

Cogno's Marco Matteini (at right) during the olive harvest. See page 3.

### THE RARE WINE CO.

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# Utterly Singular, Ultra-Rare

Toro Albalá's 100-point 1946 & Otherworldly 1949

his fall has, at long last, seen the release of two of the world's rarest and most unusual dessert wines. Both hail from southern Spain, yet they don't come from Sherry and weren't made by the solera method.

They are vintage Pedro Ximénez ("PX") wines from Bodegas Toro Albalá in Montilla-Moriles: the **1946 Don PX Conento** and **1949 Don PX Reserva Especial**.

Never before offered for sale, they in fact had never even been bottled. Generations of Toro Albalá winemakers had watched the wines develop in cask, until their complexity, concentration and intensity justified their being sold.

#### **Miraculous Transformation**

Yet, the magic of these wines is not in their richness and power, but in how ethereally elegant they become through their long time in wood. In *Sherry, Manzanilla & Montilla*, Peter Liem wrote that "rather than becoming heavy and cloying with age, the wines actually develop a pillowy, ethereal grace, appearing vibrant and lively in their balance."

Other Montilla producers have ancient PX soleras. But Toro Albalá is the only one specializing in cask aging single vintages—*añadas*—for decades, patiently waiting as they develop their surreal harmony of opulent richness and delicate finesse.

And when fifth-generation owner-winemaker Antonio Sánchez Romero feels they've reached perfection, the entire miniscule produc-

"As decadent as it gets ... putting a drinking window to these wines feels a bit silly." Luis Gutierrez, The Wine Advocate

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Olio Nuovo!

tion is certified and bottled at one time.

In the case of the 1946 PX Convento, all of 825 bottles were finally deemed ready to be bottled in 2011, testament to Sanchez's uncanny ability to judge the right moment for them to leave wood for glass.

#### Montilla

While separate from Sherry, Montilla-Moriles is closely linked as the supplier of almost all of Sherry's Pedro Ximénez grapes. One hundred miles northeast of Jerez, Montilla-Moriles provides Spain's most ideal conditions for PX.

It thrives in the Montilla's high-altitude, hot climate and its pure chalk albero soil. Here, the grapes reach high sugar levels by August and are then laid out on straw mats in the sun. They lose half their volume and concentrate all of the elements in the fruit.

#### **Singular Methods**

Following this process, the 1946 and 1949 would have been fermented in *tina-jas*, large clay amphorae, as was the tradition until fairly recently.

But "fermentation" of such sweet, concentrated juice—the typical numbers for the juice are over 40% residual sugar and 40% extract—is almost non-existent, so the must was quickly fortified, retaining all of the natural sweetness and concentration to be transformed during its long stay in barrel.

Over time in barrel, the water evaporates, and the wine profoundly deepens in color and concentration.

# Ancient Nectar from Montilla



Antonio Sánchez Romero

▶ The evaporation is three to four percent per year, and as legally only wine from the same year can be used to top up, the overall quantity when bottled after many decades was very small, which explains the mere 825 bottles of that 1946.

#### **Unique Character**

Founded in 1844 by the original Antonio Sánchez, Toro Albalá was the first in the region to bottle their own production, rather than selling in bulk to the big Jerez houses.

Today, Sánchez presides over both new vintages and the shepherding of the ancient ones. By definition all of the long cask-aged PXs are *Reserva Especial*, but occasionally the enigmatic Sánchez

will select a particular wine as a *Convento* bottling.

#### Convento

The *Convento* designation means special packaging, consisting of a hand-numbered oak veneer label, in which the information has been pyrographically written with a burning tool, and oak presentation box. It takes an experienced carpenter and one assistant a full day to finish only ten bottles.

Finally, we can offer one of the rarest of all Montillas: the **1910 Ginés Liébana**. Bottled from a single cask in December 2005, only a handful of bottles remain for sale.

In the twenty-one years since we began publishing this newsletter, we've shared with our customers our passion for the full sweep of wine, with its rich history, noble traditions, unique characters and compelling surprises. Given that, we have to say we've never seen anything quite like these astonishing wines.

And, with their extreme rarity, we don't know if we will again. Here's your chance.

# 1946 Don PX Convento\* \$345 750ml bottle

Luis Gutierrez: "100 rating ... produced with Pedro Ximenez grapes dehydrated under the sun at the time of the Second World War, was only bottled in September 2011. This is an extreme wine, my first descriptor was ultra-mega-super concentrated. It is unbelievably powerful, both in the nose and the palate, full of umami, with sweet cinnamon, Christmas cake, camphor, petrol, lemongrass, Belgian chocolate and butter. Incredibly complex and rich, sweet, balanced and smooth in the palate, it is both very sweet and somehow salty, and with time it develops a black olive note. It is as decadent as it gets. 825 bottles were produced. This wine will survive all of us ... it's amazing that you can still buy and drink something so old, and I'm even tempted to say that it might represent good value for what it is. A real tour de force sweet wine. Drink it if you ever have the privilege to do so from 2013-2060."

# 1949 Don PX Reserva Especial\* \$235 750ml bottle

Luis Gutierrez: "97 rating. The 1949 Don PX Reserva Especial differs from the other old wines from the winery as it is less dark, it even has a (very dark) translucent tone compared with the others... It feels incredibly elegant and balanced... full of spicy notes of cinnamon, cloves, a touch of ash, and the smell of an antique shop. The palate is fluid, sweet and fresh. Putting a drinking window to these wines feels a bit silly. You should drink it whenever you have the occasion."

# 1910 Don PX Ginés Liébana\* \$695 750ml bottle

The ultimate PX rarity: a fabulous 103-year-old nectar from a single cask opened and bottled eight years ago, the wine named for a famous Cordoba artist. Señor Sanchez chopped the barrel into little cross sections, one of which is included with each bottle, to show the wine/oak pore dynamics.

# Olive Essence

## Our Growers Thread the Needle with Six Beautiful Olio Nuovos



Each day, Cogno's Marco & Giovanni Matteini make two 100km round trips to the frantoio, to assure their olives are pressed within hours of harvest.

The idea behind The Rare Wine Co.'s annual Tuscan Olio Nuovo offering is simple. We visit Tuscany during the olive harvest, choose the best presssings, have them bottled immediately and then fly them to Sonoma.

This captures all of the color, richness, thickness, nuance and power of Tuscan olive oil at its best.

And you'll love this year's selections. But seeing, smelling and tasting them, you'd have no idea how hard to come by they were. (And how rare Tuscan oil of this quality will be this year.)

#### It's All about Timing

As with wine, choosing when to harvest olives is critical to the end result. And the best olive growers, like the best wine growers, seem to have a knack for knowing just the right moment to pick.

While the trend in recent years has been to harvest early—in mid- or even early-October—this year the savvy growers knew the olives weren't ready. Instead they waited until the end of October.

But at that point, it became a race against the clock. In two weeks heavy rains came, and as one of our growers gloomily told us on November 12th, "the game is over." Except for that two-week period, the harvest was a neardisaster.

Fortunately, we were on the spot between November 10th and 12th, choosing our just-pressed oils from 2013's undeniable sweet spot: the time between October 25th and November 10th.

The oils have some the finest colors we've seen in years. Though there's some variation, the basic theme is that oils pressed during that two-week period are vividly green, in a way that's rare in recent years.

They are also classically aromatic, with plenty of artichoke and freshly cut grass.

And they're not intensely peppery, so they're easy on the palate. The taste is smooth, with plenty of fruit, but without the firey finish you find in some years' newly pressed Tuscan oils.

The bottom line is that they are lovely Nuovos—green, fresh and aromatic, and gentle to the palate. They should be delicioius throughout 2014, but this winter and spring they will be especially seductive.

#### **Our Offering**

Demand for our Olio Nuovos grows each year and, we've tried to keep up; this year's air shipment is a good 25% larger than last year. But even so, we know there won't be enough to go around. There never is.

To manage the expected demand this year, we're offering the six oils we chose as a 6-bottle assortment, limit one set per customer.

If you want to buy more than this (for corporate gifts, etc.), we do have some extra bottles of four of the oils. Let us know your needs, and we'll do what we can.

## The 2013 Olio Nuovo **Assortment**

\$165 6-pack

One 500ml bottle each of Selvapiana, Vetrice, Prunatelli, II Girardino, Cogno "Frantoio" and Monte



## La Rioja Alta's 2001 Ardanza Reserva Especial



a Rioja Alta is a traditional Rioja icon. It has been one of the region's greatest producers for over a century. And in recent decades, it has been one of few bodegas defending the classic methods that created one of the world's most distinctive and long-lived styles of wine.

And one of La Rioja Alta's traditions has been to produce its mainstay red, Viña Ardanza, as a Reserva. Until recently, only twice in the past half century did it stray. This was in 1964 and 1973, when the quality of the vintage was so exceptional that Ardanza was labeled Reserva Especial.

Well, it's happened again. The 2001 Ardanza is a wine of such power and energy that the bodega once again has dusted off the Reserva Especial designation.

Within the La Rioja Alta stable, Ardanza is distinguished by the relatively large proportion (20-25%) of Garnacha (aka Grenache) to complement the Tempranilla at its core. The Garnacha gives Ardanza unusual warmth and richness, hence the Burgundy-shaped bottle it lives in.

While the Ardanza Reserva Especial is already a dozen years old, and delicious to drink now, it clearly has 20-30 years of further development ahead.

From any other region on the planet, quality like this would cost you \$60-\$80. But we can be thankful that it's Rioja, and thus one of the greatest wine bargains to be had. Consider it a gift.

# 2001 La Rioja Alta Viña Ardanza Reserva Especial 92 Josh Raynolds \$35.95 bt. \$205 six pack

Josh Raynolds: "Sexy, intensely perfumed bouquet of ripe raspberry and cherry with suggestions of potpourri, sandalwood and vanilla. Shows more power and darker fruits on the palate, picking up a touch of singed plum that adds a serious quality to the sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors without costing the wine any of its vibrancy. The long, sweet finish hangs on with very good tenacity."

# Grand Grand Cru

## Fèvre's Great 2008 Chablis "Bougerots" Amazingly Priced

In just a few short years, William Fèvre has taken its place alongside Raveneau and Dauvissat at the very top of the Chablis hierarchy. This feat is all the more remarkable considering that Fèvre's holdings are several times larger than either of its rivals.

Today, the domaine is pruning for some of the lowest yields, and the winemaking is perfectionist, with minimal use of new wood, à la Raveneau and Dauvissat.

Such obsession with quality is revealed in the stellar 2008 Bougros "Côte Bougerots." From a steep south-facing *grand cru* hillside, it offers classic true *grand cru* minerality and power. Our price is a giveaway.

# 2008 William Fèvre "Côte Bougerots" \$65.00 bt. \$375 6-pk

Burghound: "96 rating ... strikingly layered nose of oyster shell, mineral reduction and perfumed cool green fruit is extremely seductive and serves as a fascinating introduction to the concentrated, serious and powerful yet refined flavors that ooze a fine minerality on the mouth coating and hugely long finish ... buckets of sap ... indisputably a 'wow' wine."

# Holy Trilogies!

## Winsome Threesomes of Some of the Greatest Champagnes Ever

If you're a long-time client, you may recall that our early holiday newsletters featured 3-bottle sets of our best wines. Though presented as holiday gifts, we always Issuspected that most of them went straight into our customers' cellars. But we didn't mind, as long as they made a wine lover happy.

It's been years since we've offered these sets. But in combing our Champagne library this fall, we were inspired to put together the following fabulous trios. Ten sets of each are available, except Krug, of which we have two.



## Lanson Collection Magnums

\$1995 3 magnums disgorged 2012

1976 Richard Juhlin 95 1979 Richard Juhlin 94 1988 Richard Juhlin 94 If purchased separately \$2695



#### Selosse Ambonnay-Le Bout du Clos

The historic 1st 3 disgorgements The 2011 disgorgement is pure 2004; 2012 marries '04 & '05; and

> 2013 marries '04, '05 & '06, \$1395 3 bts

(Not available separately at any price.)



### Clos des Goisses **\$495** *3 bottles*

1998 Antonio Galloni 94 2000 Richard Juhlin 95 2002 Antonio Galloni 96 If purchased separately \$545



### Vintage Krug **\$2100** 3 bottles

1975 Richard Juhlin 94 1979 Richard Juhlin 97 1988 Richard Juhlin 98 If purchased separately \$2265

More sexy Champagnes for the holidays

# More Sexy Champagnes for the Holidays

1999 Pol Roger Cuvée Winston Churchill
<b>2002 Philipponnat Clos des Goisses Juste Rosé</b> Josh Raynolds: "96 rating explosive a superb blend of richness and vivacity noteworthy length and clarity."
1988 Le Mesnil Grand Cru Blanc de Blancs <i>Magnum</i> 195.00
<b>1976 Alfred Rothschild Grand Trianon</b> These bottles lived in a cool, damp UK cellar for 30 years. The moisture wreaked havoc on the labels and foils, but the wine inside the bottles is sublime.
<b>2000 Billecart Salmon Cuvée Nicolas François</b> Richard Juhlin: "95 rating one of the most impressive champagnes from this harvest. So charming, fresh and luxuriously inspiring."
1988 Dom Ruinart*  Richard Juhlin: "97 rating massive tropical opulence of mango and orange.  There is also a lovely attack here, and a sophisticated, long aftertaste fabulously beautiful." Early 2014 arrival, but had to include it!
<b>NV Bollinger Special Cuvée</b> <i>3-liter Jeroboam</i> Richard Juhlin: "One of my absolute favorites it's fascinating to see how much 12 percent old reserve wines, vinified in oak barrels and stored in magnums, do to lift the product. The oakish, smoky, and deep Bollinger style develops after a couple of years in the bottle."
<b>1996 Perrier-Jouët Belle Epoque Magnum</b>
2000 Deutz Extra-Aged



★ For Holiday Parties ★ Philipponnat Royale Réserve Cuvée Non-Dosé 92 Burghound — 92 J. Raynolds \$39.95 bottle \$89.95 magnum Special Case Prices for December Only: 12 Bottles \$450 6 Magnums \$499

# Italian Royalty

# Barolo Mags from the Vault





2004 Barolo Monfortino Magnum AG100	1395.00
2002 Barolo Monfortino Magnum AG98	1050.00
2008 Barolo Cascina Francia Magnum AG95+	295.00
2007 Barolo Cascina Francia Magnum AG96+	275.00
2005 Barolo Cascina Francia Magnum AG95+	295.00
2004 Barolo Cascina Francia Magnum AG97	395.00



## A Bartolo Treat

Rare Magnums
Straight from the Cantina
Signed and Dated by
Maria-Teresa Mascarello

★A Monster Gift for Barolo Lovers ★

2005 Bartolo Mascarello Barolo <i>Mag</i>	num —	- Signed &
Dated by Maria-Teresa Mascarello	AG94	325.00

# Italian Royalty

# End of an Era at Biondi-Santi



Tith the death of Franco Biondi-Santi this fall, Biondi-Santi's torch has been passed for only the fourth time since the family made its first Brunello in 1865. Franco was an ardent traditionalist dedicated to his family's legacy of longlived Brunellos.

In his honor, we are pleased to offer five of his wines, including his first—the famous 1970 Riserva—which we were first privileged to taste with him in his cellars in the late 1980s. (That bottle had been open a week but was still fresh!) And we conclude this offer with his perfectly rated 2004, which brought the estate back to international prominence.

We discovered a couple of beautiful cases of this in Italy in November and tasted a bottle. Absolutely stunning: one of our great Biondi-Santi experiences ever. This won't arrive until late winter, but we had to include it.	
1983 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva	5.00
1999 Brunello di Montalcino14	5.00
2004 Brunello di Montalcino Riserva	
The historic vintage that earned a very rare two perfect ratings: 100 points from	

Gambero Rosso and 20/20 from Decanter. Other U.S. prices for this wine range from \$470 to \$690 (averaging \$540).

# More Brunello Icons

#### Cerbaiona



Alongside Biondi-Santi and Soldera, Diego Molinari has carried the banner for traditional Brunello for more than 30 years. His Cerbaiona Brunellos are towering examples of the art.

1990 Brunello <i>AG95</i>	345.00
1991 Brunello	
2006 Brunello <i>AG98</i>	189.95
2008 Brunello <i>AG93+</i>	179.95
2008 Brunello <i>Magnum AG93+</i>	365.00
Soldera Case Basse	

### 2004 Brunello Riserva *Magnum AG97+*......1250.00 Three Rarities from the Past

	1990 Mastrojanni Brunello <i>W\$94</i>	125 00
1	1990 Banfi Brunello Poggio all'Oro Rsva <i>WS95</i>	
ı	1988 Banfi Brunello Poggio all'Oro Rsva <i>CT92.3</i>	

# 2013: Tuscany's Year

## A Host of Venerable Wines Finally Get Their Due

Looking back over 2013, one of the year's biggest stories has been the recognition given a number of important Tuscan wines that for too long flew under the radar.

Largely responsible for this is Antonio Galloni, who published reports on vertical tastings of several important Super Tuscans and Brunellos. Tasting through mul-

#### Fontodi Flaccianello

Giovanni Manetti's masterpiece has, since 1985, been made 100% from Sangiovese grown in the Conca d'Oro, one of Tuscany's most noble *terroirs*. Galloni calls Flaccianello "one of the great wines of Tuscany." For now, it is still a bargain in comparison to so many other Super Tuscans. **2009 Flaccianello 4694** 

2003   laudialidilo //u37	
2001 Flaccianello <i>AG95 / WS97</i>	110.00
2000 Flaccianello <i>AG93</i>	89.95
1998 Flaccianello <i>AG93</i>	89.95
1996 Flaccianello <i>AG93+</i>	89.95
1990 Flaccianello <i>AG95+</i>	175.00
Mannums!	
2009 Flaccianello <i>Magnum AG94</i>	179.95
2008 Flaccianello Magnum AG94	189.95
2000 Flaccianello Magnum AG93	189.00
1999 Flaccianello <i>Magnum AG94</i>	229.00

### 

Luca and Maurizia di Napoli make some of Tuscany's most compellingly pure wines. Galloni's vertical back to 1996 showcased the brilliance not only of their wines but of those of their father, Alceo.

2008 Vigna d'Alceo <i>Magnum JS100 / AG96+</i>	350.00
2008 Sammarco <i>AG98+</i>	109.95
2007 Sammarco <i>AG97</i>	89.95
1990 Sammarco <i>RP93</i>	145.00
1988 Sammarco <i>\$T93</i>	
1990 Castello di Ama Chianti Bellavista	149.95
Galloni: "98+ rating one of the greatest wines ever made in Italy."	

tiple decades is the perfect way to know which wines are the real deal. We should all be grateful to Antonio for making these eye-opening reviews available.

Throughout 2013, RWC acquired some of these great wines in a variety of formats, saving them for this offer. All are in stock or on their way for the holidays.

#### San Giusto a Rentennano

**Percarlo** is, of course, the big name here, and the great 1997 briefly made Percarlo a favorite of collectors. Now, Galloni has brought Percarlo back, writing that a complete vertical "left me speechless." Less well known are the merlot **La Ricolma**, and the Chianti Riserva **Baroncole**, which is a screaming bargain in 2010.

2010 Chianti Riserva Baroncole <i>AG95</i>	44.50
2010 La Ricolma <i>Magnum AG96</i>	159.95
2010 La Ricolma <i>AG96</i>	75.00
1998 Percarlo <i>AG94</i>	
2008 Percarlo <i>AG96</i>	

#### Montevertine

Galloni calls Montevertine "one of the most privileged spots for wine anywhere in the world." And after a vertical tasting of its Pergole Torte, he wrote "viscerally thrilling ... I had a hard time getting to sleep the night I tasted these wines." Though in the Chianti Classic zone, no Chianti has been made here since the 1980s; one taste of the simply named "Montevertine," and you understand why. We are pleased to offer several fine vintages of it along with the great 2007 Pergole Torte in three formats. All are offered at seriously low prices.

2009 Montevertine <i>Double Magnum AG94</i>	225.00
2007 Montevertine <i>AG93</i>	45.00
2006 Montevertine Magnum AG93	95.00
1985 Montevertine <i>Magnum</i>	
2007 Pergole Torte <i>Double Magnum AG98+</i>	

1990 Isole e Olena Cepparello	149.95
Galloni: "94 rating the finest modern Cepparello."	

## "The intensity is stratospheric." Monica Larner on '07 Bussola Amarone TB



Tommaso Bussola

ommaso Bussola trails only Quintarelli and Dal Forno as Amarone's leading legend.

Yet, while their masterworks will set you back \$400-\$600, you can still buy Bussola's at one-third the price—or less. And you'll sacrifice absolutely nothing in the way of excitement.

Like Romano Dal Forno, Tommaso tests the limits of what grapes can produce—extracting enormous richness and complexity, using methods that spring directly from Veneto tradition.

His 2007 continues a history of ravishing Bussola Amarone. Monica Larner's October reviews in *The Wine Advocate* have ramped up demand, but Tommaso has rewarded our nearly 20 years of collaboration with an allocation not only of bottles, but of magnums and 3-liter jeros, too.

These wines have a depth of color, aroma, flavor and texture that borders on surreal. If

you love great Amarone, you won't want to miss them. Winter arrival.

2007 Bussola
Amarone TB\*
94 Wine Advocate
\$105.00 bt. \$595.00 6-pack
\$250.00 mag. \$500.00 3-liter

Monica Larner in *The Wine Advocate:* "... an immense and beautiful wine ... represents the best selection of fruit from the best vineyard sites ... the intensity is stratospheric with bold tones of dried fruit, exotic spice, leather, tar, maple syrup and caramelized sugar. The mouthfeel is velvety and rich with loads of extra nutmeg and dove on the finish."



2007 Bussola Amarone Vigneto Alto\*
96 Wine Advocate
\$159.95 bt. \$895.00 6-pack
\$345.00 mag. \$695.00 3-liter

Monica Larner in *The Wine Advocate:* "From a single vineyard cru ... only produced in the best years. The 2007 vintage shows balance and grace ... As you savor its long mouthfeel, you'll enjoy flavors of dark fruit, tar, cola, barbecue spice and smoke. There's enough heft and energy here to expect a decade or more of life."

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