's early days.

And so in this 308th edition of our newsletter, it is a privilege not only to tell the Swan story, but to make what could be the most remarkable offering *ever* of Swan's iconic Pinot Noir, "Trenton Estate." Included are not only some very rare bottles, but also *impossibly* rare magnums, dating back more than three decades.

You wouldn't be reading this if not for Rod Berglund. After Joe Swan died in 1989, it was Rod who carried on his profoundly beautiful style of winemaking. Far more recently, it was Rod who dug deep into the winery's now largely depleted library to find the bottles and magnums—in some cases the last that will ever be sold—for this offer. We are in his debt.

### The Birth of A Movement

Not many people remember Joseph Swan today, but for California Pinot Noir in the 1970s, his importance cannot be overstated.

He planted his iconic Trenton Estate Vineyard in 1967, creating the first Pinot Noir vineyard to produce wine in the Russian River Valley.

Then, for nearly two decades, Joe came to symbolize classic, artisanal winemaking in the same unbending way that Joe Heitz and Mayacamas' Bob Travers did a few miles to the east. After his death, Joe's son-in-law Rod Berglund contin-

 *"Reminds me quite a bit of Clos des Lambrays in its aromatic and flavor profile."*  
*John Gilman*  
*"It's hard to find words to describe its beauty."*  
*Wine Enthusiast*

ued his work with the same devotion to tradition.

Today, looking back over the combined 45 years of Rod and Joe's work, the Swan winery looms large and heroic, to be cherished not just for its contributions to early California winemaking, but as one of the few producers that has remained true to its early ideals.

### A California Original

Born in North Dakota, Joe Swan was a pilot who, in 1967, bought land on which to retire in the Russian River Valley. The land included some old Zinfandel vines, from which he made his first wines. Two years later, on the advice of his friend, the legendary André Tchelistcheff, he cleared and planted the property's best site to Pinot Noir and some

Chardonnay.

Today, that would seem like the obvious thing to do, but not in 1969. The Russian River Valley was rife with old zinfandel and "mixed black" vineyards, reflecting the origins of the Southern European immigrants who'd settled the area.

Burgundian varietals were virtually nonexistent. And so Joe's first vineyard was the progenitor of what has become one of the world's great Pinot Noir regions.

Joe made his first wines from his Pinot vines in 1973, and for about 15 vintages, the wines were simply labeled "Estate." But as Rod recently recounted ►

# Joseph Swan Trenton Estate

► to *View from the Cellar's* John Gilman, Joe was often asked by Europeans why the vineyard source of his best wines had no name. With time, the name “Trenton Estate” was chosen, honoring the community that used to be there.

## It's in the Soil

The land itself is a thin layer of volcanic Goldridge loam over sandstone. This soil—along with the cool morning fogs that slow and extend the grapes' ripening—produce Pinot Noir of beautiful texture and character, with no heaviness.

Rod Berglund goes even further: “It is the Trenton Estate vineyard that will probably keep me making wine until the day I die: shallow soils, mostly older vines, low vigor, small crops, tiny clusters, tinier berries, cool climate, great plant material. One cannot ask for much more.”

In the 1970's, Swan's Trenton Estate Pinot was a trophy wine for California wine collectors, and it remained so for a number of years. Soon, neighboring vineyards—Trenton Station, Trenton View—adopted the Trenton name.

But as tastes changed in the 1990s, and California reds became denser and darker, Swan Trenton Estate receded into the background. Though it was made just as it was in the 1970s, and the vines were now even older, there was a smaller market for such wines from California.

Less than three years before Joe Swan died in January 1989, his daughter Lynn married Rod Berglund, the talented young winemaker at La Crema—itsself a terrific source of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay at that time.



*Rod Berglund in his element.*

The next year Rod joined his father-in-law at Swan, and by the 1988 harvest, he was Swan's winemaker, having fully absorbed Joe's philosophy



*Joe Swan (c) with Ravenswood's Joel Peterson (l) and André Tchelitscheff (r)*

and methods.

Since 1988, Rod has carried on Joe Swan's legacy, in much the same manner as David Heitz has for his father at Heitz Cellars.

## The Great Swan Pinot

Today, Joseph Swan produces a number of Pinot Noir *cuvées*. But their greatest wine—and the wine that must be on any short list of history-making California wines—is the Trenton Estate.

Don't be surprised if you've never been offered this wine before. Fewer than 300 cases are made in a typical year, and the winery's mailing list absorbs almost all of it. The unique character of Trenton Estate (*vis a vis* the other Swan Pinots) is attributed not only to the vines' age (now over 40 years old) but also to the site's naturally tiny yields. Furthermore, this is where the "Swan clone" of Pinot Noir became famous.

Looking to the future, Swan's "Trenton Estate" is poised to become a collectible as it was in the past. For the moment it is seriously undervalued, but with the pendulum swinging back to typicity, purity and unique *terroirs*, we know where to put our money.

## Rod's Gift to All of Us

Fortunately, our deep admiration encouraged Rod to give us an allocation of the newly released '09 Trenton Estate. In addition, a few months ago, we purchased the last remaining cases, perhaps in the world, of the now-rare 2007 Trenton Estate that got some very big press when it was released a couple of years ago.

In addition, Rod has given some of his tiny-production (101 cases) 2010 Chardonnay from the Ritchie Vineyard. (The last time Rod made Chardonnay from Ritchie was in 1980!) Today, of course, Ritchie is best known for Mark Aubert's “cult” version. Rod's interpretation is different from Aubert's and will appeal to those who admire his old-school approach—as well as his phenomenally low price. ►

# Joseph Swan Trenton Estate

► But here's where this offer gets really interesting. To cap off our offer, we asked Rod if it might be possible to get some older vintages of Trenton Estate from his library, perhaps a couple from the 90s and even one or two from the 1980s. We even dared ask for a few magnums—a size we had never seen but was reputed to be made occasionally (and in tiny quantities).

Rod said he would need to go through his library to see

## 2007 Joseph Swan Pinot Noir

"Trenton Estate"

97 Wine Enthusiast

93+ Gilman 93 Raynolds

\$59.95 bt. \$145.00 mag.

John Gilman: "... quite classic ... deep, full-bodied ... great length and excellent intensity of flavor ... reminds me quite a bit of Clos des Lambrays in its aromatic and flavor profile ... 2013-2030+."

Josh Raynolds: "Gorgeous bouquet of red and dark berry preserves, potpourri, sandalwood and star anise. Suave and impressively silky ... lovely purity and cut ... The finish clings with excellent tenacity ...."

*"An absolute classic  
in the making"*

*John Gilman*

**2009 Jos. Swan Pinot Noir  
"Trenton Estate"**

93+ Gilman 93 Raynolds

\$54.95 bt. \$320 6-pack



Josh Raynolds: "Alluring aromas ... deep and glycerol ... sweet and seamless ... superb energy and grip ... Impressively concentrated and dense, with an explosive, incisive, floral finish ...."

John Gilman: "... an absolute classic in the making ... the wine is deep, fullish, pure and shows off excellent intensity in the mid-palate, with superb acidity, excellent focus and balance ... outstanding length and grip on the still very primary finish ... High class and quite sophisticated pinot. 2015-2045+."

what was left. (He is famous for his generosity, and there's very little remaining from the past). And so we waited, fingers crossed, to see what he could offer us.

Though most quantities were limited to the few bottles he had left, Rod gave us 18 different vintages from 1982 to 2006. And as noted above, in a number of cases, these will be the last bottles (or magnums) from the library that will ever see the light of day.

## 2010 Joseph Swan Chardonnay

"Ritchie Vineyard"

\$38.95 bt. \$220 6-pack

Just 101 cases made. The exceptionally cool 2010 growing season produced a wine with striking minerality, refined fruit, very good acidity, yet with the size you expect from this vineyard. Clean, zesty and citrusy nose with subtle notes of vanilla and Asian pear and green apple. Entry is full but well-focused and Burgundian in mouthfeel, thanks to the wine's acidity. Fine concentration and underlying minerality. A very complete wine that should age gracefully.

## Jewels from the Library

**Trenton Estate Pinot Assortment #1 .....\$545**

One bottle each of 1989, 1992, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2006, from the winery library.

**Trenton Estate Pinot Assortment #2 .....\$495**

One bottle each of 1991, 1994, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2005, from the winery library.

**Trenton Estate Pinot Assortment #3 .....\$399**

One bottle each of 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, from the winery library.

**Rarest Magnums from the Library**

1982 Trenton Estate Pinot Magnum .....225.00

1983 Trenton Estate Pinot Magnum .....225.00

1984 Trenton Estate Pinot Magnum .....325.00

1985 Trenton Estate Pinot Magnum .....245.00

2006 Trenton Estate Pinot Magnum .....145.00

**And a couple of extra cherries ...**

1984 Trenton Estate Pinot 750ml .....150.00

1990 Trenton Estate Pinot 750ml .....145.00

# It's Here.

## *A New Bonneau Célestins to Rival the 1989, '90, '98 & '01*

The release of Henri Bonneau's 2005 Reserve des Célestins is potentially the biggest story in Châteauneuf du Pape this year.

A wine of epic dimension, it takes its place with the four greatest Célestins of the past quarter century: '89, '90, '98 and '01. And if the price trajectory of its predecessors is any guide, it's a wine you'll want to buy now.

### **One of a Kind**

Wines often reflect the personalities of their makers, and for no one is this more true than Henri Bonneau. One of the most engaging winemakers we've ever met, Bonneau is a larger-than-life figure who has inspired every Châteauneuf winemaker born in the past half century.

He is famous for waiting six to eight years to release his greatest wines. And so, despite the fact that his neighbors are now offering their 2010s, the seven-year wait for the 2005 is "normal" for a great vintage of Célestins. It took him that long to select the barrels—and then to decide that the wine was ready to meet the world.

For decades, Bonneau has been considered the heart and soul of the Southern Rhône. But on the death of Rayas' Jacques Reynaud in 1997, he acquired a second mantle: that of the region's greatest winemaker.



*Henri Bonneau*

*"The  
appellation's  
most ferocious  
guardian of  
traditionally  
made  
Châteauneuf"*

*R. Parker*

### **The Glorious 2005**

For twenty years, this newsletter has been America's pipeline to Bonneau. In our very first issue in September 1992, we offered 1989 Célestins for \$42.95. Fortunately, our relationship with the domaine is as warm as ever, and we can once again offer an historic vintage of Célestins at a price which is very possibly the lowest in America.

## **2005 Henri Bonneau CDP Réserve des Célestins\***

**97+ Parker**

**\$245.00 bt. \$1435 six pack**

Parker: "The vintage about which Bonneau is most excited ... obviously built for 30-40 years of longevity ... great fruit and huge notes of lavender, soy, hoisin sauce, smoked duck, beef blood, black currants, plums and figs. This massive, concentrated wine finishes with excruciatingly high tannins and lots of structure ... This amazing Châteauneuf du Pape may turn out to be one of the two or three finest wines of the vintage ...."

## *Clerico's 2007 Barolo Ciabot Mentin*

*"98 rating ... one of the greatest wines I have ever tasted at this address." Antonio Galloni*

A leader of Piedmont's modernist movement in the 1980s, Domenico Clerico has never stopped searching for the best way to express his vineyards. His 2007 Barolo Ciabot Mentin, released last year, could be the finest wine he's ever made.

## **2007 Clerico Barolo Ciabot Mentin**

**\$96.95**

Galloni: "98 rating ... profound, breathtaking personality. The 2007 shows tons of Ginestra nuance, but with extra dimensions to the fruit that literally covers every nook and cranny of the palate."



# Spain's Other Glories

## *López de Heredia's Magnificent, Rare Viña Tondonia White Gran Reservas*

No school of winemaking produces such unique character and complexity as Rioja's traditionalists. And while their way of doing things is fast disappearing, a handful of old firms have stuck to their guns, fashioning wines of startling elegance and nuance. The standard-bearer is certainly López de Heredia.

López de Heredia is best known for its nearly immortal red Gran Reservas. But the top whites are just as magical and long-lived. One particularly brilliant example is their current release, the 1991 Viña Tondonia Blanco Gran Reserva. Another is the iconic 1981, of which just a small amount remains in the bodega's library.

### One of Rioja's Greatest Terroirs

These Gran Reservas are sourced from ancient Viura vines, complemented by a small amount of Malvasia, in López de Heredia's iconic Tondonia vineyard, widely regarded as one of Rioja's greatest white *terroirs*.

The López de Heredia family considers 1991 to be one of Viña Tondonia's all-time

*"Perhaps no winery in the world guards its traditions as proudly and steadfastly as López de Heredia does."*

*Eric Asimov, NY Times*

*"Viña Tondonia Blanco is absolutely one of my favorite dry white wines produced anywhere in the world."*

*John Gilman*

finest vintages; consequently they aged the Blanco Gran Reserva for an astonishing ten years in immaculate old barrels to maximize its opulent, honeyed character and kaleidoscopic complexity.

As a vintage, 1981 may be even more famous, particularly for Viña Tondonia Blanco. First released as a Gran Reserva eight years ago, today López has little left. We were indeed fortunate to get some.

### Preferred Access

As always, it's a great privilege to have access not only to López's current releases, but to the rarest bottles from the family library—each bottle shipped directly to us in our own temperature-controlled container.

And so the magnificent '81 and '91 whites are now resting comfortably with us. Both are, of course, fully mature, but each promises decades more of further aging. These are must purchases for those who love traditional Rioja—as well as *great* white wine generally.

### 1991 López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Blanco Gran Reserva

**94 Josh Reynolds**

**\$79.95 bt. \$470 6-pack**

Josh Reynolds: "... Explosively perfumed nose offers an array of citrus and orchard fruits, with exotic nuances of mace, chamomile and honey. Rich and deeply pitched but almost shockingly vibrant, offering spicy pear, nectarine and lemon pith flavors. Suavely blends richness and vivacity, finishing with excellent clarity and length. This should age at a snail's pace."



### 1981 López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Blanco Gran Reserva

**94+ John Gilman**

**\$129.95 bt. \$750 6-pack**

John Gilman (2009): "... drinking brilliantly at age twenty-seven ... truly magical ... superb mélange of orange zest, lemon, sea salts, fresh almonds, a hint of green olive, grapefruit and white soil tones. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, deep and racy, with great precision and focus, bright acids, a rock solid core and a very long, classy and bouncy finish ... I would not hesitate to keep this tucked away in the cellar for a few more years before drinking it with really wild abandon ... the next legendary bottle of this wine after the surreal 1964 and 1957."

# Pages from Barolo's History

*Marchesi di Barolo's 1970 and 1971 Barolos*



The origin of Barolo as we know it today can be traced back to the historic house of Marchesi di Barolo. In the first half of the nineteenth century, they were the first to produce Nebbiolo as a rich, dry wine and the first to label it as Barolo.

These revolutionary developments were based on the quality of the fruit from their wealth of vineyards spread over La Morra, Barolo and Serralunga d'Alba, but particularly from the region's greatest *cru*, Cannubi.

Marchesi di Barolo's cellars, and what remained of their glorious holdings, were acquired by the Abbona family in 1929 and they continued the firm's tradition of blending great Barolos from their *crus*, with Cannubi at its core, until 1975.

That was the year they first bottled Cannubi separately, having decided that the wine from this iconic vineyard merited its own bottling. And while this means that the classic Barolo in subsequent vintages was now lacking its heart, the years prior to 1975 were enriched by Cannubi's velvety texture and aromatic complexity.

Consequently, we were delighted recently to acquire, in Italy, a few well-cellared cases of the 1970 and 1971 vintages. As you would expect from such a historic house, the wines were made by thoroughly traditional methods and have stood the test of time beautifully.

Here's a rare opportunity to experience two classic examples of Barolo's old school at very attractive prices. Quantities are limited.

- 1971 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo\* .....135.00
- 1970 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo\* .....110.00

# We Got More!

*Chasseloir's 2007 "Cuvée Ceps Centenaires" from the Oldest Muscadet Vines in Existence*

One of last year's most compelling offers was the 2007 Ch. de Chasseloir Muscadet Cuvée Ceps Centenaires.

Made from the oldest Muscadet vines in existence, this wine is aged *sur lie* and conveys the mineral essence of an exceptional volcanic *terroir*. The Chasseloir Ceps Centenaires also has a history of developing for decades, becoming increasingly complex and creamy textured.

And at \$18.95, it's one of the planet's greatest wine bargains.

This modestly priced wine is made by the Chéreau-Carré family, which has been in Muscadet since 1412. Since 1953, they have owned the Ch. de Chasseloir. The Ceps Centenaires is their top *cuvée* and a wine that began as a private *cuvée* made just for the family.

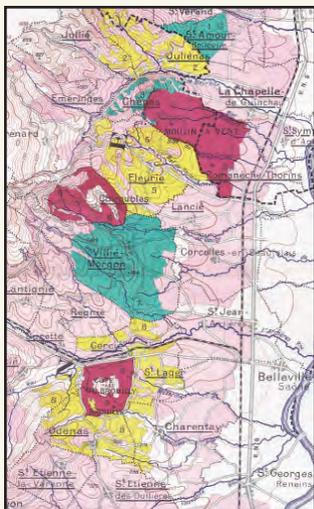
When we first offered the 2007 Cuvée Ceps Centenaires last August, we went through a boatload of it. However, we were able to get the last cases in the market. You will not want to miss this.

**2007 Ch. de Chasseloir  
Muscadet "Cuvée Ceps Centenaire"  
92 Wine Advocate  
\$18.95**

David Schildknecht: "... a sensational value. Scents of sea breeze; honeydew and musk melon; and fresh lemon lead into an expansive yet persistently refreshing palate, featuring rich hints of nut oils beneath bright, juicy, brine-crustured waves of melon and citrus ... strikingly tactile in its sense of minerality. Close your eyes and just try making yourself believe that salt water and chalk have not somehow been transported into this wine ... worth following for at least the next ten years."

# A Rare Beaujolais Opportunity

*Pristine 2005s from Two Legendary Domaines*



*Larmat's Map of Beaujolais, 1942.*

The wine world is full of injustices: producers who get far less attention than they deserve.

Until the 2009 vintage, Beaujolais had more than its share of these overlooked heros. But in that watershed year, the world discovered such hidden giants as Marcel Lapierre, Foillard and Clos de la Roilette.

Of course, these and other top domaines had been making great wine for years—if not for decades. A case in point was the Geoffrays of Ch. Thivin, who had single-handedly made the Côte de Brouilly an elite address for *vin de garde* Beaujolais.

## Remarkable Longevity

John Gilman—who knew the skinny in Beaujolais long before most other critics—has described the Geoffrays' Ch. Thivin as “one of the most important historic domaines in all of Beaujolais, and the Geoffrays make

very traditionally structured and deep wines that are slow to unfold, but which offer up superb longevity that can only be matched by the very top domaines in Morgon

**2005 Ch. Thivin Côte de Brouilly  
Cuvée La Chapelle\***  
**\$28.95 bt. \$165 six-pack**



John Gilman: "**93 rating**. In 2005 Monsieur Geoffray bottled a bit of the La Chapelle on its own ... more fruit-driven ... it jumps from the glass in a blaze of plums, black cherries, cocoa, a touch of game and a nice base of soil ... On the palate the wine is deep, full and quite powerfully built, with broad shoulders, an intense, sappy core of fruit, ripe tannins, and a long, powerful and primary finish ... will be a stellar example of the vintage ... superb. (Drink between 2010-2030)"

and Moulin-à-Vent ... All that is needed here is a little patience to discover one of the very top wines in the region."

Another example is Bernard Diochon who, in Gilman's words, has "for many years been one of the flagship producers of Moulin-à-Vent ... (their) wines age magnificently and are clearly amongst the very finest to be found in the region ... the Diochon wines are textbook examples of Moulin-à-Vent ...."

## This Extraordinary Offer

If you bought the Ch. Thivin and Diochon 2009s, you made a wise investment. But there's nothing like drinking these wines with a few years of bottle age.

Fortunately, a friend in Europe has been buying and cellaring Ch. Thivin and Diochon for years and let us have some of his most prized wines from the great 2005 vintage. Included was the rare and extraordinary "La Chapelle" bottling.

These wines are now unavailable anywhere in the U.S. And the provenance is exemplary.

Don't miss this important opportunity to lay in two certified Beaujolais legends with a few prized years under their belts ... yet with two decades of further aging potential.

**2005 Dom. Diochon  
Moulin-à-Vent\***  
**\$34.95 bottle**



John Gilman: "**95 rating** ... brilliance of Beaujolais with the stunning 2005 Moulin-à-Vent from Domaine Diochon. The bouquet is deep, primary and stunning, as it soars from the glass in a mélange of black cherries, dark berries, vinesmoke, herbs, earth, a touch of espresso and a topnote of peppercorn. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, pure and sappy on the attack, with a great core of fruit, laser-like focus, and great tanginess and grip on the stunning backend. Glorious juice. (Drink between 2010-2030)"

# Perrone's 2011 Moscato Clarté

*"Literally redefines what is possible with the grape."*

*Antonio Galloni on Stefano Perrone's Clarté*

*November 1995.* We were in Piedmont, as the autumn's Moscatos were hitting store shelves, just in time for Christmas.

In search of the region's greatest Moscato for our import portfolio, we seized the opportunity to taste the newly bottled 1995 Moscatos from nearly two dozen of the most highly regarded local producers.

Two stood out: Saracco, which at that time was considered the best by insiders. The other was made by an unknown former motocross racer, Stefano Perrone. As phenomenal as the Saracco was, we gave a slight edge to Perrone's wine. And so our deep friendship with Stefano (and later his wife Giuliana) began.

## The New Order

*Fast forward 17 years.* Today, Stefano's wine is considered by many the world's greatest example of Moscato. *He* is the superstar—the guy who can wring every last drop of nuance out of the Moscato grape, and can do so with surreal balance of sugar and acidity.

We've also learned over the past 17 years that the Moscatos released for Christmas may not even be the producers' best. Perrone is a case in point: he holds back the best part of each harvest to produce Clarté, for release the next spring. If any wine expresses the essence of the Moscato grape, it is Clarté.

*For the  
First Time  
in 6 Years:*

**Magnums!**

## Galloni's Take

In writing about the 2010 vintage, Antonio Galloni nailed it, by calling Clarté one of "Italy's great dessert wines. Low yields and a superb site result in one of the most intense Moscati readers are likely to come across. It is not an understatement to say this is a wine that literally redefines what is possible with the grape."

Galloni continues: "Exotic flowers, lime, green pears and the essence of crushed rocks flow effortlessly from this dazzling wine. The Clarté has the focus and cool, piercing minerality of a great Chablis, but of course with the sweetness of Moscato."

The 2011 Clarté has just been bottled and it's on its way to us (as always, in a temperature-controlled container set to 55 degrees). Just 400 cases were made.

But before it left Stefano's cellar, we repeated our November, 1995, tasting. Lining up two dozen different 2011 Moscatos in a Castiglione Tinella *trattoria*, none of the competitors even came close to matching the precision of 2011 Clarté.

**2011 Elio Perrone  
Moscato "Clarté"**

**\$18.95 bottle \$39.95 magnum**

**THE RARE WINE CO.**

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