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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

- PA 2002 AMIOT
- LULU ON FINESSE
- DOMAINE JOGUET
- NEW MONTLOUIS FIND

OPEN • TUESDAY-SATURDAY 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. CLOSED • SUNDAY & MONDAY

FEBRUARY 2004

NEW WHITES: VINTAGE 2002

2002 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE BLANC “LA CRAU”

DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

I have a strong positive reaction to VT’s 2002 white. In fact, it is one of my favorites from them, and that may be because it is quite Burgundian in terms of balance, weight, and dryness. It has a nice stony grain and the word finesse applies to it, which is usually more applicable to white Burgundy than to southern whites. Of course the flavors are not Burgundian. So this is perfect for white Burgundy fans when they are serving Mediterranean-style cuisine.

\$40.00 PER BOTTLE **\$432.00** PER CASE

2002 MONTLOUIS “LES LUMENS” DOMAINE ALEX MATHUR

How nice to introduce a new domaine with such a stellar vintage. The wine really shows its stuff!

Consider this, however. Do you know what I mean when I say that a lot of wines these days seem to go over the top trying to attract your attention? The Pamela Anderson syndrome. Our new Montlouis seems calm and calming, relaxed and relaxing. Not garish. Not blaring. I almost called it ingratiating, but that implies intent. This easy-to-like white draws you in not by insisting, but serenely, by seduction.

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE **\$161.46** PER CASE

2002 RIESLING D’EPIFIG ANDRÉ OSTERTAG

A lovely freshness from start to finish and a broad, round, supple, ample palate. I notice a little fig and clove-like perfume in the aftertaste, which is a nice addition to the typical Riesling character.

\$18.50 PER BOTTLE **\$199.80** PER CASE



SOUTHWESTERN REDS

2001 IROULÉGUY DOMAINE ETXEGARAYA

Ear-rule-ay-ghee / etch-uh-guh-rye-uh. Sort of.

A good place to drink this one is at the *Hôtel les Pyrénées* in St. Jean Pied de Port. Basque cuisine: smoked trout from the river down the street, a platter of Spain's best ham, *pata negra*, lamb from the Pyrénées mountains (which loom right out the window), and then slices of Brebis cheese are served with the hotel's own black cherry jam. Mmm.

Our wine is 60% Tannat, the rest Cabernet Sauvignon and Franc. The 2001 is a dark one and the aroma complex: smoky with ripe blackberry fruit and a nice earthy note to keep it interesting. The palate is rich with just the right tannic structure. Given the intensity of it all, it is still rather ethereal.

Another good place to enjoy it, closer to home: Gérard Hirigoyen's *Piperade* restaurant in San Francisco, 415-391-2555.

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE **\$161.46** PER CASE

2001 CAHORS • CLOS LA COUTALE

This beautifully colored Coutale will show you much the same style and character you have experienced in the 2001 Rhône reds. It seems to contain a bunch of every good thing you can possibly imagine on a very large scale. Wow!

\$11.50 PER BOTTLE **\$124.20** PER CASE

2000 MADIRAN • CHÂTEAU DE PERRON

If you go to the southwest of France where the scenery is so lovely, watch out for gizzards and giblets and kidneys and all that kind of stuff. It is difficult to order even a salad that won't appear with foie gras or something on it. Delicate he-men like me get our fill pretty quickly. Twice will suffice. Luckily there is a regional antidote called Madiran. No prescription necessary. Our 2000 is black and tannic and that bracing tannin will foil any innard attack. (Locals finish with a few Armagnacs, just to be sure.)

This is a good-sized, intensely flavored, Bordeaux-like red, and you get a lot of wine for your money. Innards aren't necessary; serve it as if it were a big vintage Pauillac.

\$12.00 PER BOTTLE **\$129.60** PER CASE

BURGUNDY

2002 MÂCON FARGES • HENRI PERRUSSET

Vintage 2002 is a great one at Perrusset's, and you will see a staff favorite (meaning we almost all of us drink the stuff often) in its finest incarnation so far.

Aristocratic posture. *Droit*, firm, full, strong, long, complete, and deliciously flavored.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE **\$172.80** PER CASE

2002 BOURGOGNE ROUGE "LA DIGOINE" A. & P. DE VILLAINÉ

Recent vintages have disappeared so quickly, is it worth even announcing the arrival of the 2002? It is as if La Digoine had achieved the title of Finest Bourgogne Rouge Money Can Buy.

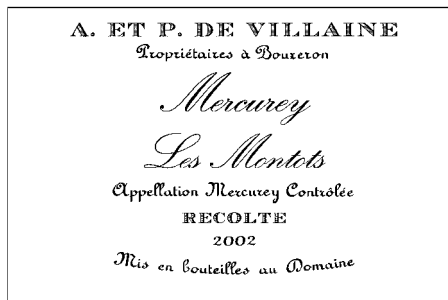
In this particular version, 2002, what you see at first glance is dazzling, the Pinot fruit so lovely, and what you don't see right off the bat, the under-the-surface stuff that makes us finally love whatever we are attracted to, you will enjoy that experience, too. It's like a great one-night stand and you end up asking her hand in marriage.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE **\$302.40** PER CASE

2002 MERCUREY ROUGE "LES MONTOTS" A. & P. DE VILLAINÉ

Intense, firm, tannic, a wild beauty that is going to be even better if you can resist it for five or six years. There is a lot of Pinot and a lot of Noir in this Pinot Noir.

\$31.00 PER BOTTLE **\$334.80** PER CASE



— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2002 DOMAINE GUY AMIOT & FILS

TWO THOUSAND AND TWO white Burgundy will go down as one of the most successful vintages of recent years. Not only is quality high: it is also consistent. And it is consistent both geographically . . . and hierarchically. There are delicious wines at the generic (Bourgogne Blanc) level as well as among the grands crus. This is the sign of a fine vintage.

The yield in the top domaines was not excessive, hence a vintage of concentration as well as substance. The fruit is delightfully ripe without any hint of over-maturity. The wines have grip and backbone. Acidities are good without being excessive. All this adds up to wines of harmony as well as attraction, and wines which should last well. . . . Meanwhile prices are stable at source, though the weakness of the dollar and the strength of the euro, with the pound somewhere between, will affect prices at the retail level. The market is quiet. So this is a good time to stock up.

—CLIVE COATES, *THE VINE*

Clive Coates gave Amiot's 2002s excellent notes, for example the Saint Aubin: "Lovely nose. Pure and concentrated. Stylish and complex. Quite full-bodied. Lots of depth. Very good grip. Even intense. Lovely fruit. Very good indeed. From 2007."

	PER CASE
2002 BOURGOGNE GRAND ORDINAIRE BLANC	\$150.00
2002 SAINT-AUBIN "EN REMILLY"	438.00
2002 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET	450.00
2002 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET "LES MACHERELLES"	561.00
2002 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET "LES CHAMPAINS"	597.00
2002 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET "LES VERGERS"	657.00
2002 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET "LES BAUDINES"	597.00
2002 CHASSAGNE-MONTRACHET "LES CAILLERETS"	657.00
2002 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET "LES DEMOISELLES"	1,044.00
2002 LE MONTRACHET	4,281.00

*Pre-arrival terms: Half-payment due with order,
balance due upon arrival.*



— NEW ARRIVALS —

DOMAINE CHARLES JOGUET

WHY ALL THE GOSSIP and misinformation about Domaine Joguet? One writer even reported a rumor that Charles Joguet was forced out of his own domaine by an unscrupulous businessman. I keep in touch with Charles since he retired from wine to live full time in Paris, and had not heard any complaints from him, but I phoned him anyway to see if there was any truth to the story. None at all, he said. On the contrary, he still keeps a place to stay there at the domaine, is on good terms with the staff (who worked with him for as long as twenty years before taking over), has a good retirement, and he cannot understand where all the curious stories come from. A back-biting competitor, perhaps?

The last time I stopped in Paris, I visited Charles at his art studio and looked at his new work. Then he uncorked an old Vouvray while we chatted. At dinner with his wife, Monique, he asked what I thought of the quality of the wines at the domaine since his departure. One of France's wine critics had loudly lamented a fall in quality. But Charles and his wife agreed with me, yes, agreed with me when I said that the overall quality is now actually higher, certainly more consistent. The cuvées Terroir, La Cure, Varennes, and Petites Roches have never been better. We'll see how the Dioterie turns out in the superb vintages 2002 and 2003. Will they match the unforgettable and still vibrant 1983 and 1976 made by Charles? Then the picture will be more complete.



CHINON

APPELLATION CHINON CONTRÔLÉE

CUVÉE DE LA CURE

Mis en bouteilles 2002 à la propriété

This is not the first time I have heard such rumors about a top domaine after a changeover. When François Raveneau and Lucien Peyraud finally completely retired (both in the early nineties), there were claims that the quality suffered, but no one knew that Jean-Marie Raveneau had taken over the vinification well before that, in 1973, to be precise. And Jean-Marie Peyraud, same story, only he took over the Tempier cellar in 1974. Buzzards beware: Jean-Marie made the great 1975, 1979, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1989, and 1990, not Lucien.

Domaine Joguet is still the pick of the bunch at Chinon, and, more than ever, converting newcomers to the appellation. The cuvée Terroir has been so irresistible the past few years, for example, it is like a beacon to the wines of Chinon. What has changed is that Domaine Joguet's is no longer the only good Chinon. But Charles launched the revolution. He was the pioneer.

Joguet's staff learned from him, took over (thank goodness) when he'd had enough, and have added even more charm and deliciousness to the wines. It hurts to see good guys suffer malicious gossip.

You can read what Charles has to say at www.charlesjoguet.com.

Their 2002s are brimming over the top with pleasure. We have an impressive collection now in stock:

2002 CHINON "CUVÉE TERROIR"

Exquisite perfume, delicate and complex, and it is for immediate gratification. I selected several barrels for our unfiltered bottling.

\$15.00 PER BOTTLE **\$162.00** PER CASE

2002 CHINON "LES PETITES ROCHES"

I like the domaine's notes: "From our best gravelly parcels, this is a denser wine. Very ripe red fruits dominate the aroma, and already one perceives some typical animal notes in this full-bodied wine. A cuvée *très gourmand* with lots of vinosity that could age for a few years."

\$17.50 PER BOTTLE **\$189.00** PER CASE

2002 CHINON "CUVÉE DE LA CURE"

A wine typically Joguet with a deep color, fruits both red and black, good bright flavors, and a remarkable texture with excellent tannins.

\$19.00 PER BOTTLE **\$205.20** PER CASE

FINESSE

I WROTE TO Lulu Peyraud and asked her to define finesse because it is highly valued in French wine circles but not well understood over here. I had trouble understanding Lulu's response until I realized that she was defining finesse in human rather than wine terms:

Finesse is the opposite of coarseness or crudeness. It is a light touch as opposed to heavy-handedness. It is spirituality, subtlety, and intelligence, from which comes an aptitude for knowledge and deeper understanding. It is also a matter of sensibility, of perceptiveness combined with a great deal of delicacy in regard to emotions and feelings.

To understand finesse in a wine, think of it as an ethereal quality that can apply to light or full-bodied wines. In terms of aesthetic pleasure, it is better to have a big wine with finesse than one lacking it.

France's greatest gifts to the wine world may be the concepts of finesse and *terroir*.



Lulu and Lucien Peyraud, 50th wedding anniversary party

— BACK IN STOCK —

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2001 BARBERA D'ALBA • GUIDO PORRO	\$12.50	\$135.00
2001 LIRAC ROUGE • DOMAINE DU JONCIER	16.00	172.80
2001 BEAUMES-DE-VENISE ROUGE DOMAINE DE DURBAN	16.00	172.80
