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the world's best wine magazine

# Decanter

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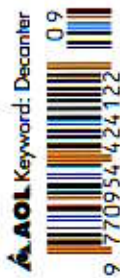


30<sup>th</sup>

ANNIVERSARY  
SPECIAL

## INSTANT WINE WISDOM

HOW TO GET *EVEN MORE*  
ENJOYMENT FROM YOUR GLASS:  
OUR EXPERTS' TOP TIPS



### VALUE RHONE

We rate 99 Côtes du  
Rhône Villages 2003

### CLASSIC BURGUNDY

Understanding Chassagne-  
and Puligny-Montrachet

**PLUS: PORT'S GREAT 2003 VINTAGE | LANGUEDOC**

the best mixed case taken from the new releases available this

## FRANCE

LAURENT PERRIER,  
ULTRA BRUT,  
CHAMPAGNE NV

★★★★★ 16.75  
£29.75–32

A blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir with no dosage. Very pure aromas on the nose. Fresh and balanced palate with complex soft fruit and some citrus notes. Ideal with oysters and caviar!

BBR, Evy, F&M, F&R, Har, Odd, Sel



## FRANCE

POMMERY,  
CUVÉE LOUISE,  
CHAMPAGNE 1995

★★★★★ 16.5  
£70

Only produced in exceptional years, Cuvée Louise has a clean, elegant nose. Full on the palate, clean citrus and flowery characters, balanced with a complex and elegant finish.

Up to 5 years  
Div, Evy, J&B



## FRANCE

MAS DE DAUMAS  
GASSAC, VIN DE PAYS DE  
L'HERAULT 2004

★★★★★ 17.5  
£18

This is a blend of Chardonnay, Viognier and Petit Manseng. Very elegant nose of apricot and peach fruits with some floral notes. Crisp acidity with balanced ripe fruit characters, complex with a long finish. Up to 5 years.

CPy, Gns



## FRANCE

LOUIS JADOT, ST-AUBIN 2002

★★★★★ 17  
£15.99

The fermentation takes place in oak barrels, then the wine is aged in barrel for 15 months before being bottled. Ripe, creamy nose, clean apple aromas. Balanced palate with a fine acidity, intense rich fruits and some nutty characters.

Up to 2 years.

DBy, Evy, Fah, Luv, Thr, Wmb



## GERMANY £

THE NAKED GRAPE,  
RIESLING, PFALZ 2004

★★★★★ 17  
£5.99

Made by internationally known winemaker Ernst Loosen. A very elegant, clean, aromatic wine with a nice peachy bouquet. Crisp acidity, great zestiness on the palate. Drinking very well now; ideal with spicy Eastern cuisine.

Sai, Wai



## AUSTRALIA

SHAW & SMITH,  
CHARDONNAY, M3  
VINEYARD, ADELAIDE  
HILLS 2003

★★★★★ 16.75  
£15.95–17.50

Aged for one year in new and one-year-old barrels, this has rich aromas on the nose, ripe with herbaceous notes. Full on the palate, lots of creamy characters, very long finish. Up to 2 years.

Evy, Lib, Nid, P&S



# MICHAEL BROADBENT

## Ancient and modern

**A**IME GUIBERT OF Mas de Daumas Gassac, who makes an impassioned case for wines of character and individuality (versus commercialism and the new 'global' taste), certainly practises what he preaches. His reds are always excellent, but the newly released 2004 white is in a different league: a brilliant ensemble of Chardonnay, Viognier, Chenin Blanc and Manseng, it exudes a galaxy of youthful pineapple aromas with a matching flavour and considerable length. Surely one of Aimé's best ever and, dare I say it, reminiscent of the superb 1989 Laville Haut-Brion in its youth.

Another striver, this time in Bordeaux. To be more precise in Entre-deux-Mers, once the no-man's land of mediocrity. Jean-Marc Maugey sets out to demonstrate what can be achieved

with care, dedication and, I presume, more than adequate finance. I first tasted Château Maugey (the vintage was 2000) in March a year ago and was impressed. It had a deep, velvety core, an intense youthful rim, peppery fruit, sweet, delicious flavour, but with new oak apparent.

The reaction to my reactions was as favourable as unexpected, for a dozen bottles arrived (one of the penalties of being a wine writer!).

Even the wooden box hinted at something 'luxe', for instead of the customary singed branding, 'Château Maugey' was embossed in gold – the ever-enterprising Daphne has made a tray out of it, to the hilarity of the family. Capsules, labels, corks, even the bottles, were cut above the norm; moreover, and unusual for Bordeaux, it has a back label to appeal to even the most blasé New World wine drinker. 'Le Jean-Marc', we are informed, is thoroughly biological, its grapes, Merlot (80%), Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon (17% and 10% respectively, the balance Malbec), are given 30 days' maceration followed by élevage in new barrels for three winters. Unfiltered. No mention of fining but I wouldn't be surprised if, à la New Zealand's 'Sophia', free-range eggs were used. Clearly no ordinary claret.

What was my second impression of the 2000 14 months later? Not much change. I was still seduced by its style and character, noting more soft fruit, ripe, brambly, on the nose,

plus a whiff of cedar and, on the palate, more than a touch of spicy, 100% new oak. Its flavour was mocha-like, rich with high extract. Lovely to taste, to drink by itself, and a sure-fire gold medal

winner. But, with lamb, the more we sipped, the less interesting we found it. I shall keep a few bottles but wonder if it will ever reach the perfection of the 1985 Château Cissac, a bourgeois Médoc, made in a traditional way by an old hand and a very old friend, Louis Vialard. Time will tell.

Thinking about great Médocs, I had the pleasure and privilege of drinking two in a row. The first, a jeroboam of Château Pichon-Lalande 1959 (more and more I prefer 1959s to 1961s), at a dinner party at the château on May de Lencquesaing's 80th birthday. It was fairly deep and youthful for its age (like our indomitable hostess); sweet, soft, lovely. Curiously a touch of coffee on the nose. Yet sheer perfection.

The following day, a lunch given by Corinne Mentzelopoulos at Château Margaux in honour of the Bacchus Society of America. The 1953 *grand vin* in magnums. What a lovely vintage. Relaxed, autumnal; the sort of bouquet unique to Château Margaux – fragrant is too limp a word. Multi-layered, intriguing, glorious. Also sublimely sweet on the palate. So easy to drink that if one was not careful it would slip down too quickly to make a note worthy of its stature, even if this were possible. We were also witnessing the passage of time, catching perfection for a fleeting moment before it fades. Like New Hampshire in autumn.

Apropos 1953 and my mention of Louis Vialard, my first taste of Cissac was of this lovely vintage. Thanks to my note-making fetish, I found reference to this in my 'little red book', Volume V. On 20 April 1960 I noted: 'Ch Cissac, Ht Medoc 1953 John Snell L Vialard, full red; very good (bouquet), fragrant cedar; lovely flavour, elegant, med (weight), tannin and acid.' I was working for Harveys in Manchester at the time, and we lived in a modest cottage in Cheshire. The wine had been imported in cask and bottled by John Snell's father, a neighbouring doctor in Bowdon. He made a very good job of it. Very economical too. Those were the days!

**Michael Broadbent has more than 50 years' experience in the wine world. He has written several books on wine, and is a director of Christie's.**



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