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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER
2003 GIGONDAS
DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES

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

JULY 2005

BOUND FOR GLORY

2004 ROSÉ “AU PETIT BONHEUR” DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES

Au petit bonheur means something like “Here’s to the simple pleasures of life.”

This wine is actually a Gigondas rosé from a parcel of vines at Pallières that my partners, Daniel and Frédéric Brunier, thought might make us a good drinking rosé. Judge for thyself, please. Don’t take my word for it. After all, I might be prejudiced since it’s mine. I am also married to my wife, however, who consumes more rosé than anyone in the known world, and she approves of it. Her vote should count heavily.

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

2004 CALVI BLANC “E PROVE” DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

Superb aroma. Complex and minerally. Unusual and inviting. Spectacular palate. It drenches your taste buds in deliciousness. Dry, crisp, crystalline, with an extra-long finish. An absolute marvel!

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

2004 SAINT-CHINIAN ROSÉ MAS CHAMPART

The Champart’s rosé is always one of the best, and their 2004 does something that all rosés should strive for: it makes the inside of your mouth feel ultra-fresh. It’s like sparklers are going off. Remember the guys in *Sideways*? Didn’t you see a wine bottle on their bathroom sink? So I’m going to put a Champart rosé on mine and gargle with it every morning, you know, start each day with my mouth turned on.

The Champart’s 2004 also seems to be impeccable in every other way you can possibly imagine. Ten minutes later you can still feel a pleasant little peppery tingle, which we wine professionals refer to as an aftertaste.

Try sitting in your backyard some evening with a bottle of Champart in an ice bucket and listen to the birds singing in the trees.

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



THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

INTRODUCING three colorful new reds from the south of France that might lead you to believe that you can stop your damnable shopping around, because we can satisfy your needs, inexpensively if you like.

2003 CUVÉE RÉSERVÉE SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE

No, go ahead, shop around one last time. I want you to find an expensive Cabernet or Merlot (we don't stock any) and an expensive red Bordeaux (ours aren't expensive). You know, in the \$50- to \$200-per-bottle range. Blind taste them alongside this Saint Martin. Pick your favorite. This one might win. Then compare the price-to-quality ratio. Aha, gotcha! I think you will find that you don't always get what you pay for, and sometimes you get more.

\$11.50 PER BOTTLE \$124.20 PER CASE

2002 LES SERROTTE LA GRANGE DE QUATRE SOUS

Les Serrottes is an oak-aged blend of 60% Syrah and 40% Malbec. It is produced near Saint-Chinian, but because of the Malbec it cannot under French wine law call itself Saint-Chinian. So what? What matters is that it is quite a fine red, dry and elegant, stylish and original.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE \$215.46 PER CASE

2003 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE VILLAGES ROUGE DOMAINE SAINT LUC

Sometimes a few seemingly unrelated details can end up telling you more about a wine than an accounting of its berries and cherries. For example:

1. The winemaker's wife is a great Provençale cook. Imagine the hell to pay if he served a lousy wine next to her splendid cuisine.
2. This is the same winemaker that Patricia and Walter Wells selected to vinify their lovely Côtes-du-Rhône, Clos Chanteduc. Pat and Walter have good taste.
3. Michael Butler, he of KLWM fame, found Saint Luc for us a few years ago while touring France. If you don't at least try one, you might hurt his feelings. I know it hurts bad when you ignore my discoveries.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE \$135.00 PER CASE

— LOIRE —

**UNFINED, UNFILTERED,
UN-IRRIGATED**

**2003 CHINON “CLOS GUILLOT”
BERNARD BAUDRY**

Advice to everyone: 2003 is surely a great vintage for Chinon and Bourgueil, one that will be remembered for a long time. I have been buying there for thirty years, and have never seen anything comparable. It makes sense to buy a bunch for the future.

Baudry's Clos Guillot has good flesh, good depth, and a spicy complexity. It has a solid tannin to assure a beneficial evolution. Unfined, unfiltered. Drink now to 2010.

\$18.50 PER BOTTLE \$199.80 PER CASE

**2004 VOUVRAY “CUVÉE DES FONDRAUX”
DOMAINE CHAMPALOU**

What we see saturating the market today are hot-climate wines made possible by irrigation and temperature-controlled vats. I could go on. All vintages seem alike. But in French vineyards irrigation is illegal, and the country has an inconsistent climate, which means: vintage diversity! Hurrah hurrah. Diversity is not monotonous.

Vouvray's 2003s were from stressed grapes practically cooked on the vine by a killer heat wave, and remember, no irrigation. We enjoyed full-bodied, richly textured, luscious Vouvrays.

Vouvray 2004 is lighter, fresher, and livelier tasting. A bistro style. You drink them down with gusto without having to interrupt your conversation. Fun, delicious, exhilarating. A springtime bouquet with suggestions of quince and pear, a suspicion of sweetness that does not translate into heaviness. No, it seems more like a freshening than anything. A tender, supple finish and then the ripe perfume lingers on.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE \$172.80 PER CASE





— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2003 DOMAINE LES PALLIÈRES

AS IT HAPPENS, the taste of the 2003 Pallières is very fresh in my mind because I was at Pallières yesterday. We bottled the '03 one month ago, and it is tasting good.

Our 2003 might surprise you by its intensity, an intensity that came not from our vinification but from the grapes. They were few, sweet, and petite, and we wondered if the wild boars in the Pallières hills were going to leave us any. Wild boars are picky about what grapes they eat, and when the grapes are perfectly ripe, they strip the bunches clean, leaving nothing but the stems. Along with the boars and wine grapes, the hillsides also contain black truffles and wild thyme. Put 'em together and what do you get?

About the weather: 2002 in the region is historic. Right before the harvest, between Vaison-la-Romaine and Nîmes, a normal year's rainfall fell within 36 hours! Several people drowned. As for the harvest, a certain dilution resulted, to put it mildly, so we decided to sell off all our 2002 Pallières in bulk to *négociants*.

The summer of 2003 was also historic, but only up in the north. You may have read about the thousands of deaths in Paris during the incredible heat wave. Down at Pallières the weather was nothing but beautiful, nice and hot, but not deadly.

So the 2003 has more intensity than our other vintages, but when you stick your nose in the glass, the charm and character typical of Les Pallières come leaping out. I would say that vintage 2003 is all about the combination of intensity, depth, finesse, and the expression of the Pallières *terroir*.

PRE-ARRIVAL PRICE

\$276.00 PER CASE

(ALSO AVAILABLE IN TENTHS, MAGNUMS,
JEROBOAMS, AND METHUSELAHS)

*Pre-arrival terms: Minimum half-case orders.
Half-payment due with order, balance due upon arrival.*



REMEMBERING RICHARD

*by Aubert de Villaine
Bouzeron, France*

NOTHING MATERIAL that has been built during a lifetime: career, success, etc., truly counts: what counts is the good or the evil one has done to the spirit. Richard Olney died on July 31, 1999. His friends have not replaced him: who nowadays could bring to them and teach them, as he did, this quest for perfection that possessed him, this instinctive capacity he had to distinguish the beautiful from the mediocre, the true from the false, the sublime from the artificial? This admirable gift for concision, this determination to reach true simplicity—where sensuality is essential because what is beautiful also seduces . . . sensuality to which the monastic solitude of his life, installed in his house high up in Solliès-Toucas, made him even more sensitive.

Since his prime youth he had elected cooking and great French wines as two of the highest values of civilization, true expressions of the spirit. He chose to remain faithful to them all his life. He served them and respected them so much that he rejected strongly, sometimes violently, like a disappointed lover, everything that could make them common. France found in this American Epicurean the best champion of her most precious traditions. Richard Olney was one of these “guardians,” who know, who warn, who forever, even beyond their own life, continue to inspire.

HEART LAID BARE

*by Steve Edmunds
Edmunds St. John Winery*

BACK IN THE '50s, way back nearly halfway through the last century, on live TV, I watched one of the very first open-heart surgeries ever performed. I must have been all of ten or eleven, and it seemed like a miracle to me; I'd never before imagined what it might really look like inside the human body, and here it was, right before my eyes! Of course, the only thing you could really see was the heart itself, beating away. It was pretty mesmerizing, though, even on a black-and-white set.

And there must have been eight or ten people gathered around this person, making sure everything was going according to plan. I kept wondering what it must be like to be that person, whose heart was laid open to the world in such a manner. For most of us, our bodies just automatically do what they need to do to operate properly, and we can live “outside” of our own skins and not have to consider all the meat and bone, all the blood and ganglia. All the everyday miracles.

When I got interested in wine, only about a quarter of the way back through the last century, I did so because of the way I found that wine could open up my heart. I'm not sure that's the way I thought of it at the time; I just knew I'd had some kind of profound experience that changed the way all my molecules were arranged, the kind of experience that can't be ignored. I knew, as well, that it might take the rest of my life to be able to find the explanation for what had occurred down at ground zero in my nervous system. I've been working on it ever since, and though I'm sure I still don't have it all figured out yet, I regard the fact that I still feel so compelled to think about it as a good sign.

Part of the reason I'm still compelled to think about it is that the experience continues to occur; for example, when I taste a wine like Philippe Faury's Saint Joseph, with its textbook rendition of suave Syrah fruit and smoke and that spine-tingling perfume of tender berries and violets, I feel a whisper of wildness in it, that presence of not just the human endeavour in that place, and that year, but of something elemental, behind those things, something inviting me to engage with it. Something very hard to name.

And it doesn't have to be an earth-shattering kind of experience that shakes me down to my shoes; it can be something as simple and surprising as the smell of autumn on the wind, sunlight on a white wall in North Beach at 8 a.m., the sound of my daughter's laughter, beads of rain on a spiderweb as the clouds part and the sun breaks through, an old man singing absent-mindedly as he carries his laundry home, up Walnut Street. Just something quirky and peculiar that stands up like an Icelandic poppy just as your eyes sweep around to that very spot.

It doesn't have to be an "important" wine to move me in this way. Too often I find that wines that are "important" are thought of that way for entirely different reasons. It's only occasionally that they will have the impact on me that I've described above. Think of what we read. Does everything have to be *War and Peace*? Or *Finnegans Wake*? I read Marilyn Robinson's new novel, *Gilead*, at Christmas last year and thought it was just about as fine a piece of writing as I've come across in a long time. Is it great? I don't know, but it got under my skin, and made me think, and feel. I remember reading recently, over the internet, a discussion about whether any of the wines from Beaujolais are truly great wines. Now, I've done my share of coveting the great wines of the world, and I still remember vividly the way a few of them tasted. I don't really care, though, if anybody thinks Château Thivin is great or not. When I smell that stuff, I feel blessed by the Universe. If I have the chance to eat a plate of sausages, or some rabbit fricassee with mushrooms and pappardelle while I'm drinking it, I feel like Good King Wenceslas.

There's a set of circuits in me that really light up when I smell a wine like the Chignin-Bergeron that Kermit brings in from the Savoie, with its lovely bouquet of wildflowers and honey. Well, at least if there's a light on, maybe there's somebody home.

WHAT GOOD IS A RED WITHOUT A WHITE TO PRECEDE IT?

2003 **AUXEY-DURESSSES BLANC**
“LES HAUTES” • **DOMAINE VINCENT**

A stunning white Burgundy, the finest Auxey *blanc* of my life, and it can compete with Burgundy's biggest shooters in 2003. Most of Anne-Marie and Jean-Marc's vines are in Santenay, *rouge et blanc*, and they're doing great stuff.

Anne-Marie sent me her notes: “An exuberant nose, almost Hermitage-like, which grabs the taster's attention. Notes of fresh pear and apricot, honey, and even dried apricot. Its balance is impeccable. A truly exceptional white Burgundy due to its originality and style.”

A very small, under-the-house winery, the Domaine Vincent 2003s just arrived. There ain't much of 'em, but there's a hell of a lot to them. Experiencing their handmade wines is a worthwhile endeavor. Ahem.

\$27.00 PER BOTTLE **\$291.60** PER CASE

WHAT GOOD IS A WHITE WITHOUT A RED TO FOLLOW?

2003 **COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROUGE**
CHÂTEAU DE LASCAUX

I like these white to red progressions. Last month's brochure featured a white Bordeaux followed by a Domaine Guillemot red Burgundy. White to red. That is getting down to reality, at least in my universe.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, we follow our tasty, opulent white Burgundy (Chardonnay to you, Mr. Earp) with a deep, ripe, luscious, cassis-flavored southern red that makes me wonder about the collapse of education and whether our government let it collapse on purpose. Benjamin Franklin believed that an educated populace was the foundation of a democratic society.

Full-bodied, sumptuous, versatile at table. Syrah, Grenache, Mourvèdre.

\$12.50 PER BOTTLE **\$135.00** PER CASE

