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NEW ALSATIAN DOMAINE

OPEN • TUESDAY–SATURDAY 11 A.M. TO 6 P.M. CLOSED • SUNDAY & MONDAY

FEBRUARY 2007

INTRODUCING DOMAINE MEYER-FONNÉ

WHEN WORD GOT AROUND Alsace that I was no longer importing Zind-Humbrecht's wines, samples started pouring in from other domaines. Maybe I was a little spoiled by the quality of Humbrecht's selections, and by André Ostertag's, too, because I found myself rejecting a lot of above-average wines. Second best was not what I was waiting for.

Then, one day at my place in the south of France, in the company of Domaine Tempier's Daniel Ravier, I was tasting through an assortment of samples from all



over the country. We lowered our noses into glasses of a Pinot Blanc. *Hmm, old vines, who's that? Meyer-Fon . . .* We looked up at each other, eyes widening. *HEY, that smells great. Wow, the stuff wine dreams are made of.* We continued through the domaine's samples with huge smiles and oohs and aahs, enjoying that rare thrill of recognition that you experience when you discover something crucial in your glass.

Not long after that, there I was in Katzenthal near Ammerschwihr, tasting with Monsieur Meyer: impeccable vinification, purity of expression, depths of interest, a strong sense of *terroir*, stylishness, class, and pure hedonistic pleasure, too.

Grosse tête is French for egotistical, blinded by self-importance, conceited. Félix Meyer is the opposite of a *grosse tête*. He still has humility, still has a sense of wonder, and is still capable of self-criticism. He is a seeker and a perfectionist.

Quantities are limited because while he makes several different cuvées, the domaine has only eleven hectares of vines.

He is a terroirist, and when he speaks of a granitic soil, the wine in your glass tastes of it.

Here are my notes on some of our first arrivals. Let's hope you will share the same sense of excitement I feel.

2005 PINOT GRIS "RÉSERVE PARTICULIÈRE"

Half of it comes from *grand cru* vineyards. Burnt stone, smoke; powerful and loaded with fine flavors.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE

\$237.60 PER CASE

2005 RIESLING GRAND CRU
“WINECK-SCHLOSSBERG”

You won't need to be told that the vineyard is steep and south-facing. You'll sense it in the wine. This is not a fruity style. The Riesling serves as a vehicle to express the minerality.

\$33.00 PER BOTTLE **\$356.40 PER CASE**

2005 RIESLING “KATZENTHAL”

Decomposed granite, and there it is. Zing! You have a remarkable delicacy on top of a solid granite core.

\$23.00 PER BOTTLE **\$248.40 PER CASE**

2005 RIESLING “PFOELLER”

From chalky soil this time. Malo completed. A generous, broad, deep palate that you can tell will explode with flavor in a year or two.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE **\$345.60 PER CASE**

2005 GEWURZTRAMINER
“DORFBURG” VIEILLES VIGNES

Majestic, expansive varietal aroma. Full-bodied, loaded with flavor. Then, at the end, the minerality emerges and shines, lingering brightly.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE **\$378.00 PER CASE**

2005 GEWURZTRAMINER GRAND CRU
“WINECK-SCHLOSSBERG”

The *grand cru* gives us the most elegant of his Gewurztraminers. From mostly old vines on the steep granite slope, it is a jewel-like wine. It is fascinating to contemplate the details as you enjoy tasting it.

\$39.00 PER BOTTLE **\$421.20 PER CASE**

2005 MUSCAT “KATZENTHAL”

Fine, discreet bouquet, and it whispers a gorgeous melody. The delicate, delicious perfume reappears on the palate, and you’ll be glad it does. Lovely as an apéritif or with cheeses, I urge you to try this Muscat because it creates such a magical experience.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE **\$215.46** PER CASE

2004 PINOT BLANC *VIEILLES VIGNES*

At my place I babied this along over three days and watched it improve! Quite a creation, because the grapes were so ripe and botrytised. It is ample on the palate with a perfect acidity tucked into the fleshy body. It might be mistaken for a Pinot Gris. This is the wine that opened my eyes and prompted my trip to Katzenthal.

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

2005 PINOT GRIS “HINTERBURG DE KATZENTHAL”

Very stony soil of decomposed granite. Steep, east-facing slope. Great smoky, grilled stone nose with honey. Opulence and elegance. And then comes that intense, minerally, peaty, almost bitter finish typical of great Pinot Gris.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE **\$313.20** PER CASE

2004 GEWURZTRAMINER *GRAND CRU* “WINECK-SCHLOSSBERG” *VENDANGE TARDIVE*

Fifty-year-old vines late harvested with plenty of noble rot. Rose petal, mineral, really a little cosmos of complexity. Length, class, intensity. So rich, so ethereal.

\$45.00 PER 500-ML BOTTLE **\$486.00** PER CASE OF 12



2004 **RIESLING GRAND CRU**
“WINECK-SCHLOSSBERG”
SÉLECTION DE GRAINS NOBLES

Aromatically, this is beyond any varietal character. It has such a peaty, smoky quality, it could be taken for a Pinot Gris. Noble rot and granite dominate the fruit. Meyer could not even make a *trie*, a selection harvesting, because the individual grapes were so shriveled and hidden in noble mold.

The palate, yeah, sort of Riesling-ish. It is not completely opened up yet, of course, but already it acts wild, banging on the bars to get out.

You have here a time bomb of an SGN that will deliver something unusual. Meyer says none of his friends had ever experienced or witnessed such an enormous attack of botrytis.

\$74.00 PER 500-ML BOTTLE

\$799.20 PER CASE OF 12

BACK IN STOCK

Some of your favorites are available again.

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2005 FLEURIE “LES MORIERS” • MICHEL CHIGNARD . . .	\$22.00	\$237.60
2004 VIN DE TABLE <i>ROUGE</i> • DOMAINE LECCIA	19.95	215.46
NV MANZANILLA • LA GUITA	12.00	129.60
NV MANZANILLA • LA GUITA <i>TENTH</i>	6.25	135.00



—NEW ARRIVALS—

SOUTHERN FRANCE

2005 CUVÉE SAINTE AGNÈS BLANC DOMAINE ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

This is a stylish blend of Marsanne, Roussanne, Clairette, Grenache *blanc* and *gris*, with an appetizing dollop of Viognier to top it off. Dixon Brooke calls the lovely aroma “Meursault-like, stony and precise under a veil of honey.”

The palate is rounded, with suggestions of peach, pear, and apricot, some chalkiness, and a nudgin of oak.

\$18.00 PER BOTTLE **\$194.40** PER CASE

2004 LES SERROTTES LA GRANGE DE QUATRE SOUS

Demand for Grange’s wine has heated up, so give the 2004s a try while you can. You will understand why this Syrah/Malbec blend would be a crowd pleaser. It is ultra-suave with lovely depths to explore. The nose has exquisite, brambly blackberry fruits, then the wine ends with a marvelous tannin without any harshness to it.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE **\$216.00** PER CASE

2004 CUVÉE SAINT MARTIN CHÂTEAU SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE

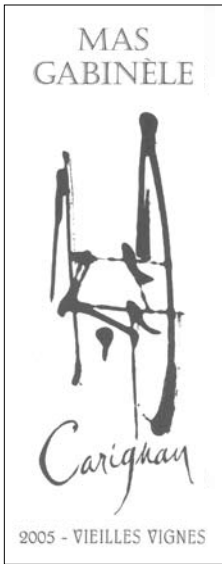
This is Saint Martin’s most expensive wine, their so-called luxury cuvée, but unlike most of the special cuvées from around the world, it is not inkier, oakier, and heavier than their other wines. Nor is it more alcoholic. *Mon dieu!*

It is finer than their other cuvées, a bottling from their best vines, Syrah, Carignan, Mourvèdre, and Grenache, barrel-aged, unfiltered.

“Barrel-aged but not oaky?” you ask. The winemaker explains that it is a question of *terroir*, as in Burgundy where a Bourgogne in new oak turns out too oaky, but a *grand cru* handles it very well.

You might find such things as spices, truffles, *réglisse*, coffee bean, grilled almond, and orange peel bouncing around in it.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE **\$216.00** PER CASE



2005 **CARIGNAN**
“**VIEILLES VIGNES**”
MAS GABINÈLE

Mas Gabinèle is a new find. We offered their 2003 Fau-gères in December.

Sylvain Fadat at Domaine d’Aupilhac taught me to love Carignan (when properly handled) and then I discovered that another longtime favorite of mine, Fontsaïnte’s cuvée La Demoiselle, is 90% Carignan. Now try number three.

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE **\$204.66** PER CASE

2005 **ROZETA • MAXIME MAGNON**

Music and wine are two of my passions, so when I tasted this stunning beauty from the Corbières (it is a red wine)

I couldn’t help but break into song, namely “Rosetta” by Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. At two minutes fifteen seconds it ain’t symphonic, but it sure is catchy, just like the wine. The bottle seems to drain more quickly than others, so you might program your compilation CD like this: Bob Wills’ “Rosetta” followed by Hank Williams’ “My Bucket’s Got a Hole In It.”

If Jean Foillard had a vineyard in the south of France, I expect his wine would taste like Rozeta.

\$16.95 PER BOTTLE **\$183.06** PER CASE

2005 **MUSCAT DE BEAUMES-DE-VENISE**
DOMAINE DE DURBAN

1. It makes a lovely apéritif all by itself.
2. A few tenths forgotten for a few years will turn into a very different and always satisfying sort of wine.
3. During the summer months, you’ll want some handy to pour into fresh fruit salads.
4. Guests are always amazed to discover Durban’s Muscat.

\$16.95 PER TENTH **\$366.12** PER CASE

The following appreciation appeared in the French publication Bourgogne Aujourd'hui, vol. 72.

DOMAINE A. ET. P. DE VILLAINÉ

ALIGOTÉ'S REVENGE

In Bouzeron, no matter what the rest of Burgundy is doing, Aligoté occupies the place of honor. Aubert de Villaine and his wife, Pamela, are showcasing the unsuspected potential of the varietal in this terroir.

Aligoté does not always find favor in the eyes of lovers of Burgundy's great white wines. Normally this is justified. *Bourgogne Aligoté* is often harsh, vegetal, and undignified. It stands to reason that it is the traditional base for a kir cocktail. The great terroirs have been conquered by Chardonnay (although even now Aligoté vines can be found in certain highly regarded corners of the Côte de Beaune). But in 1998 Bouzeron in the Côte Chalonnaise staked its reputation on the Aligoté grape. This "anomaly" owes its existence largely to the efforts of Pamela and Aubert de Villaine. Wine lovers will recognize de Villaine as one of the directors of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. This tasting of fifteen vintages is a testimonial to the work he has put in to the Bouzeron appellation since 1971. It is an expression of his authentic passion for wine, played out in a terroir much less renowned than that of Burgundy's—if not the world's—most famous domaine. At Bouzeron 10 of de Villaine's 21 hectares are planted in Aligoté. The vines are cared for organically, and are planted on the upper slopes above the village. Here, the meager soil acts in combination with *gobelet* pruning to curb the varietal's vigorous nature. "Aligoté tends to be vivacious, fresh, and pure. In Bouzeron, it sets itself apart with an additional richness and finesse. But you mustn't simply imitate Chardonnay," de Villaine admits. The relatively short aging is done in *foudres* and in *caves*, so there is no oak flavor imparted.

THE TASTING:

2003: Typical of the vintage, the nose is expressive—melon, white peach, fresh grape. The palate is noticeably closed, but this is certainly temporary. Re-visit in four or five years.

2002: The robe is that of a young wine. Great complexity on the nose with citrus (orange peel) and mineral notes. The palate is lively, with only a hint of richness. An austere and taut wine, but with great purity.

2000: Straw-golden robe. Aromas of dried fruit, honey, and *mousseron* ("fairy-ring mushroom"). Dense on the palate with a mineral backbone that carries it well. Would be interesting to go back six years to see how it began to evolve. Ready to drink.

1998: The purity remains, but there is also a great smoothness (buttery aromas). The palate is finely chiseled and assertive, with a polished feel. In evolution, but also in balance.

1997: The robe has a brilliant golden glow. *Fruits confits*, honey, a touch of dried herbs on the nose. The palate is harmonious and silky-smooth, with a fine length. Very pleasurable.

1996: A baffling wine. In the glass it appears incredibly young. The nose is nearer to a Riesling than to any Burgundy varietal. Great minerality on the palate. On the whole, serious and austere.

1995: Remarkable aromatic complexity: ripe fruit (notably pear) and honey. It is both bracing and rich on the palate, with a medium finish. Enjoy it sooner than later.

1994: The intensity of the color is slightly less here, but this product of an otherwise average vintage is not in the least fatigued. It has a pleasant delicacy, purity, and polish in the mouth. Overall, an impression of freshness.

1992: What class! Here the varietal has been quite simply transcended. The nose is airy, with notes of beeswax and honey, but with nothing heavy. On the palate it is fleshy, subtle, and complete.

1989: Another sweetheart! The robe is a superb gold. Simply put, the nose evokes a great Chardonnay in its finest hour: toasted notes, dried fruits, brioche. It is incredibly rich on the palate, but held firmly together by its minerality. A great wine.

1988: 1989 was a tough year to follow. This wine plays more in the key of finesse than power. It is still young and fresh. A pleasant, light-bodied wine with some acid, but not too much.

1987: The nose combines minerality with petrol notes. It's like lace on the palate, with a fine freshness. Once again the youthfulness of this wine (it's 20 years old!) surprises.

1985: The bottle I tasted has the distinction of having aged in the cellar of a Parisian retail client. The travel and the storage haven't diminished it one bit. Fine nose with notes of brioche. A certain rigidity in the mouth but surrounded by richness. Great wine.

1984: This is the first time during the tasting that a wine has shown evidence of advanced age. There are some *rancio* notes, but the wine is still pleasant on the palate.

1983: The youthful quality of this wine is once again surprising. This vintage, remarkable for its noble rot, was atypical in Burgundy. Even so, this wine remains fresh, taut, and harmonious. It is characterized by a certain fullness.

— NOW IN STOCK —

2005 **BOUZERON ALIGOTÉ**
A. & P. DE VILLAINÉ

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE

BURGUNDY

2005 MÂCON-VILLAGES • HENRI PERRUSSET

Dixon Brooke of our Beaune office along with Henri Perrusset and the 2005 vintage joined forces to create this beauty, in my opinion the best Mâcon-Villages so far from Perrusset. Precocious bouquet with honey, peach, and floral notes. It is fleshy yet seems light on its feet. Flavorful, ripe, dry Chardonnay, made for pleasure.

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

2004 BOURGOGNE ROUGE • PIERRE BOILLOT

A Pinot Noir with a touch of honeysuckle? Well, sort of, maybe. The wine makes an impression, then grows on you more and more as you get into it. Once you taste it, the price seems like a stroke of luck.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE **\$237.60** PER CASE

2004 SAVIGNY-LES-BEAUNE PREMIER CRU LES SERPENTIÈRES • DOMAINE GUILLEMOT

The red currants and raspberries are not shy, and there is a sort of leathery, spicy something or other, too. It is elegantly rustic, focused, and coiled, you might say (pun intended). Good freshness, good backbone, a marvelous, friendly texture, and a stony Pinot finish. Drink over the next decade.

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE **\$388.80** PER CASE

2004 CHAMBOLLE-MUSIGNY PREMIER CRU DOMAINE BERTHEAU

I see a great leap forward now that the son has assumed the winemaker post chez Bertheau, and I was happy to see that Claude Kolm in issue #114 of his *Fine Wine Review* (out of San Francisco) had the same impression. This is classic Chambolle-Musigny, just like the wine books say it is supposed to be.

Do not ignore it because the name of the *premier cru* is not on the label. Bertheau prefers to blend four *premier cru* parcels into one bottling: Groseilles, Gruenchers, Noirots, and Baudes.

Seductive, soothing, luxurious, and exciting to taste. In fact, our Ashley Hall calls Bertheau's 2004s "the sexiest wines alive." What might she mean?

\$75.00 PER BOTTLE **\$810.00** PER CASE

VALUE OF THE MONTH: WHITE

2005 ALSACE BLANC • KUENTZ-BAS

Prepare to be amazed, because the rapport between quality and price here is unbeatable. The only dry white competitor I can think of is our Bordeaux *Blanc* from Hervé Dubourdieu at Château Ducasse.

Purity, freshness, and charm. Those are the first impressions. While generously aromatic, it delivers its Alsatian character with delicacy. The vinification and blending of the numerous Alsatian grape varieties are masterful.

The palate is round, flavorful, and dry. It shows the charm and harmony of the 2005 vintage, and the floral, fruity qualities typical of the region.

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

VALUE OF THE MONTH: RED

2004 BOURGUEIL “BEAUVAIS” DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE

For centuries “Le Beauvais” has been cited as one of Bourgueil’s greatest vineyards. It is up on the limestone (*les tufs*) slopes above Benais. And according to an old book on Loire wines, even in the 1950s Chanteleuserie was considered one of Bourgueil’s top sources.

Weighing in at 100% Cabernet Franc, the 2004 shows a lovely deep color. While Bourgueil has always been notable for a raspberry-like fruit character, this year’s is more like fresh black cherry with a hint of mint and stoniness. Fairly full-bodied, tannic, and intense, I’ll bet it keeps evolving for several (eight to twelve) years. It is too chewy and tannic for fish, but roast a chicken, for example, or put together a *coq au vin*, grill some quail or sausages . . . the wine will show off its stuff.

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



MICHAEL BUTLER'S SWEETHEART SAMPLER

HERE IS A SELECTION of wines we put together expressly to share with your sweetie. I mean, for you to share with your sweetie. Don't forget, February 14th is coming up soon and no one wants to be without appropriate wine selections.

One highlight is Champalou's delicious sparkling Vouvray. I swear it is even more in the spirit of Valentine's Day than Champagne. More tender at heart. Celebrate with it or use it to start a special meal.

Oysters on the half shell? How about a crisp, invigorating, stimulating, organic Muscadet?

Then, from the beautiful island of Corsica (the French call it *l'Île de Beauté*) you can share the fabulous Vin de Table from Yves Leccia, a blend of Grenache and the island's own Nielluccio. This stuff is wild and dangerous.

Looking for a sweet wine to share with a sweetie pie? We have included one *half bottle* of the Muscat from Beaumes-de-Venise. We don't want you to drink *too* much.

NORMALLY

2004 ALSACE BLANC • KUENTZ-BAS	\$11.25
2005 MUSCADET • CHÂTEAU DE LA FESSARDIÈRE	12.95
2005 CHIGNIN BLANC • A. & M. QUENARD	14.95
NV VOUVRAY PÉTILLANT • DIDIER CHAMPALOU	18.00
2004 VIN DE TABLE ROUGE • DOMAINE LECCIA	19.95
2004 DOLCETTO "VIGNA I'PARI" • GUIDO PORRO	14.95
2004 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROUGE "CUVÉE TRADITION" SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE.	9.95
2003 CHINON "CUVÉE TERROIR" • DOMAINE CHARLES JOGUET	16.00
2004 CAIRANNE "CUVÉE LÉA FELSCH" DOMAINE CATHERINE LE GOEUIL	16.00
2005 LE PIGEOULET ROUGE • HENRI BRUNIER	14.00
2003 BANDOL ROUGE • DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE	25.00
2004 MUSCAT DE BEAUMES-DE-VENISE DOMAINE DE DURBAN TENTH.	16.00

(Normally \$189)

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE

\$151

(A 20% discount)
