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Old American oak barrels at Hermanos Peciña in Rioja.

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The New Jewel of Traditional Rioja

“The resulting wines have made Peciña a new classic.” Luis Gutierrez, The Wine Advocate

Rioja’s traditional school of winemaking reigned from the 1850s until the 1980s, producing some of the world’s most consistently complex, soul-satisfying wines.

But today few of the historic bodegas have remained purely traditional. In fact, apart from López de Heredia and La Rioja Alta, who is left to carry the torch of silky, Burgundian reds aged for years in old American oak barrels?

But there is one highly important example that didn’t even exist 25 years ago and is largely unknown to the world outside of Rioja: **Hermanos Peciña**.

The buzz is starting. And as lovers of traditional wine discover the magic of Peciña’s excitingly classic wines, this small bodega is taking its place alongside the greats.

A La Rioja Alta Alumnus

Peciña was founded in 1992 by La Rioja Alta’s vineyard manager, Pedro Peciña. Pedro not only had the experience of managing La Rioja Alta’s 1,200 acres of vines, he comes from a long line of growers. Grapes are in his blood, but he also owns 20 hectares of great vineyards, of which eight hectares are 60 years old.

His winemaking is utterly classic, yet the expression of his wines is different from that of La Rioja Alta, whose reds have a pronounced signature of American oak. Pedro uses his American oak barrels more subtly. With an average age of 8 to 10 years, the wood is largely neutral, providing only background notes.

In fact, the style of Pedro’s best wines—the **Reservas**, **Gran Reservas** and **Vendimia Seleccionada**—remind us of no less than the great Cune Viña Reals and Riojas Monte Reals of the 1960s and 1970s in their warmth, generosity and velvet textures.

The Rewards of Patience

He ages far longer than is required by law, from a minimum of two years in barrel for Crianza to four or more years for Gran Reserva. And his cellar speaks volumes, with line after line of barrels, stacked four and five high. It’s a scene commonplace in Rioja forty years ago—but one that has now all but vanished.

Pedro’s wines age with incredible grace, in part due to meticulous twice-a-year rackings—transferring the wine from one barrel to another, to let the wine breathe. Most large bodegas today rack by mechanically pumping the wine from barrel into big stainless steel tanks and then back into barrel, disturbing the wine’s graceful development.

Pedro racks as earlier generations did. Each barrel is gently drained by hand into a clean barrel beneath it. It’s a vestige of the past that is made possible not only by Pedro’s staunch traditionalism, but also by his small, artisanal scale of production.

This practice, combined with avoidance of new wood, results in Rioja of breathtaking silkiness and irresistible richness. His work—and his wines—beg to be compared with the great traditionalists of Piedmont, and stylistically, he reminds us a lot of Fabio Alessandria at Burlotto.

Extraordinary Vineyards

In 2002, after 18 years at La Rioja Alta, Pedro left in to devote himself entirely to his bodega. By now, he knew where all the best vineyards were, acquiring prime old parcels exclusively on the left bank of the river, with its high elevations and chalky soil. ►

The New Jewel of Traditional Rioja

► And Pedro is preserving the diversity of the old vineyards, keeping varieties that others are ripping out.

He uses no chemical fertilizers, nor does he induce fermentation. And he respects the traditional idea of blending to produce more complex, complete wines. Drawing on nearly a dozen different sites, he can create a diverse range of wines with remarkable consistency from vintage to vintage, which is one of the hallmarks of Rioja's glorious past.

Curating History

Over the past two decades, we've watched with dismay as so many of the great bodegas of the past have abandoned the classic



Top Spanish trestaurants have prized Peciña's wines for years. Here's Arzak's bin of 1998 crianza aging at Peciña.

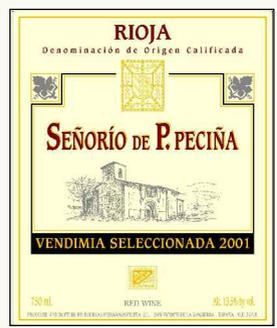
approaches that made Rioja so singular.

Discovering Pedro Peciña's work not only gives us hope, but also the opportunity to experience nobly traditional Rioja as it was made a half century ago.

This past fall, The Rare Wine Co. was honored to be appointed Peciña's importer for the entire U.S. except New York-New Jersey. This is our first newsletter offer.

For it, we've selected three wines that we consider to both emblematic and exciting. Quantities of each are limited, and we strongly urge you to buy all three.

**2001 Peciña
Rioja
Vendimia
Seleccionada**
\$39.95 bot. \$225 6-pack



2003 Peciña Rioja Gran Reserva
\$39.95 bot. \$225 6-pack

The 2003 Gran Reserva is a fascinating contrast to the 2001 Vendimia Seleccionada, since they are both essentially Gran Reservas. But the 2003 exhibits more pure power. It's phenomenally rich and velvety in that way that only classic, long-aged Rioja can be.

A Bargain in Magnum!
2006 Peciña Rioja Crianza*
\$39.95 magnum \$235 6-pack

Among the eccentricities of classic Riojas is their patience in letting even their *crianzas* develop. By law a *crianza* only needs to spend three years in a producer's cellar. But this gem spent a full seven and a half years before being sold. And Pedro thought so much of the wine, he bottled a good part of it in magnum, for long development. We grabbed as many as we could and suggest you do as well.

In outstanding vintages, Pedro occasionally selects a few barrels for a special bottling. Though the wine qualifies as Gran Reserva, he labels it Vendimia Seleccionada. The 2001 version is stunningly complex and seamless, with his old-vine Tempranillo on full display, with only a subtle back-drop of oak. So magical is the mouthfeel, it stopped us in our tracks when we first tasted it. And at the moment, it is possibly the greatest wine in his cellar. Only in Rioja will find wine of such complexity, age, depth and elegance for this kind of price.

History in the Making

Three Vintages of Ch. de la Tour's Heroic Clos de Vougeot ...including the Ultra-Rare Hommage à Jean Morin

Over the last decade, Château de la Tour—the domaine with the largest holdings within Clos de Vougeot—has skyrocketed to the top of the short list of great producers of this iconic grand cru.

The brilliant quality of the Clos de Vougeot alone cements the domaine's place among the Clos' elite producers. But the Vieilles Vignes and Hommage à Jean Morin cuvées hit even greater heights, rivaling the greatest wines of the Côte de Nuits.

Deep Roots

These extraordinary wines epitomize the Burgundian ideal of intensity without weight. They are powerful and complex, yet light on their feet. Proprietor François Labet achieves this through a deep appreciation of his ancestor's methods, applied to the concentration and complexity of the domaine's ancient vines.

Labet can trace his lineage—and connection to Clos de Vougeot—back to the negociant firm of Maison Beaudet Frères, which became a major owner of the Clos in 1889. Soon, they built the Château de la Tour along the vineyard's northern wall. Consequently, the domaine is the only producer making chateau-bottled Clos de Vougeot from within the Clos.

Grounded in Tradition

Today Labet makes his Clos de Vougeot in a way that both emulates and honors those who preceded him. As Allen Meadows' states in his 1885-2010 vertical tasting report, Château de la Tour's wines are "resolutely old school" in style.

Yields for the densely planted old vines are kept painfully low through ruthless pruning. Labet harvests as late as possible for maximum maturity and complexity and vinifies strictly with whole cluster fruit.

Promise Fulfilled

Thanks to François Labet, Château de la Tour has been on fire in recent years, completely fulfilling the long-held promise of its ancient vines and blessed terroir. To quote Allen Meadows, "It is to Labet's considerable credit that he was returned the domaine, and its wines, to a place of prominence."

Here are several of his greatest wines from the last few vintages, each an exemplar of what Clos de Vougeot can be when no effort is spared in its tending and making. Very limited; please hurry.

2006 Clos de Vougeot Vieilles Vignes* 169.95

Burghound: "94 rating. ... quite serious, driving, well-detailed and superbly well-balanced concentrated and broad-shouldered flavors that are blessed with plenty of dry extract on powerful and explosively long finish. This is a terrific and exceptionally promising effort"

2009 Clos de Vougeot 135.00

Burghound: "94 rating ... impressive richness to the powerful broad-shouldered flavors that brim with dry extract that does an excellent job of buffering the very firm tannins on the beautifully balanced, long and quite serious finish. This is an excellent example."

2009 Clos de Vougeot Vieilles Vignes 199.00

Burghound: "96 rating ... rich, round and admirably concentrated ... an overt muscularity ... explosively long and overtly austere finish ... a genuinely remarkable effort and it should be on your short list of '09s to potentially acquire as it's truly breathtaking."

2010 Clos de Vougeot Vieilles Vignes 189.95

Burghound: "96 rating. ... rich, intense and super concentrated broad-shouldered flavors ... a wonderful example of the phrase 'power without weight.' As I noted above, if you can find it, buy it though I emphasize yet again that this is a 'put it in the cellar and forget about it' wine. In a word, brilliant."

2010 Clos de Vougeot Hommage à Jean Morin 545.00

Bottled for the first time as a separate cuvée in 2010, it was sourced exclusively from the first clusters on the canes of the domaine's oldest vines. This severe selection meant only enough juice to fill two barrels, guaranteeing its rarity. 1-bottle limit.

Burghound: "97 rating. ... everything about this wine is concentrated and powerful ... opulently thick mid-palate ... velvety and palate drenching finish that goes on and on and on ... about as old school as you will ever taste in a modern day burgundy"

Hiding in Plain Sight

Why the Produttori's regular Barbaresco should become Piedmont's next essential collectible

The reawakening of traditionalism in Piemonte over the past two decades has revealed many truths. Truth #1 is that while modernism produced a number of fine winemakers, none has surpassed the genius of such traditional giants as Giovanni Conterno, Bartolo Mascarello, Bruno Giacosa or Mauro Mascarello.

Truth #2 is that the modernist doctrine of short macerations and barrique aging has yet to produce Barolo or Barbaresco that will rival the best of the traditional school for purity of expression or longevity.

And we've learned other things, including that the **Produttori del Barbaresco's Single-Vineyard Riservas** stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the region's best.

But one truth has yet to be revealed: that the Produttori's Barbaresco *normale*—yes, the cuvée that can cost you little more than \$30 on release—is also one of Piemonte's great traditional wines. And with 20 or 30 years of age, its nobility is abundantly expressed.

Our Epiphany

Last fall we assembled a vertical tasting of 14 vintages of Produttori *normale*, from 1967 to 1999, organized in flights by decade.

The tasting provided one revelation after another. Not only did the wines of the '80s show that they had not yet peaked, the wines from the '70s were still in their prime, including the brilliant 1974. This 39-year-old wine probably cost \$4 on release, yet today it rivals just about anything made in Europe in 1974.

The tasting showed that the Barbaresco *normale* begs to be cellared like other great traditional Nebbiolos. But we were also left with questions, including how such a modestly priced wine can be as great as it is—and so close in quality to the *riservas*.

And so we went to our old friend, longtime Produttori *direttore*, Aldo Vacca. What we learned may surprise you.



The lineup of last fall's Produttori Normale tasting.

A Wealth of Great Vineyards

The key is the raw material. We all know that the nine *riservas*—made only in great vintages—come from iconic vineyards. But a full 70 to 80 percent of what goes into the regular Barbaresco comes from vineyards at the same level of quality.

Here's how the cuvée is created. In years in which the nine single-*cru* bottlings are made, a significant portion—forty percent—of the *normale* comes from the four *crus* in which Produttori members have the largest holdings: **Montestefano, Ovello, Pora and Rio Sordo**.

Another 30% comes from three renowned sites never bottled separately by the Produttori: **Basarin** and **San Cristoforo** in Neive and **Faset** in Barbaresco. These, too, are great vineyards; San Cristoforo produced one of Bruno Giacosa's earliest single-vineyard Barbarescos. The juice from these vineyards is a primary reason for the backbone, depth and character of the *normale*, regardless of the vintage.

The balance is made up of the other *crus*, including the famous **Gallina**. And each *cru* contributes its unique character to this wine's harmony.

What About the Non-Riserva Vintages?

In years when the single-vineyard wines are not made, the nine *crus* make up an average 60% of the *normale* blend. They are complemented by major contributions from Basarin, San Cristoforo and Faset, plus smaller amounts of other *crus*.

And to secure the quality of the blend, the Produttori typically declassifies about 20% of production, which goes into their Langhe Nebbiolo bottling. This ensures that only the finest juice goes into the flagship wine.

Winemaking

Throughout its history, the Barbaresco *normale* has been aged exclusively in *botti*, not barrique. Even today it spends 20-24 months in large barrels, ►

Why the Produttori's regular Barbaresco should become Piedmont's next essential collectible

► compared to three years decades ago.

Maceration on the skins also remains highly traditional. It had been as much as two months in the 1970s, and then dipped to 15 days between 1984 and 1986, but today is a relatively long three to five weeks.

The Riservas

At the beginning (from 1958 to 1966), the Produttori made no single-*cru* wines. This was a reflection of the times, when blending was considered the surest way to create a complete wine from Nebbiolo. In addition to the *normales* made in those years, we have seen blended *riservas* from 1959, 1961, 1962 and 1964.

But then in 1967, the Produttori joined the ranks of producers making single-vineyard wines. (These have always been *riservas*.) This is the history:

1967: Ovello, Rabajà, Pajé, Pora, Martinenga and Moccagatta

1970: Ovello, Rabajà, Pora and Moccagatta

1971/1974: Ovello, Rabajà, Pora, Montestefano and Moccagatta

1978/1979: Ovello, Rabajà, Pora, Montestefano, Moccagatta, Asili, Montefico, Rio Sordo

1982: Ovello, Rabajà, Pora, Montestefano, Moccagatta, Asili, Montefico, Pajé, Rio Sordo

These nine Riservas have been made 14 times since. But the *normale* has always

been the benchmark. In years of no single-vineyards, it has represented the very best of the Produttori's production. But even in years in which the *cru*s are made, the quality comes very close.

The *normale* represents something else important. It is the great surviving example of blended Barbaresco—a legacy of a noble, but endangered, philosophy.

This Offer

As the details above suggest, and our tasting last fall proved, the Produttori Barbaresco *normale* has always been built to age. And it is one of Barbaresco's greatest wines. Yet, it has been trapped in the shadow of the more prestigious Produttori *riserva* bottlings, as well as in the shadow of the Langhe's more famous producers.

In fact, it's really only a matter of time before the Produttori Barbaresco *normale* is collected and aged like the best of the the Langhe Old School. Which is just what it deserves.

The offer that follows is a unique opportunity to explore the history of this quintessential Barbaresco in vintages old and young, not only in bottle, but in prized larger formats. And all for a price that continues to be astonishingly low for what you get in the bottle.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|--|--------|--|--------|
| 2007 Produttori Barbaresco | 32.50 | 1990 Produttori Barbaresco N 1.5L | 235.00 | 1978 Produttori Barbaresco* N 1.5L | 250.00 |
| 2006 Produttori Barbaresco | 34.95 | 1990 Produttori Barbaresco | 110.00 | 1978 Produttori Barbaresco | 125.00 |
| 2004 Produttori Barbaresco* N | 49.95 | 1989 Produttori Barbaresco* N 1.5L | 250.00 | 1974 Produttori Barbaresco* N 1.5L | 195.00 |
| 2000 Produttori Barbaresco* N | 59.95 | 1986 Produttori Barbaresco N 3L | 395.00 | 1974 Produttori Barbaresco | 95.00 |
| 1999 Produttori Barbaresco N | 79.95 | 1986 Produttori Barbaresco | 95.00 | 1971 Produttori Barbaresco N 1.5L | 250.00 |
| 1998 Produttori Barbaresco | 69.95 | 1982 Produttori Barbaresco* N 1.5L | 275.00 | 1971 Produttori Barbaresco N 3L | 500.00 |
| 1997 Produttori Barbaresco* | 79.95 | 1982 Produttori Barbaresco | 135.00 | 1970 Produttori Barbaresco N | 95.00 |
| 1996 Produttori Barbaresco | 99.95 | 1979 Produttori Barbaresco* N 1.5L | 195.00 | 1967 Produttori Barbaresco | 125.00 |
| 1995 Produttori Barbaresco* | 79.95 | 1979 Produttori Barbaresco N | 95.00 | | |

A Madeira for TJ

The Rare Wine Co. Honors America's Earliest Wine Connoisseur with a Madeira Worthy of his Passion

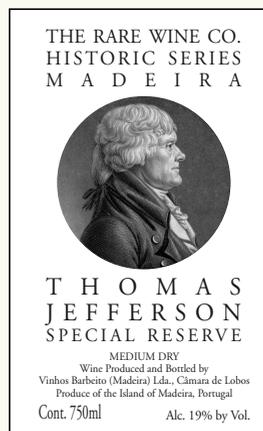
As an American, Thomas Jefferson had no peer in his appreciation of French wines. But that seed wasn't planted until he was in his forties, by which time he'd been passionate about Madeira for at least 20 years.

Born in 1743, Jefferson came of age at a time when Madeira was the king of wine in America—always present on affluent tables and ready to toast important events.

For years, we've wanted to honor Jefferson's love of Madeira with a commemorative bottling as part of our Historic Series. And in 2012, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation and Monticello agreed to collaborate with us on this project.

After more than a year's work—perfecting the blend and producing the wine—we launched it with a tasting and lecture at Monticello on October 9, 2013. Joining us was Ricardo Freitas, who'd masterfully blended the wine, and Monticello's resident wine historian, Gabriele Rausse.

The wine itself is a spectacular fusion of elegance and depth, and youth and antiquity. The oldest component in the blend is more than 80 years old, a fact



that Jefferson would undoubtedly have appreciated.

A Refined Choice

Like others of his time, Jefferson had his own Madeira preferences. While a student, he fell in love with a “recipe” for a particularly elegant Madeira he'd learned from the wife of his law school mentor. That recipe called for a blend of one-tenth “superfine Malmsey” with nine-tenths dry Madeira. Jefferson never lost his taste for what he came to call “silky Madeira.”

Decades later, he defined “silky” wines as having the taste of “dry wine dashed with a little sweetness, barely sensible to the palate: the silky Madeira we sometimes get in this country is made so by putting a small quantity of Malmsey into the dry Madeira.”

A Toast to TJ

Our Thomas Jefferson Special Reserve captures the spirit of this elegant style. The blend is sheer genius, with the 10% of Malmsey represented by a Favilla Vieira Malvasia believed to be at least 80 years old. ▶

Jefferson's Madeiras: The Holy Grail

Americans consider any article owned by Thomas Jefferson to be nearly sacred, and this extends to wine. But since Jefferson's death in 1826, only a few “Jefferson” Madeiras are known to have surfaced, always bringing high prices at auction.

The earliest sighting of a Madeira supposedly owned by Jefferson belonged to an Alexandria, VA, tavern owner John Gadsby. These were auctioned in 1839, and then subsequently in 1843 and 1845.

In 1852, a demijohn of Thomas Jefferson-owned Madeira was among the prized lots in the famous Josiah Lee sale in Baltimore. These were purchased by the descendents of the Revolutionary hero John Eager Howard and remained in

that family for at least another four decades.

And finally, there's the 1800 “Jefferson” Madeira acquired by the great Baltimore connoisseur Douglas H. Thomas in 1890. In 1896, Thomas gifted a bottle to President Grover Cleveland, as thanks for having “perpetuated Jeffersonian democracy.”

For all of these Madeiras, actual ties to Thomas Jefferson are as yet unproven. But Aaron Nix-Gomez is doing the best original research we've seen on Jefferson and Madeira. Look for an in-depth article soon on his blog, hogshead-wine.com. Our thanks to Aaron for his help with our own research.

A Wonderful New Madeira Honoring Jefferson

Madeira | 7

► For the first release, fewer than 100 cases were made, of which about one-third were set aside for Monticello.

Passionate Connoisseur

As President, Jefferson ordered (in barrel) the equivalent of more than 3500 bottles of Madeira for the White House cellar over the first three years of his presidency. These were supplied by Thomas Newton of Norfolk, Virginia. Newton recommended them to Jefferson as "Brasil Quality ... superior to any other."

Jefferson loved the Brasil Madeira, reordering it on a regular basis. But on one occasion Newton was able to supply only "good" rather than "superior" quality as the latter was already spoken for.

Jefferson took Newton up on his offer of a yearly allocation of the "superior" shipped directly from the island. And when American Minister to France in the 1780s, Jefferson asked that his Madeira be shipped via the U.S. rather than risk getting Madeira of questionable quality on the Continent. Jefferson was not

only the foremost American wine enthusiast of his time, he was also its savviest. The Thomas Jefferson Special Reserve is a fitting tribute to a towering American, both as statesman and wine connoisseur. We are pleased and honored to be able to offer it.

Thomas Jefferson Special Reserve Madeira The Rare Wine Co.

\$64.95 bottle

This quintessentially refined Madeira is a fitting tribute to America's first wine connoisseur. Modeled after the "silky" style of Madeira Jefferson prized, the wine's very slight sweetness is perfectly balanced by brisk acidity. And its soft, nutty flavors are enriched by the spiced cake nuance of an ancient Malmsey sourced from the Favilla Vieira family. Another masterpiece by Ricardo Freitas and essential for not only Madeira lovers but history lovers as well.

2009 Sammarco at an Unbelievably Low Price "A Dazzling Effort ... 95 points" Galloni

When Sassicaia "arrived" in the 1970s, it spawned three other important Tuscan Cabernets, each with close ties to Sassicaia and/or its owner Marchese Incisa della Rocchetta. These wines were Solaia, Ornellaia and Sammarco.

The first two have long been famous. But Sammarco is only now getting the respect it has deserved since its first vintage in 1980. And for the long-overdue attention, we can thank Antonio Galloni.

Like Solaia, Sammarco was first made by the legendary Giacomo Tachis. But unlike Solaia, its style is more Bordeaux than Tuscan. In fact, it reminds many tasters of a fine red Graves.

Its unique style is a reflection of an extraordinary *terroir*: the Conca d'Oro vineyard with its amphitheatre-like contours and galestro soil.

The 2009 is a showstopper. We're pleased to offer it at what we believe to be the lowest price in America.

2009 Sammarco* Castello dei Rampolla 95 Galloni

\$64.50 bt. **\$375** 6-pack



Antonio Galloni: "Layered and expressive ... Grilled herbs, tar, licorice, black cherries and currants meld together in these seamless, voluptuous wine. I don't think I have ever tasted such a succulent, young Sammarco that delivers so much pleasure at this early stage ... a dazzling effort."

A Prestige Champagne Giveaway

2000 Billecart Nicolas-François at \$89.95

Billecart-Salmon's great 2000 Cuvée Nicolas-François, is widely regarded as one of the top Champagnes of the vintage. With prestige Champagne prices in a steep ascent, it seems improbable that you can buy a blue chip like this for under \$100. But we are pleased to offer a small stock at an astonishing \$89.95.

A Noble Lineage

Nicolas-François—with its hedonistic, yet remarkably precise, style—could be the least-well-known of the great prestige cuvées. It is that anonymity that reminds us so much of how little-known Philipponnat's Clos des Goisses was a decade ago.

And, like Clos des Goisses, Nicolas-François's credentials are impeccable. Its 1959 and 1961 vintages placed first and second among 150 of the greatest 20th-century Champagnes in Richard Juhlin's 1999 Millennium Tasting.

Nicolas-François' transcendent quality is emblematic of the exacting standards of the Billecart family, which has been making wine since 1818. The key to their approach is a very cold, very long fermentation—a method they pioneered—which amplifies the aromatics and gives its Champagnes their unmistakable refinement.

Created in 1955 to honor the house's founder, Nicolas-François is an all-grand-cru blend of 60% Pinot Noir from the Montagne de Reims and 40% Chardonnay from the Côte des Blancs. It is partially fermented in used Burgundy barrels and undergoes extended aging on the lees, giving it even more richness and complexity.

This is an uncommon opportunity to buy an even more uncommon bargain.

**2000 Billecart-Salmon
Cuvée Nicolas-François**

95 Juhlin 94 Galloni

\$89.95 *bt.* \$530 6-pack



Richard Juhlin: "Right from the start one of the most impressive champagnes from this harvest. So charming, fresh and luxuriously inspiring."

Antonio Galloni: "... impresses for its sheer purity and focus. Nothing is out of place in this beautifully delineated, precise wine. Cool, minty notes add lift, yet the 2000 is rather reticent at this stage and appears to need further bottle age. Still, its textural finesse is impossible to miss."

THE RARE WINE CO.

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