

A view from La Landonne (Côte Rôtie), overlooking the Rhône. See Page 1.

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A Reawakening

In 2009, Côte Rôtie's Sun Shines Brightly, in a Repeat of 1999

ne of France's most ancient wine regions, Côte Rôtie glimmers with nobility and greatness.

Yet a quarter century after Guigal's La-La's became three of the world's most coveted wines, other important Côte Rôtie growers still struggle for

recognition. Simply put, much of the world has yet to appreciate what makes Côte Rôtie so special.

Only once in the past 20 years has the name

"Côte Rôtie" made it onto most collectors' radars without Guigal's help. That happened in 1999, thanks primarily to the epic wines of René Rostaing and the Jamets. Even in 2005—a year we believe will be looked back on as one of the greats—really only loyalists jumped on the wines when they were released.

But a decade after 1999, history has repeated itself. The '09s have awakened the wine market in much the same way that 1999 did, with equally rich wines that in

Simply put, much of the world has yet to appreciate what makes Côte Rôtie so special. many cases offer superior structure and acidity, and lower alcohol levels, attributable to the year's healthy yields.

For this offer, we have rounded up a Who's Who of the great 2009 Côte Rôties—wines whose scarcity is due to their tiny production. There are omissions of course—the most notable being the '09 Guigal La-La's, which won't be released until next year.

Clusel-Roch

"Almost more Burgundian than Burgundy itself." Andrew Jeffords, The New France

Gilbert Clusel and Brigitte Roch's wines are prized for how they, as John Livingstone-Learmonth writes, "carry a Burgundian finesse with northern Rhône depth and sinew." Key to this is their belief in Sérine, the ancient, and now rare, local clone of Syrah to which almost all of the domaine is planted.

Clusel-Roch's wines are always among the purest expressions of Côte Rôtie *typicité* due to their classicist methods. Like René Rostaing, they only partially destem, and they judiciously use new oak. Consequently, Clusel-Roch's '09s are stunning, particularly the *crus* Les Grandes Places and Viaillière, two of only four 2009 Côte Rôties to receive Livingstone-Learmonth's highest 6-star rating.

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René Rostaing

With Marius Gentaz and Albert Dervieux now gone, René Rostaing, in his 42nd year as *vigneron*, wears the mantle of Côte Rotie's Grand Old Man.

In fact, the vineyards of Gentaz and Dervieux live on in René's work, as he inherited their vines when they retired in the early 1990s. If you believe as we

5 2009 Côte Rôtie La Landonne139.95

do that the soul of a wine comes from its ancestors, there are no Côte Rôties richer than those of René Rostaing

Rostaing's wines capture the Burgundian side of Côte Rôtie with transparency and typicity, yet with an elegance that reminds us of the great domaines of Chambolle-Musigny.

05 2009 Côte Rôtie Côte Blonde169.95

Livingstone-Learmonth: "6 stars. Wow! This nose has a beguiling serenity floating across it depth, the black fruit is surprisingly elegant within. There are airs of slight grilling, toasting, intense cherry ... a Margaux-style finesse." He quotes René: "A sublime expression of the Blonde." In this era of high-octane Syrahs, this majestic wine came it at a genteel 13.3% alcohol.

If there was a theme to wine collecting in the 1990s, it was "out with the old, in with the new." A pervasive belief settled over the wine world that traditional winemaking doctrine, which included a reverence for *terroir* and deep respect for the past, was misguided. And billions were spent to prove it.

But what goes around comes around. In Burgundy and Piedmont, the great traditionalists have re-emerged as icons, while their most vocal critics are looking foolish.

Those who questioned the importance of *terroir* are getting their comeuppance. Even former skeptics are starting to understand that noble wines require noble *terroirs*—and that technology can't compensate for a mediocre site. Where today are the hot producers of the 90s, who traded not on having great vineyards but having a big-name enologist?

Why Côte Rôtie Matters

And let us be clear: there is no more noble *terroir* (or rather group of *terroirs*) than Côte Rôtie. Hermitage may be more famous, and the *grand crus* of Burgundy may produce more iconic wines. But Côte Rôtie captures the best of both: the power and opulence of the south and the delicacy and nuance of the north. And it is a greatness that has been appreciated for centuries.

Not only does it have a spectacular exposition—several miles of slopes of up to 60 degrees—but it has a dizzying diversity of soils. Here, growers can interweave multiple sites to classically blend the perfect wine, or they can craft evocative site-specific bottlings.

The diversity of winemaking philosophies is intriguing. Traditionalism is still very much in evidence. But with the loss of winemaker-philosophers like Marius Gentaz and Albert Dervieux—and too little public awareness that few of their breed remain can it be resurrected as it has been in Piedmont?

Modernism also thrives, but there are fewer pure modernists than was the case in Piedmont a few years ago. The range of styles among Côte Rôtie's winemakers seems much more mixed—from the largely traditional methods of Levet, Champet, Jamet and Rostaing to the overt modernism of Gerin and Ogier.

But in the middle you find independent thinkers like Jean-Michel Stéphan and even Yves Cuilleron, who balances all his new barriques with very traditional whole-cluster fermentation.

For all of these reasons, the great wines of Côte Rôtie are a playground for those fascinated by man's search to extract the essence of *terroir*.

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Jamet, Champet, Bonnefond & Stèphan

– Jamet -

Like their father Joseph, Jean-Paul and Jean-Luc Jamet make Côte Rôtie that is the quintessence of the appellation, created by blending up to ten different *lieux dits*. If you love traditionally made Côte Rôtie, and you want to experience excitingly expressive examples of an ancient art, you'll want to drink Jamet.

We're pleased not only to offer the 2009 Côtie Rôtie in two sizes, but a few bottles of the incredibley rare '09 Côte Brune, made from a small parcel of vines belonging to their father. Go on, you know you want it.

2009 Jamet Côte Rôtie*95.00 2009 Jamet Côte Rôtie *Magnum**210.00

Livingstone-Learmonth: "5 stars ... a sense of ripe power ... There is good 'steel' in the palate, comes with a good tension, is compact and tightly wrapped ... a smoky, ash backdrop hovers, pebbles and dust. The attack has life, energy ... rocks along openly and expressively ... Its richness is lined with smoky tannins"

2009 Jamet Côte Rôtie Côte Brune245.00

Livingstone-Learmonth: "6 stars" Extremely limited.

Patrick & Christophe Bonnefond "Hedonism at its finest" Parker

In Les Rochains and Côte Rozier—just above La Landonne—the Bonnefonds have such great *terroirs*, they could have made fine 2009s in their sleep. But they made *great* 2009s, thanks to a decision to cut their new oak by half and increase cask size and time in barrel. The result is their most eloquent expressions to date of their two prized *terroirs*. Each wine has tremendous structure, but it's thoroughly embedded in the vintage's rich fruit, promsing great complexity with bottle age.

2009 Bonnefond Côte Rôtie Côte Rozier*79.95

Robert Parker: "94 rating... exhibits abundant cassis and black raspberry notes intermixed with hints of...licorice, smoke and graphite. Rich, full-bodied and powerful with supple tannins and a long finish"

2009 Bonnefond Côte Rôtie Les Rochains* ...89.95 Robert Parker: "96 rating ... monumental ... boasts stunning

aromas of smoke, spring flowers, fried bacon, black raspberries, blackberries and cassis. This voluptuously textured, multidimensional wine is built like a skyscraper ... Drink this profound Côte Rôtie over the next 15-20 years."

— Jean-Michel Stéphan—

"The Independent Spirit of Côte-Rôtie" John Livingstone-Learmonth

In the debate over traditionalism versus modernism in the northern Rhône, what seems all-important is typicity, the idea that, regardless of how it is made, a Côte Rôtie should smell and taste like Côte Rôtie, with aromas and flavors found nowhere else on earth.

In this region of individualists, there are as many ways to achieve this as there are *vignerons*, but arguably the most unusually artisanal approach belongs to Jean-Michel Stéphan.

Seeking purity, Stephan tends his Côte Blonde vines organically and then ferments using partial carbonic mac-

eration without sulfur—like Thierry Allemand in Cornas—to express "a perfection of the elements in a wine" before aging in neutral barrels.

Fewer than 700 cases are made, so Stéphan's wines are painfully scarce.

2009 Jean-Michel Stéphan Côte-Rôtie64.95

James Molesworth, *Wine Spectator:* "94 rating ... a wild mix of bramble, steeped blackberry, roasted fig, melted licorice, tar and dark tapenade notes, which all weave together through a singed iron finish ... serious length."

Livingstone-Learmonth: "Plenty in the glass, a real tannic movement ... very wide and persistent at the end."

——Joel Champet –

"Closest Thing to a Côte de Nuits Burgundy" Robert Parker

Emile Champet is one of the great classicists of Côte Rôtie, and his son Joel marches to the same drum beat. He owns two prized hectares in the revered Viallière *cru* from which he makes a Côte Rôtie of both expression and generosity—using whole bunches, large barrels and a deep respect for tradition.

2009 Joel Champet Côte Rôtie Viaillière54.95

Livingstone-Learmonth: " $\star \star \star \star (\star)$... a curvy black berry fruit with licorice and wood smoke snap ... an "elegant" tar ... typical Côte-Rôtie violet and floral notes ... the fruit beams with the sun from its harvest, and its heart is sweet and refined. It shows the finesse of Viallière, and is very pure ... a rich, liqueur style ... Its texture is a real winner throughout."

Champagne & Loire | 4

Camille Savès' 2004 Stunning Pinot-laden Grower Champagne

at an Amazing Price

The 115-year-old domaine of Camille Savès is a leading light in today's grower movement in Champagne. And one of our best-selling vintage Champagnes <u>ever</u> has been Savès' 2002.

That vintage is now gone, but we've grabbed some of the equally splendid 2004.

Pinot-Based

While the domaine has vines in Ambonnay and elsewhere, most of Savès' eleven hectares of vineyards are in the *grand cru* village of Bouzy, where the vines are Pinot Noir, giving great richness to its wines. But there is still ample Chardonnay in Savès' blends to lend freshness and floral nuances.

Gilman describes the Savès style as "big-boned, ripe and toasty in a style that perfectly captures the Bouzy stylistic flair, while still retaining outstanding cut, minerality and elegance." But since none of the wines undergo malolactic fermentation, the intensely ripe fruit is complemented by racy acidity.

The '04 Brut Millesime is a stunning example of the Savès style, which marries power and finesse. You won't want to miss it.

2004 Camille Savès Brut Millésime* *93+ Gilman* \$49.95 *bt.* \$285 *6-pack*



John Gilman: "... with all of the class, complexity and balance for long-term cellaring that one would expect from this excellent Bouzy house ... a blaze of apple, tart orange, warm bread, citrus zest and a really superb base of minerality ... beautifully balanced, with a great core of fruit, bright acids, excellent focus, elegant mousse and outstanding length and grip on the classy and very poised finish ... has the balance and structural integrity to age long and gracefully."

Treasures from Huët's Cellars 1996 Ière Tries from Clos du Bourg & Le Mont



Clos du Bourg



Since its founding in 1928, Huët has staked its claim to making Vouvray's greatest dessert wines. The wines that most quickly come to mind are the legendary Moelleux bottlings from years like 1928 and 1947, and the even richer Moelleux 1ère Trie bottlings from more recent great years like 1961, 1971 and 1990.

Continuing this lineage, 1996 stands tall, as a year when great sweetness joined forces with fabulous acidity. In fact, for lovers of late-harvest Chenin Blanc (or Riesling for that matter), Huët's top 1996s came straight from heaven, as their monumental richness was achieved less through noble rot than from sheer ripeness. As a consequence, their varietal and mineral purity is nearly unique.

Le Mont

The Huët story is, of course, enhanced by the fact that the domaine has always had the disci-

pline to hold on to a library of its best wines. This practice has just yielded a wonderful prize from Huët's cellars: immaculate bottles of the monumental 1996 Moelleux 1ère Trie from the Clos du Bourg and Le Mont vineyards.

John Gilman: "**96** rating ... The bouquet is brilliant ... a mélange of lemon, apple, acacia blossoms ... fresh and strikingly pure, with brilliant focus ... hauntingly beautiful ... A great wine ... drink between 2016-2070."

1996 Vouvray Moelleux 1ère Trie Le Mont 69.95

John Gilman: "94 rating ... candied quince, honey, brilliant chalky soil tones, a bit of fresh-cut hay and incipient notes of the fresh almond to come ... fresh and beautifully glazed on the attack, with a rock solid core of fruit, bracing acids and a brilliant, long and soil-driven finish ... Drink between 2016-2060."

Madeira 5

A Wine as Compelling as its Story H.M. Borges' 1940 Reserva Solera

n the century after Phylloxera (1875-1975), the number of Madeira producers declined by more than 90%. Only ten exporters remained.

One of these was H.M. Borges. Founded by its namesake in 1877, it thrived for forty years until he died in 1916. From that point on it, the firm was a gritty survivor, living off of stocks of ancent Madeira acquired by H.M., relying on sales to Scandinavia and, on occasion, purchasing wine from other houses that failed.

And so, a few years ago, Borges bought a remarkable solera from a now largely forgotten firm named Silva Vinhos. This was a great find for Borges but ironically, the solera's story goes back further than Silva. It had been started in the 1940s by a third house, Veiga França, which failed in the 1980s.

I can pinpoint the time of Veiga França's failure because, by chance, one day more than 20 years ago, I was walking past Veiga França's lodge just as it was being demolished. I snapped the photo you see above. Weeks later, there would have been nothing for me to see.

But while Veiga França's walls were being torn down, its stocks of wine, still in barrel, were being sold to other producers, like Silva Vinhos. And when Silva Vinhos failed, the process was repeated.

Multiple Bottlings

While it was still in business, Veiga França bottled and sold some of the solera. Silva Vinhos, on the other hand, bottled none of it, passing it on



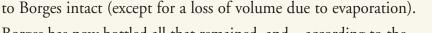
The demolition of Veiga França's lodge on Funchal's Estrada Monumental.

RESERV

OLER

1940

ADEL



Borges has now bottled all that remained, and—according to the Norwegian wine blogger Niklas Jorgensen—the Borges bottling is "far superior" to the one that appeared under the Veiga França label.

The reason was as clear to Jorgensen as it may be to you: extra time in barrel. Niklas is in a position to know, having compared bottles of both Veiga França and Borges in the past four years.

While he gave the Vega França bottling 92-93 points, he rated Borges 94. He writes: "... notes of bitter almonds, figs, corinths, tobacco, burnt sugar and fudge. Elegant and complex. Beautiful! On the palate the impeccable balance continues. Nothing moving in the opposite direction. Caramelised taste with nutmeg, figs, old casks, sweet pipe tobacco, orange like acidity and fine sweet balance. Long, intense aftertaste."

As of late last year, little remained of the 1940 Solera. Fortunately, we were able to acquire it all directly from Borges. It is not only a beautiful wine, it is a truly remarkable value. But there's not much to go around, so you'll want to hurry.

> 1940 H.M. Borges Rsva. Solera 94 Niklas Jorgensen \$135 bottle

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Piedmont & Muscadet | 6

2006 Bussola Amarone TB

"One of the best young Amarones I have tasted in quite some time. 96 rating." Ian d'Agata, International Wine Cellar

n part due to their scarcity and cost of production, the greatest Amarones are now arguably Italy's most expensive red wines. In fact, the top Amarones of two producers—Quintarelli and Dal Forno—have left everyone else in their dust, pricing their newest releases above \$500.

There is a robust market for these great wines, but their prices underscore the mindbending value offered by Tommaso Bussola's Amarones. And there is no greater deal to be found than Bussola's 2006 Amarone TB.

As Bussola drinkers know, Tommaso makes two elite Amarones, TB and Vigneto Alto. In most vintages, the Vigneto Alto has an edge in quality, justifying its 50% to 75% premium.

But in the great 2006 vintage, the quality of Bussola's fruit was so high that there is little to separate the two. In fact, Ian d'Agata, who handles Italy for Steve Tanzer, gives the edge to the TB, with a stunning 96 point score. He also rates it higher than the new Amarone releases of Dal Forno and Quintarelli.

The 2006 Amarone TB is a masterpiece, with a depth of color, flavor and texture that borders on surreal. It is the ultimate deal from the Veneto this year and could be the ultimate wine deal period. Don't miss out.

2006 Bussola Amarone TB \$114.95 bottle

Ian d'Agata, Tanzer's *International Wine Cellar:* "96 rating. Very pure, captivating aromas of red cherry, raspberry jam, spicecake and cocoa. Suave, dense and extremely long, this utterly compelling wine displays concentrated yet lively flavors of red fruits and spices and a seamless quality. It's amazing just how concentrated this is, but it tastes neither heavy nor too sweet ... One of the best young Amarones I have tasted in quite some time."

"Potentially Perfect" Parker 2010 Mas de Boislauzon "Cuvée de Quet"



hen we first visited Mas de Boislauzon in 2005, we were struck by Daniel Chaussy's passion for his *terroir*—nine hectares of old vines—as well as a new special cuvée he'd launched: Cuvée de Quet (*pronounced "kay"*). Quet is a selection of his best Mourvèdre and Grenache from vines planted in 1920.

Chateauneuf's "galet roulés"

Chaussy felt that the intensely concentrated fruit from these old vines had something unique to say, which would be lost in the blend of his excellent regular cuvée, "Tradition." And so after the vinification, he kept the wine apart, aging half of it in used small barrels and the rest in larger *foudre*.

Parker's perfect 100-point rating for the 2007 vintage generated extraodinary demand for subsequent releases. But tiny production has thwarted most collectors. Consider this an opportunity you won't want to pass up.

2010 Cuvée de Quet* 95-100 Parker \$125.00 bottle



Parker: "... potentially perfect ... aromas of graphite, espresso, white chocolate, new saddle leather, and oodles of blueberry and blackberry fruit. With a powerful, full-bodied mouthfeel, terrific concentration and purity, good focus and freshness, this massive wine should be given 5-6 years of cellaring and drunk over the following 25+ years."

Chablis & Piedmont | 7

The Natural Patrick Piuze's Brilliant 2010 Chablis Grands Crus

Patrick Piuze is Chablis' most exciting new producer, drawing raves from Allen Meadows, Jancis Robinson and John Gilman for the breathtaking purity and minerality of his wines. Yet Piuze was unknown just a short time ago.

Following nearly a decade working in Chablis with Olivier Leflaive, Verget and Jean-Marc Brocard, Piuze launched his own label and immediately served notice with the brilliant quality and pure expression of Chablis' *terroirs* in his 2008s.

Piuze's secret is his belief in ancient vines and Chablis' true

John Gilman: "95+ rating ... a superb bouquet of apple, tart orange, a touch of straw, pink grapefruit, very complex minerality and a smoky topnote. On the palate, the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and racy, with a great core of fruit, snappy acids, laser-like focus and superb cut and grip on the very, very transparent and long finish. A superb 2010."

John Gilman: "95+ rating ... a beautiful wine in the making, with impressive complexity on both the nose and palate and the requisite structural integrity to seemingly cruise along on its exquisite balance for several decades ... Great juice."

-A Barbaresco Bargain:

Along with Asili, Rabajà is arguably the greatest vineyard in the village of Barbaresco. And for Produttori collectors, it <u>is</u> the greatest.

Rabajà is a thoroughbred ... a *grand cru* ... one of the greatest pieces of vineyard land on earth. So, the idea that one of its old families should sell the art from its holdings for just \$43, seems a bit absurd. But such is the case with the Corteses, a family with a long history here.

Cortese continues to honor Barbaresco tradition by aging its Barbaresco Rabajà in large barrels, ranging in size from 17 to 25 hectoliters.

Needless to say, 2007 is a great Barbaresco vintage, and this is a superb example. Don't miss it.

"A truly thrilling new producer of hand-crafted Chablis..." Jancis Robinson "... nothing short of sensational given that 2010 is only his third vintage." Burghound Kimmeridgian soil—his experience taught him who the top growers with the best placed old vines are and he sources from them exclusively. And his methods are essentially those of Raveneau and Dauvissat—harvesting by hand only, hands-off winemaking and aging in neutral barrels.

While the results are thrillingly transparent, bracingly mineral Chablis even at the *villages* level, Piuze's best wines are, of course, his *grands crus*. Here is the chance to try four of the top 2010s from this fast rising star, but quantities are small, so hurry.

ain: '07 Cortese "Rabajà"

2007 Giuseppe Cortese Barbaresco Rabajà \$42.95 bt. \$239.95 6-pack



Galloni: "94 rating. Gorgeous, knock-out aromas emerge from the 2007 Barbaresco Rabaja. Ripe, candied cherries, flowers and minerals emerge seamlessly in the glass, revealing gorgeous inner perfume.

In 2007 the Rabaja possesses a touch more textural richness and body than is typically the case, but without abandoning what remains a classic, mid-weight style. This is a terrific showing from Cortese. Anticipated maturity: 2017-2027."

Another \$30 Etna Stunner

"★★★ Lively, energetic and pure, with deep, rich fruit and mineral flavors, mellowed by age." Eric Asimov's Highest-Rated Etna Red (NY Times 5/26/12)

Midst the tumult of Mount Etna's wine boom, Calabretta has been one of the few traditionalists—dedicated to keeping alive the volcano's rich, ancient winemaking culture.

Slow Food says Calabretta's style is "a thousand miles away" from other Italian wine, but the gap might be better measured in time, since the estate seems stuck somewhere in the 19th century.

In fact, Calabretta's most distinguishing feature is its dedication to long macerations—two months or more!—and 6 to 7 years aging in massive, neutral Slavonian oak *botti*. In other words they make wine just as was done in Barolo and Montalcino 50 years ago.

Considering such traditional approaches—and their 70- to 80-year-old ungrafted Nerello Mascalese and Nerello Cappuccio vines—it's no surprise that Calabretta's wines are so reminiscent of great traditional Barolo and Brunello.

This Offer

This, our third offer of Calaberetta's flagship Etna Rosso, follows offerings of the 2000 and 2001 vintages. Like its predecessors, the 2002 is a time machine that takes us back not only a decade to its making, but also to a century earlier, when Etna's flourishing vineyards routinely made wine like this.

For us, it's a privilege to not only represent Calabretta, but to experience wine of such character and beauty at a price this low.



From left, Massimiliano and Massimo Calabretta with one of their ancient vines.

2002 Calabretta Etna Rosso 93 John Gilman \$29.95 bottle \$175 6-pack



John Gilman: "... one of the superstars on the island of Sicily ... The 2002 is a stunning wine, offering up a deep, complex and still fairly youthful nose of cherries, orange peel, roasted game, coffee, fresh herb tones, a stony base of soil nuances and a nice topnote of exotic spices. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and very well-balanced, with a rock solid core of fruit ... and a very long, complex and classy finish ... a broad-shouldered and truly superb bottle of Etna Rosso."

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