

FOOD & WINE BEST WINE  
2002 AMERICAN WINE AWARDS WINE AWARDS IMPORTER

JAMES BEARD  
SEMI-FINALIST  
2008 & 2009



# THE RARE WINE CO. NEWSLETTER

02/28/12  
ISSUE NO. 305



*Plowing at Horse Power vineyard. See page 1.*



# THE RARE WINE CO.

21481 EIGHTH STREET EAST SONOMA, CA 95476 800-999-4342/707-996-4484 [email us at sales@rarewineco.com](mailto:sales@rarewineco.com)

February 28, 2012 - ONLINE EDITION

## Christophe's Quest

*Bionic Frog is Joined by Two New Cayuse "Holy Grails"*



*Christophe Baron. The stones form much of Cayuse's "soil."*

Among the most compelling examples of Syrah outside France are made in the most unlikely of places—Washington State's Walla Walla Valley—and by a Frenchman, born not in the Rhône, but in Champagne.

The winemaker is Christophe Baron, who came to Walla Walla in 1996, discovering land littered with Châteauneuf-like stones. He instinctively knew he could make great wine here. But Christophe didn't find his greatest inspiration in Châteauneuf du Pape; he found it instead in the Northern Rhône, in Cornas and Côte Rôtie.

And so, in 1998, he planted Syrah in what was to become "Coccinelle." And in 2000 he made

the first vintage of the wine that would make him a superstar, Bionic Frog.

### In Search of the Essence

Bionic Frog is arguably America's most sought-after Syrah. Only 300 cases are made.

And only one American retailer receives an annual allocation: The Rare Wine Co.

We are accorded this special privilege for two reasons. The first is, of course, our longstanding belief in Christophe. But the other is our shared passion for the Syrah grape—and the great Northern Rhône winemakers that have been his role models.

These include Allemand, Verset and Clape from Cornas; Hermitage's Chave, and Rostaing and Jamet from Côte Rôtie. The work of each of these legends has played a part in developing Christophe's winemaking philosophy.

But he's also been led by his own intelligence and quest for the truth. His vines are now 100% biodynamic; he increasingly uses draught horses for plowing; he obsessively green harvests and drops more than half of each crop to keep yields at 1.2 to 2 tons per acre; he relies solely on native yeasts, and he practices partial whole-cluster fermentation.

Today, he also uses little new wood. All Cayuse reds, including Bionic Frog, now see only 15 to 20% new oak. And he is gravitating towards larger barrels. For years he's been buying used 600-liter puncheons from Rene Rostaing and is experimenting with large old 1,200-liter *foudre*, à la Clape.

### Widowmaker & Impulsivo

Since arriving in Walla Walla, Christophe has planted no fewer than seven different vineyards, each an experiment in grape varieties and vine spacing (up to 4840 vines per acre). His earliest vineyards were all planted on their own roots, but in 2000 he made his first move towards using rootstock, in the En Chamberlin vineyard, an ancient stony riverbed.

He planted En Chamberlin equally to Cabernet, Tempranillo and Syrah, and the former two grapes are already producing two of Christophe's most coveted wines: **Widowmaker** and **Impulsivo**, respectively.

We are honored to be able to offer a small amount of both wines from the 2008 vintage. They join Bionic Frog, which is always the cornerstone of our annual ►

# Impossible-to-Find Prizes from Cayuse

► Cayuse Feast. This year's romp includes not only the brilliant new 2008, but a small additional amount of last year's showstopper, the great 2007.

These are the wines of a true original. It's a privilege to be able to offer them.

## 2007 Cayuse Syrah "Bionic Frog"

**99** *The Wine Advocate*

**\$245.00** very limited



Jay Miller in *The Wine Advocate*: "... a splendid aromatic array of forest floor, herbs, olives, bacon, underbrush, blueberry, and black cherry. This is followed by a voluptuous wine with gobs of succulent fruit, impeccable balance, enough fine-grained tannin to evolve for 5-7 years, and a lengthy, seductive finish."

## 2008 Cayuse Syrah "Bionic Frog"

**99** *The Wine Advocate*

**\$245.00** very limited

Jay Miller in *The Wine Advocate*: "... strikes me as the most complex of the Rhone-style offerings. Smoke, game, exotic spices, black truffle, and assorted black and blue fruits lead to a lengthy, impeccably balanced, pleasure-bent offering that will drink nicely for 10-12 years."

## 2008 Cayuse Cabernet Sauvignon "The Widowmaker"

**97** *The Wine Advocate*

**\$195.00** very limited



Jay Miller in *The Wine Advocate*: "... aged in 50-60% new oak, something Baron uses judiciously. It is a very Left Bank Bordeaux styled wine combining power and elegance. It is likely to have a 20 year lifespan."

## 2008 Cayuse Tempranillo "Impulsivo"

**100** *The Wine Advocate*

**\$295.00** very limited



Jay Miller in *The Wine Advocate*: "... remarkably complex bouquet of smoke, licorice, tar, violets, exotic spices, blackberry, and black raspberry. Dense, powerful, and mouth-filling ... a total turn-on that will continue to provide pleasure for another 12-15 years."

## From the Great André Brunel, A Southern Rhône Bargain

As the price of Châteauneuf du Pape has risen, the best producers have looked outside the appellation for vineyards to make Châteauneuf-styled wine at much lower prices.

For example, the legendary André Brunel has augmented his famed Les Cailloux and Cuvée Centenaire Châteauneufs with Cuvée Sabine, a spectacular Côtes du Rhône Villages grown 50km to the west.

This 80% Grenache-20% Syrah is vinified just like a Châteauneuf du Pape. In the great 2009 vintage, it is a screaming value. Don't miss it.

## 2009 André Brunel CDR Villages 'Cuvée Sabine'\*

**92** *Parker*

**\$17.95** bottle



Parker: "92 rating. Blackberry, blueberry, lavender, tobacco leaf and meaty notes are intermixed with the tell-tale kirsch component that comes from ripe Grenache ... a big, hefty Côtes du Rhone-Villages that should drink well for 7-8 years."

# A Creature of Terroir

## The Monumental 2002 Clos des Goisses and the Ultra-Rare Rosé

The first important Champagne ever made from a single vineyard, Philipponnat's Clos des Goisses has, since its birth in 1935, been worshipped by insiders as a wine of nearly magical complexity and power.

And for years, those same insiders have been waiting for the 2002 Clos des Goisses to be released. This is the finest Champagne vintage since 1996, and there is no safer bet than buying Clos des Goisses in top years.

In January, we received our allocation directly from Philipponnat, and it more than lives up to our hopes. If you love *great* Champagne—especially Champagne capable of aging for decades—you won't want to miss it.

### A Providential Site


Those who read this newsletter regularly will already be tuned in to the great 2002 Champagne vintage. And hopefully you've taken our advice to stock up.

But 2002 Clos des Goisses is in a class of its own—a creature of its unique *terroir*, as well as Charles Philipponnat's classic winemaking, which includes partial fermentation in oak. Charles also blocks the malolactic fermentation to give Goisses greater structure and precision.

### 2002 Clos des Goisses

**\$215.00** bottle **\$1199** six-pack

Neal Martin: "... a mercurial bouquet with citrus peel, jasmine, hazelnut, linden and dried mango, the chalkiness only emerging after five minutes in the glass. The palate has a very Burgundian personality, superb balance and poise with dried honey, honeysuckle and a touch of chalk. Great penetration on the finish, this will surely be a long-term Clos des Goisses that will amaze the next generation of champagne-lovers."

 "2002 Clos des Goisses is a great, great wine."  
Tom Stevenson

"A long-term Clos des Goisses that will amaze the next generation of champagne-lovers." Neal Martin

"2002 Clos des Goisses is the most delicate Goisses ever"  
Michel Bettane

Goisses' *terroir* is unique in Champagne, facing south across the Marne River, a steep slope and a plateau, both laden with chalk. Not only is the temperature in the Clos 1.5° warmer than elsewhere in Champagne; the varied terrain has enabled four generations of Philipponnat winemakers to craft Champagnes combining sublime richness with ethereal balance.

### Clos des Goisses Rosé

Two thousand two was the third year in which Charles also made a tiny amount of rosé from Clos des Goisses. Only a minute amount is made—less than 100 cases—from the best section of the slope, named "La Dure."

Charles combines red Pinot Noir wine from La Dure with the classic Pinot-rich Clos des Goisses blend to achieve a light rosé color and give the wine its unique complexity. The final blend is roughly three-quarters Pinot Noir, the rest Chardonnay.

### This Offer

Our direct relationship with Philipponnat put us in the enviable position of buying both 2002 Clos des Goisses Brut and Rosé directly from its cellars in Mareuil-sur-Aÿ. But we've already sold half our allocation of both wines and the rest will soon be gone. You'll want to hurry.



### 2002 Clos des Goisses Rosé

**\$425.00** extremely limited

Josh Reynolds: "Explosive, complex scents of fresh and dried citrus fruits, pear skin, hazelnut and jasmine, with subtle smokiness and an intense mineral overlay. Projects a superb blend of richness and vivacity, showing with excellent clarity ... the firm spine of acidity helps the wine maintain focus. Finishes with noteworthy length and clarity, leaving floral and spice notes behind. This Champagne really deserves at least another decade of bottle age."



# Legacy of a Legend

## *Paul Jaboulet's 2009 & 1990 Domaine de Thalabert*

For at least a half century, insiders have considered the Domaine de Thalabert the hidden jewel in Paul Jaboulet's crown.

It was certainly the case between 1961 and 1990, when Jaboulet was King—revered for the Hermitage La Chapelles it made in 1961, 1978 and 1990. During that period, Thalabert was a go-to wine for knowledgeable Northern Rhône collectors.

Like La Chapelle, Thalabert's lustre dimmed in the late '90s and early 2000s. This was the time after Gerard Jaboulet's untimely death when every wine Jaboulet made fell in quality.

### **Jaboulet's Back**

But now that Jaboulet is under new ownership and hitting on all cylinders, insiders know which cuvée—along with La Chapelle of course—to begin buying again: Domaine de Thalabert.

And their instincts have been proven correct by the stunning quality of the 2009 Thalabert. It is a wine for the ages, and according to Parker, the finest since the last great vintage in 1990.

Jaboulet's ties to Thalabert run deep; it has been owned by the company since 1834—and is a single property of 40 hectares in the revered Crozes-Hermitage *lieu dit*, *Les Chassis*.

The ground here is covered with *cailloux roulés*, huge stones like those found in Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The stones store and reflect the day's heat and help to retain moisture—a key factor in hot years like 1978, 1990 and 2009. The soil is also responsible for Thalabert's amazing perfume and unusually fine tannins.

### **This Offer**

A number of merchants are offering 2009 Thalabert, though few are at a price as low as ours. But virtually no one else can offer its older sibling, the great 1990. We have a couple dozen bottles and magnums left from the large parcel we snapped up when Jaboulet was sold in 2006. The bottles & mags have had but two homes, both perfect cellars: ours and Jaboulet's.

This is a unique opportunity to buy and compare both vintages. But please note that we must severely limit purchases of the 1990, because when these are gone, it's the end.

### **2009 Paul Jaboulet Crozes-Hermitage "Domaine de Thalabert"\***

**95 Parker**

**\$44.95 bottle \$265.00 six-pack**



### **1990 Paul Jaboulet Crozes-Hermitage "Domaine de Thalabert"**

**92 Parker**

**★★★★★ Livingstone-Learmonth**

**\$145.00 bottle \$325.00 magnum**

Robert Parker: "The greatest Crozes-Hermitage Domaine de Thalabert since the magnificent 1990 ... the 2009, which is bursting with potential, represents a great buy for Syrah lovers. Its dense purple color is followed by an explosive bouquet of blackberries, sweet cherries, licorice, Provençal olives, graphite and subtle smoke. Full-bodied with silky tannins as well as a terrific mouthfeel and palate penetration, this gorgeous offering should drink well for 15 or more years."

Robert Parker: "... an unqualified winner. My instincts suggest it will easily eclipse the 1978. The 1990 exhibits a huge, roasted Syrah nose and the massive power produced by the hot sun and drought of this vintage. It has also benefited from an unbelievably long 40-day maceration. The huge, smoky, superripe nose of herbs, coffee, and cassis is followed by a densely packed, authoritatively rich, nearly massive, surprisingly well-balanced wine."

# Trimbach Tributes

## The Rare 375th Anniversary Riesling & 13th Generation Pinot Gris



Trimbach's cellars in Ribeauvillé

Relative to their accomplishments, great winemakers have some of the smallest egos in the world.

We see them as superstars. They view themselves far more humbly, as the voice of a great *terroir* or simply someone trying to measure up to his iconic father or grandfather. In today's mediagenic world, that is a big part of why they are so admirable.

Alsace's great traditionalists, the Trimbachs, are very much cut from that cloth. They are committed to their wines expressing a sense of place. And descending from generations of winemakers, they understand their role as stewards of a family legacy.

### 2001 Frédéric Emile 375th Anniversary

While working with the components for his superb 2001 Riesling Cuvée Frédéric Emile, Pierre Trimbach noticed that a small lot of juice from a single block of old vines in Osterberg was particularly magical.

Picked late, this lot had greater purity of fruit with more weight, roundness and "shoulder" than the others. Fermented dry, it offered heroic dry extract and richness.

Because 2001 marked the family's 375th anniversary as winegrowers, Pierre decided that bottling the lot on its own was an appropriate way to celebrate. And so he set it aside for extended aging. Released four years ago, today it is virtually impossible to find.

### 2001 Riesling Frédéric Emile "375th Anniversary"

**94 Wine Advocate 94+ Gilman**

**\$89.95**

John Gilman: "... brilliant ... apple, tangerine, bread fruit, plenty of wild yeast tones, wet stones, plenty of petrol, and a topnote that is both salty and floral, like a faint ocean breeze blowing over a field of spring flowers ... utterly seamless, with great depth at the core ... a beautiful wine."



### Two Very Special Wines

And so, about a decade ago, when Mother Nature gave Pierre Trimbach two extraordinary wines, he used the opportunity to pay homage to his ancestors.

The monumental **2002 Pinot Gris 13ème Génération** recognizes the 13 generations of Trimbach winemakers who've enabled Pierre to make magical wines just as his predecessors did. Meanwhile, his **2001 Riesling Frédéric Emile "375th Anniversary"** takes us back to the domaine's founding in 1626.

Both wines are extraordinary and now nearly impossible to find. You'll want both in your cellar.

### 2002 Pinot Gris 13ème Génération

In 2002, Pierre also honored his ancestors by setting aside a lot of late-harvest Pinot Gris from the Osterberg parcel behind the winery. The soil here is deeply stony, with a mix of clay and limestone on a base of sandy stone from the Vosges mountains. And what is particularly special about this lot of Pinot Gris is its combination of great ripeness and profound acidity.

Pierre aged the wine for nearly 7 years in bottle before releasing it in 2009. We've never seen it offered in the U.S., so it may have been sold only in Europe. In any event, forget locating it elsewhere in the U.S.

### 2002 Pinot Gris "13ème Génération"

**94 Wine Advocate**

**\$69.95**



David Schildknecht in *The Wine Advocate*: "... a high point for the vintage. It displays the most vividly carnal aromas – veal stock and smoked meats – that I can recall in any white wine. ... seamlessly rich, creamy, polished ... profoundly meaty and subtly mineral ..."

# California Royalty

## The Glory of Mount Eden's Rare Estate Wines

Since its inception in 1972, Mount Eden—the Santa Cruz Mountains property originally planted by Martin Ray in the 1940s—has been the source of some of California's most profoundly distinctive Pinot Noirs, Cabernets and Chardonnays.

Mount Eden boasts a unique *terroir*—the climate is cool and the soil poor Franciscan slate; the vines produce naturally low yields, intense minerality, vibrant acidity and restrained alcohol.

If Mount Eden's wines have a classic signature, it's not only because of the *terroir*, but because the wines have been made by the same methods and the same man for over three decades: Jeffrey Patterson.

### The Rare "Estate" Wines

In recent years, the Mount Eden portfolio has grown well beyond the

*"An almost forgotten treasure ... Patterson still crafts wonderful wines in a classic style ... I have drunk forty-year-old Pinot Noirs from this property that were positively extraordinary, and the Cabernets are even better." Raj Parr, Secrets of the Sommeliers*

original Martin Ray property. Wines now appear under the Mount Eden label that have been sourced from other fine estates in the Central Coast, including the Domaine Eden property one mountaintop over.

But the wines that remain the rarest and most sought-after are the "Estate" wines, from the original Martin Ray property.

The vines here have all been propagated from low-yielding material brought to California from France a century or more ago. Of course, the rarest of the bunch is the fabulous 2007 Reserve Chardonnay—a wine not normally allocated directly to retailers.

And so we were indeed honored to get an allocation—direct from the estate—not only of the Reserve Chardonnay, but of *each* of the Estate cuvées, too. Be forewarned, however: quantities are *very* limited.

### 2007 Estate Cabernet

**\$54.95 bottle**

Gilman: "95 rating ... an absolute classic in the making. The bouquet is deep, pure and stunning ... On the palate ... a sappy core of pure fruit, ripe tannins and a beautifully complex, poised and very long finish. I would tuck this superb wine away in the cellar ... and then drink it with great pleasure over the ensuing forty years."



### 2009 Estate Pinot Noir

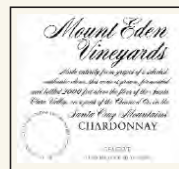
**\$54.95 bottle**

Raynolds: "93 rating ... aromas of redcurrant, cherry and Asian spices, with a sexy floral quality and slow-building smokiness. Fresh and incisive on the palate, offering tangy red fruit and mineral flavors that gain richness with air. A bitter cherry note comes up on the very long, focused, pure finish. Impressively balanced pinot."

### 2008 Estate Chardonnay

**\$49.95 bottle**

Galloni: "95 rating ... from the estate's best barrels, with the aim of producing a wine that can age 20 years. ... It reveals gorgeous scents of citrus, crushed rocks and smoke, all of which come together nicely in the glass. The 2008 remains a tightly wound, subtle and finessed wine that needs another few years in the cellar, but it is striking even today. This is all finesse and elegance."



### 2007 Reserve Chardonnay

**\$59.95**

Gilman: "95 rating ... spends an additional year of aging on the lees prior to bottling ... really a marvelous bottle in the making, as it offers up a deep and nicely reserved mélange of citrus zest, pear, spring flowers, lemon oil, complex minerality and a lovely framing of gently buttery oak ... more soil-driven than the Estate bottling ... superb, old school California chardonnay."

# Worth the Wait

## *Henri Bonneau's Fabulous 2006 Célestins*

The heart and soul of the Southern Rhône, Henri Bonneau is renowned for making old-style Châteauneuf-du-Papes of astonishing texture and nuance.

His top wine is of course the Réserve des Célestins, a blend of barrels that—over a period of five or more years—have developed into something really special. And because of his patience and his unusual approach to winemaking, it's not uncommon to see Célestins towering above everything else made that year.

### **The Glorious 2006**

Thus his 2006, released last year, is another Bonneau Wine of the Vintage. Tasted at our **Wine & Art Convergence** event in New York in February, it was a showstopper—with the complexity and palate of pure velvet we've come to

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

expect from a great Célestins.

Our special access to Henri's cellar once again allows us to offer this fantastic wine at the lowest price in America. You won't want to miss it.

### **2006 Henri Bonneau CDP Réserve des Célestins\***

**94-96 Parker**

**\$189.95 bt. \$1095 6-pack**

Parker: "Notes of soy, beef blood, kirsch, garrigue, licorice and tape-nade make this a classic, expansive, full-bodied Châteauneuf du Pape that should turn out to be a great sleeper from this cellar. It could be similar to Bonneau's 1986, which was probably the wine of the vintage in Châteauneuf du Pape. It should drink well for 25-30+ years."

## *Teobaldo's Gifts: Painfully Rare Mags of 2005 Cappellano Piè Franco*



*Teobaldo in late 2008.*

For most of his career, Teobaldo Cappellano was virtually unknown in the U.S. His philosophical objection to his wines being rated made him virtually unknown to most Barolo drinkers ... despite the fact that many insiders considered him one of the greats.

### **Cappellano's Holy Grail**

Finally, three or four years before his death in 2009, Teobaldo's Barolos began to get the recognition they had long deserved. And for Cappellano devotees, the Holy Grail became his Barolo Piè Franco, probably the only Barolo made from ungrafted vines.

Always miniscule, Piè Franco's production has been shrinking due to declining yields. We suspect that by the 2005 and 2006 vintages, production of Pie Franco had fallen to 100 to 125 cases—an amount considerably smaller than when we first started buying from the estate in the 1999 vintage.

Still, the Cappellanos make sure to bottle a few magnums of Piè Franco each vintage

for collectors. These are quite a bit more expensive than bottles and are carefully allocated to customers. Each year, for example, we receive no more than a dozen of them—and it's rare that we ever see them changing hands after their initial sale.

But a few weeks ago, a small miracle happened. An old Cappellano customer in Europe put all of his 2005 Franco magnums on the market as a parcel. Needless to say, we grabbed them in a second.

As usual, there are no tasting notes on the wine. As we have noted before, Teobaldo insisted that journalists not score his wines, and even with Teobaldo gone, you still seldom see tasting notes on Cappellano Barolos.

So, here it is, one of the greatest and rarest of all Barolos bottlings--extremely limited in quantity.

### **2005 Cappellano Barolo "Piè Franco"\***

**\$295 magnum**



# All-Star Break

## *A Star-Studded Team Produces an Epic Bargain*

As explained in our May, 2009, cover story on Evening Land Vineyards (“ELV”), the goal of this visionary project was to produce the “greatest Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays yet made in the New World—particularly if one measures greatness by the standards of Burgundy’s Côte d’Or.”

But it was not enough for Evening Land to acquire extraordinary vineyards. An instinct for making great wine was needed. For this, project founder Mark Tarlov looked to a Burgundy icon, Dominique Lafon, who was brought in to oversee the project and share his wisdom with the project’s gifted young winemakers.

### Full Circle

But while America’s gaze was fixed on the stunning wines being made, particularly in Oregon, Tarlov was buying vineyards in Burgundy. ELV made its first wines in 2009, again with Lafon overseeing.

As in the U.S., Lafon doesn’t make the wines himself; he acts as guide and mentor. The winemaking in Burgundy has been entrusted to Christophe Vial, who for 10 years was cellar master at Comte Lafon and then worked at de Montille.

The first wine to emerge from this partnership was a Bourgogne Rouge with the appropriate name, **Etoile** (or, in English, Star). To add to its luster, it’s from the 2009 vintage, and sells for just \$27.95. Oh, and it’s stunning.



### *A Chablis Icon*

*Vincent Dauvissat’s 2009 “La Forest”*

**2009 R & V Dauvissat\***  
**Chablis 1er Cru “La Forest”**  
**93 Burghound 93 Tanzer**  
**\$59.95**



*Burghound:* “... classic Chablis aromas that include oyster shell, tidal pool and white flower aromas cut with just a hint of citrus ... generous, concentrated and quite powerful ... really good stuff here....”

Steve Tanzer: “... remarkably complex ... A large-scaled but wonderfully fine-grained premier cru with superb length ....”

**2009 “Etoile” Bourgogne**  
**Côtes de Nuits Villages AOC**  
**\$27.95 limited**

This gorgeous red Burgundy is a 50/50 blend of two vineyards—Corgoloin and Comblanchien—from just south of Nuits St. Georges in the Côtes de Nuits Villages. The fruit from Corgoloin was vinified whole-cluster, while Comblanchien’s was de-stemmed. The result, as one would expect, is a wine with 2009’s abundant richness and flesh, but with beautiful structure, clarity and nuance. Simply an amazing red Burgundy bargain not to be missed.

## THE RARE WINE CO.

21481 EIGHTH STREET EAST SONOMA, CA 95476 800-999-4342/707-996-4484 [email us at sales@rarewineco.com](mailto:sales@rarewineco.com)

February 28, 2012 - ONLINE EDITION