

HPS WINE CATALOG



UPDATED JANUARY 2005

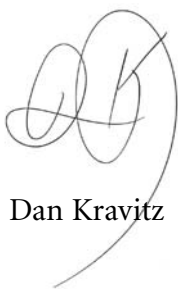
HAND PICKED SELECTIONS is the personal work of Dan Kravitz. Each year I spend more than six weeks in the vineyards and taste more than two thousand wines. Only the best values become Hand Picked Selections.

Great wines are rare and expensive. Very broadly speaking, there is general agreement as to which vineyards and which winemakers produce great wines. A merchant who wishes to sell great wine need only spend an appropriate amount of money.

The goal of Hand Picked Selections is to choose uncommonly good wines at competitive prices in each category. Typically but not rigidly a Hand Picked Selection will be an Estate Bottled wine that can be purchased by the consumer for less than fifteen dollars. Further information on our wines is available on the HPS website, **www.handpickedselections.com**.

Unless otherwise noted, all wines listed in this catalog are exclusive to Hand Picked Selections. Those exceptions either specify states where the wines are unavailable or are marked 'nx' indicating that availability and/or exclusivity must be determined on a state-by-state basis. An index of wines and suppliers appears on Page 2.

Please accept my grateful thanks for your interest in Hand Picked Selections. No effort will be spared to conscientiously select the best possible wines for your clientele.



Dan Kravitz

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LANGUEDOC

La Noble

La Noble is our varietal brand from the south of France. Until the mid-90's the wines were sold as 'Domaine la Noble' and came entirely from Yves Delmas' Estate near Carcassonne. The brand has grown exponentially since then. While Delmas' wines are still often used in the blends (particularly Merlot), wines can come from anywhere in the south.

Vintage quality and style have a great effect on the blends. In most years, we look for Chardonnay from the highest inland vineyards with the coolest climates. However in the cold, rainy 2004 vintage much of the Chardonnay came from chalky vineyards in Florensac and Marseillette, almost on the Mediterranean coast. Most of the Merlot was sourced from the area around Nimes which had a warmer season than Delmas' terroir in western Languedoc.

The 2004 vintage sees the introduction of a completely new package. The label has been redesigned along colorful renaissance lines and synthetic corks are replaced by screwcaps. The studies have been done and the verdict is clear: Wines meant for early consumption keep their freshness better with screwcaps than with either natural or synthetic corks. La Noble wines are blended to drink on release. While Cabernet and to some extent Merlot can benefit from a year or two of bottle age (depending on vintage), these are pure expressions of ripe varietal fruit (La Noble wines are not subjected to any oak ageing) meant to give uncomplicated pleasure with simple meals.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003/4	La Noble Merlot	\$9-11
2003/4	La Noble Cabernet Sauvignon	\$9-11
2003/4	La Noble Chardonnay	\$9-11
2003/4	La Noble Merlot, 6x1.5L	\$17-19
2003/4	La Noble Chardonnay 6x1.5L	\$17-19

Chateau de Lancyre

Is this the single best Estate in Languedoc? It depends on your point of view. I would have to say that the top wines of a very few Estates are possibly better than Lancyre's Grand Cuvee. However for overall average quality, reliability, reasonable pricing and substantial quantities, Lancyre is a very strong candidate.

This is the biggest property in Pic St Loup, the district anointed by both Parker and the Spectator Languedoc's best. The vineyards are 15 – 20 miles inland from the Mediterranean and almost 2000 feet above sea level. Summer days are blazingly hot, 103° fahrenheit or more. Nighttime temperatures always drop below 60° and often below 50°! Syrah is picked early in October, not late in August as in many Languedoc vineyards. The style of the wines is closer to Northern Rhone than to Languedoc.

'Rouviere' is 90% Roussanne, 10% Viognier with no oak. The basic Pic Saint Loup is 40/40 Grenache/Syrah and 10/10 Carignan and Cinsault. 'Vieille Vignes' is 65/35 Syrah/Grenache, while 'Grande Cuvee' is 70% Syrah, 20% Grenache and 10% Mourvedre. The gorgeous Rose is 60/40 Grenache/Syrah.

One of co-owner Bernard Durand's many strengths is his consistency. In the weak 2002 vintage, even the basic red earned an 88 point rating from the Wine Advocate. The '03's are stunning, and an initial tasting of the weak '04 vintage indicated that he has worked his magic again. Limited quantities remain of the great '01 'Vieilles Vignes' and 'Grande Cuvee'. The '03 red has been released. We will have a very small quantity of worthy '02 'Vieilles Vignes' this spring, followed by the '03 this fall. There is no '02 'Grande Cuvee'.

If there was more Roussanne in the world, it would join Chardonnay and Riesling for me as the white wines I drink the most. Lancyre's 'Rouviere' just gets better and better. The beautiful '03 is actually surpassed by '04, which is the best 'Rouviere' I've ever had. In this cool, rainy year I have no idea why Roussanne excelled, but it did. Last but not least, the '04 rose is also wonderful; in Languedoc weak years for reds are often outstanding for roses.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003	Ch de Lancyre Pic Saint Loup	\$16-18
2001-2-3	Ch de Lancyre Pic St Loup Vieilles Vignes	\$19-21
2001-3	Ch de Lancyre Pic St Loup Gr Cuvee	\$30-32
2003-4	Ch de Lancyre Rouviere Ctx Languedoc blanc	\$19-21
2004	Ch de Lancyre Pic Saint Loup Rose	\$15-17

Chateau du Donjon

Jean Panis took over only reluctantly from his ill father in '96. Since then he has had a change of heart and has become as enthusiastic a winegrower as I know... and his ability matches his enthusiasm. This Estate's major hot streak continues.

When Jean introduced Minervois Grande Reserve in '00, he had no idea that it would be a runaway success. The last three vintages have sold out before the next harvest. We had the good sense to protect ourselves with almost 500 cases of the '03, but will sell out before the '04 can be bottled and shipped early spring.

Grande Reserve is the benchmark wine, but the others are worthy of attention. The rose is consistently fine as well as having one of the loveliest packages of any wine we sell. Galiniere Merlot is a staple at a price point just above La Noble. We sell as much of the limited quantity of Cabernet as we can get. Carignan is offered once a year with the rose, a light, amazingly lively and refreshing red. Prestige does not get the attention it deserves but provides outstanding value and quality year after year. We have a little '01 and will go straight to '03 this fall.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003-4	Ch Donjon Minervois Grande Tradition	\$13-15
2003-4	Domaine la Galiniere VdP Merlot	\$11-13
2004	Domaine la Galiniere VdP Cabernet	\$11-13
2004	Chateau du Donjon Minervois Rose	\$12-14
2001-3	Chateau du Donjon Minervois Prestige	\$17-19

Domaine Puydeval

When brilliant young winemaker Jeff Carrel came to Languedoc many growers solicited his services. Dominique Menjucq was impressed enough to offer equity in his substantial Domaine in return for first call on Jeff's time.

One of the things that impressed Jeff about Dominique was a shared conviction that Cabernet Franc could be better in Languedoc than either Merlot or Cab Sauv. Puydeval rouge is 60% Cabernet Franc, 30% Syrah, 10% Merlot. The wine is aged 8 months in one and two year old barrels. The result is polished, ripe and balanced. This is one of the most original wines HPS imports. The Chicago Wine Challenge named the current '01 as one of the world's 50 top red wines under \$15. Production is substantial and we can probably grow sales indefinitely. At this writing we have 1300 cases in U.S. inventory and we can get more!

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2001	Domaine Puydeval VdP Rouge	\$13-15

Chateau Massamier la Mignarde

Chateau Massamier la Mignarde was an overnight sensation for us. Frantz Venes' family has owned the Estate for 300 years, but due to a family feud neither Frantz nor his parents set foot on the property for 20 years. The windup of a long court case restored the Venes to their family home and led to renewal of vineyards planted by Frantz' father and grandfather.

Minervois & La Liviniere: Most of Minervois is a high rolling plateau making easy, juicy fruity \$7-15 wines that are at their best up to 3 years. La Liviniere is a new Appellation for the 15% of Minervois in the mountains, making \$12 - 50 wines that can improve for 10 years. This is a big Estate with vineyards in both areas. Frantz Venes is passionate and tireless, so the lineup is large. We currently list six wines, ranging from inexpensive values to some of the best wines in Languedoc.

I was first seduced by the **Carignan**, my introduction to really fine wine from this varietal. It comes from a six acre parcel planted by Frantz' grandfather in 1946 on a steep slope. It is made by carbonic maceration and bottled very young. We have a little '01 left and an '02 that is stunning by any standard but particularly for the vintage.

Domus Maximus is a classic blend of 80% Syrah (made partly by carbonic maceration) and 20% Grenache. Young Syrah planted on a steep slope is complemented with 70 year old Grenache. The wine is aged 15 months in half new, half one year old French oak. La Liviniere was the only part of Languedoc where '99 was better than '98.

Cuvee des Oliviers comes in red and rose. The rose is a lovely aromatic Cinsault-based bottle. Red is a blend of Cinsault (for aroma and finesse) and Cabernet (for power and structure), along with bits of other varietals. Both represent amazing value.

Minervois Tradition is a classic blend of 50% Carignan with 25% each Syrah/Grenache. It offers lots of southern French 'garrigue' in a polished, modern format.

The drolly named Tenement de Garouilhas is a completely original wine. 60% Syrah with 20% each Carignan and Cinsault, fermentation starts by carbonic maceration, then finishes along with malolactic in 100% new French oak. It is great wine. It has to be at this price!

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003	Dne Massamier 'Oliviers' Rose	\$9-11
2001-2	Dne Massamier Carignan	\$23-25
1999-01	Ch Massamier Domus Maximus	\$30-32
2003-4	Dne Massamier 'Oliviers' Rouge	\$9-11
2003	Ch Massamier Tenement de Garouilhas (late '05)	\$55-58
2003	Ch Massamier Minervois 'Tradition'	\$12-14

Domaine des Pomaredes

Domaine des Pomaredes has been part of the HPS catalog for ten years now. Rocket scientist Jean Flourens looks exactly the same as he did when I first met him, brilliant, amiable and ageless, with unruly white hair. However I think his winemaking has improved from what was already a high level.

His vineyard in Saint-Eulalie about 10 miles west of Carcassonne is in one of Languedoc's coolest terroirs. With the goal of making substantial quantities of good, not great wine, pruning is not extremely tight. In warm years, the wines are ripe generous examples of moderately priced Bordeaux varietals. In cooler years, ripeness is a challenge. In the difficult 2004 vintage, Jean succeeded better than most. We will have a limited quantity of good Merlot.

I am up in the air about Cabernet. Jean's Cabernet Franc has always seemed to me to be better than his Cabernet Sauvignon. The problem is that the market wants Cab Sauv, not Cab Franc. I don't think I can come up with a Cab Sauv good enough in 2004. Cab Franc is a better bet. Perhaps we will do a small bottling of a blend of the two.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003-4	Domaine des Pomaredes Merlot	\$9-11
2003-4	Domaine des Pomaredes Cabernet Sauvignon ('04?)	\$9-11
2004	Domaine des Pomaredes Cabernet Franc (?)	\$9-11
2004	Domaine des Pomaredes Cab Sauv/Cab Franc	\$9-11

ROUSSILLON

Chateau de Pena and Cuvee de Peña (Cellier Agly Cooperative)

The news here is good (as usual) and getting better (also as usual).

Eight families farm an average of 60 acres each, and another 60 villagers average two acres. Most of the full-timers' vineyards are Cotes de Roussillon - Villages and the Rivesaltes dessert Appellations. Most of the part-timers grow Vin de Pays.

The weather here in 2004 was marginally better than in most of the rest of Languedoc - Roussillon, but it still wasn't good. As usual, brilliant, modest winemaker Joseph ("Tony") Gonzalez' preternatural instincts came through. He "suggested" (read "ordered") everybody to field prune for low yields. Nobody in the village is dumb enough to ignore Tony's suggestions, so instead of 3 - 3 1/2 tons per acre of green, underripe wine everybody cropped 2 1/2 tons an acre of nicely ripe wine.

The big news here is our introduction of the 3L bag-in-box, a first for HPS. The last 4500 cases of the 2003 vintage have been packaged in this format and are on the way to the U.S. as I write. By the time you read this they should be here. I was at Peña as the 'bottling' (or whatever you want to call it) began and took a few cases right off of the bottling line. I tried the wines with a number of other suppliers and acquaintances to universal approval. The market will determine what percentage of the '04 goes into bottle and into box. In contrast to the hot '03 with a preponderance of Syrah, the '04 is 55% Grenache, 28% Syrah and 17% Carignan.

'04 Rose is probably the best yet. Cool years that are difficult for red wine often yield first class roses. There is another lot of '03 Chateau on the way and late spring we will bring in the superb '03 Reserves, 'C' and 'S' as usual. We may also finally break down and try the Ninet de Peña white, a pure Viognier that in this cool year showed beautiful aromatics.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003-4	Cuvee de Pena	\$9-11
2003	Ch de Pena, Cts Roussillon-Villages	\$11-13
2001-3	Ch de Pena Reserve 'C'	\$20-22
2001-3	Ch de Pena Reserve 'S'	\$20-22
2004	Ninet de Pena Rose	\$9-11
2003	Ch de Pena Muscat de Rivesaltes	\$16-18
NV	Rivesaltes Hors d'Age	\$21-23
NV	Muscat de Rivesaltes (dancing couple bottle)	\$15-17
NV	Rivesaltes Ambre	\$14-16
2003-4	Cuvee de Pena 3x3L bag-in-box	\$21-23

“The Fifteen” Grenache

The wine is the creation of a brilliant winemaker, Herve Sabardeil. In 1998 Herve was cellar master at the Pia Cooperative, where he convinced a few growers to limit yields from their best old vine Grenache vineyards. In the past these grapes went into Rivesaltes, the dessert wines of Roussillon. These are dying out for lack of a market. The experiment resulted in the ‘98 Pia Grenache, praised by both Parker and the Spectator.

Herve quit his job at Pia to work as cellar master at the Vinassan facility where HPS blends Languedoc wines, a position from which he could expand his production of this savory crowd-pleaser. Today 4 Roussillon Coops and a dozen growers can provide the equivalent of up to 50,000 cases of wine... in years when Mother Nature cooperates!

There was no 2002 and we protected ourselves by buying a large quantity of 2001. We have about 1000 cases left. From there we move directly into 2003. It doesn't look like there will be a 2004, but again we should have continuity until (knock on wood) a 2005 can be bottled in early 2006.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2001	The Fifteen Grenache	\$14-16

Domaine de l'Agly

Herve's success with 'The Fifteen' has allowed him to realize his lifelong dream - to own a vineyard. Herve likes the village of Pia, where he launched his career, but for quality he needed to be inland at higher elevation.

He has about 10 acres each of Carignan, Grenache and Syrah and a precious 1 1/2 acres of Mourvedre, all at almost 1000 feet above sea level. The Carignan averages 77 years, the Grenache 67, the Syrah 18 and the Mourvedre 24. Everything is head-pruned except for the Syrah. Syrah and Grenache get a 3 day cold soak and 3 weeks of fermentation and skin contact, then go into 500 litre demi-muids (1/2 new) for malolactic and ageing. Carignan is made by carbonic maceration and sees no oak. Mourvedre is traditionally fermented and sees no oak. The wine is blended and bottled unfiltered at 18 months. It is a harmonious beauty featuring aromas and flavors of black raspberries, black currants, violets, black pepper and spices. Herve has created a beauty to pair with his 'The Fifteen' Grenache beast.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003	Domaine de l'Agly	\$22-24

SAVOIE

Pierre Boniface – The unknown wines of Savoie are not quite as unknown as a few years ago. Sales of Apremont and Roussette combined topped 7500 cases this year. What’s more interesting is that there are now half a dozen Apremonts being sold in the U.S.! Success breeds imitation.

For the few of you who haven’t had it, Apremont is about as light and refreshing as wine can be. Robert Parker says that it is like drinking from a cool mountain stream running through rocky crevices laced with wine... rather poetic for Mr. P. The Roussette is a bigger wine, riper, more glycerine, 12 1/2% alcohol rather than the barely 11% of Apremont. It is very savory and perhaps better suited to the rich foods of the mountain folk.

The praise for these wines has been unanimous. Howard Goldberg in *The New York Times* said: “Light White, Savoie Joy” Spritzzy, dry Boniface Apremont from Savoie - bottled joie de vivre – is a find.

Friendly competitor Kermit Lynch perhaps said it best: “This is as fresh as wine gets, the wine version of bubbling, crystal clear spring water. It is light in body, light in alcohol, alive and kicking on the palate, bone dry, and crisp at the finish. It reminds me of green apple, granite cliffs, and alpine meadows inhabited by of-age nymphs...”

Pierre Boniface is a great guy, and I’m delighted by his success. In a world increasingly dominated by cookie-cutter wines, it’s a treat to find this distinctive beauty - and 75,000 cases of it for the world to enjoy!

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2004	Boniface Apremont	\$15-17
2003-4	Boniface Roussette de Savoie	\$16-18
2004	Boniface Mondeuse	\$14-16
2004	Boniface Apremont Prestige	\$16-18
NV	Boniface Brut de Savoie	\$18-20

LOIRE - SANCERRE

Domaine Carroir-Perrin is the first HPS Loire wine in many years. It has never been HPS’ region, but as my tastes evolve I find myself increasingly drawn to the crisp, flinty style of Sauvignon Blanc that reaches its peak in Sancerre. The millions of Parisians who slurp it down regularly know what they’re doing!

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003-4	Sancerre Domaine du Carroir Perrin	\$24-26

ALSACE

Bruno Hunold – If I had to pick a single grower who shares my ideas about wine, it might be Bruno Hunold. I’ve never discussed this with him, but when I taste the wines and look at the prices I see as if in a mirror exactly what I try to offer to the consumer. Bruno is not trying to make great wine. However he is as hardworking a vigneron as I know. He crops at the maximum the law will allow - but not higher. Few people are aware that those who overcrop can send the excess to be distilled - and keep the right to the Appellation for the rest! In other words, Pinot Blanc can be cropped at 6 tons/acre. Many growers will allow the yield to burgeon to 8 or 9 tons. The excess is distilled, but what is bottled still tastes as dilute as 9 tons per acre.

Bruno’s vineyards look like a perfectly tended garden. He does a green harvest in the summer if there is any chance that yields will go over the maximum he is permitted to bottle. His vineyards are hand-harvested, an expensive procedure now used for less than 1/2 of all Alsace wines. His cellar is immaculate – you could literally eat off of the floor as it is ceramic tile and washed down many times a day.

The 2003 vintage is spectacular. The ferocious heat gave wonderful ripeness but somehow the acidity hung in there and the wines are as well balanced as ever, but with better concentration than usual. The 2004 harvest was very late and when I visited early December nothing had even finished alcoholic fermentation. Bruno is excruciatingly honest about vintage quality (he told me in March 2003 that 2002 was the worst vintage since 1994). He says 2004 is better than ‘02 – and we loved his ‘02’s!

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003-4	Hunold Pinot Blanc	\$16-18
2003-4	Hunold Riesling	\$17-19
2003-4	Hunold Pinot Gris	\$19-21
2002-3	Hunold Gewurztraminer	\$20-22
2003	Hunold P Gris ‘Vorbouurg’ Grand Cru	\$28-30
2003	Hunold Gewurz ‘Vorbouurg’ Grand Cru	\$28-30
NV	Hunold Cremant d’Alsace Brut	\$22-24
2001	Hunold Gewurz V.T. 12x375ml	\$31-33
2001	Hunold Gewurz S.G.N. 12x375ml	\$49-51
2003	Hunold Muscat	\$18-20
2003	Hunold Riesling Cotes de Rouffach	\$20-22

Jean-Marie Haag is a wonderful man and a great winegrower. His wines are some of the hardest to sell in my book, but I won't quit until I see his reputation firmly established at the top of the Alsace hierarchy, with the sales that this position merits.

Jean-Marie wants to produce great wine. Period. He prunes for low yields. He farms organically. He micromanages his vineyard to assure perfectly balanced fruit. He then broods over extremely cool, slow fermentations that result in stunningly aromatic wines. He won't bottle until he thinks the wines are fully developed, meaning that he is often out of stock of some basics during the peak spring selling season. This creates special problems for the American market. Just as we gain sales momentum, we run out of wine.

Still, the wines are worth the effort. Jean-Marie's wines now wind up on my table probably more than those of any other producer of white wine. The intensity of flavor is truly remarkable. I don't think the weak dollar will hurt sales - paradoxically it could even help as other growers with older reputations (Deiss, Boxler, Burn) see price increases steeper than Haag's.

It is hard for me to pick a favorite wine here. In terms of remarkable quality for an unremarkable varietal, Pinot Blanc may be his top wine. His Pinot Gris is always excellent; perhaps my liking is colored by the fact that it is his smallest production and I have to scramble to keep some in my own basement. Yet finally I return to his Riesling. For 30 years I was a lover of German Riesling and avoided this varietal from Alsace. Over the past few years this has changed as the glorious flowery aromatics of Haag's wine reminds me of fine Mosel, while the dry richness matches perfectly with the ocean fin fish of Maine.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003	Haag Pinot Blanc	\$18-20
2003	Haag Riesling 'Vallee Noble'	\$23-25
2002	Haag Riesling	\$20-22
2003	Haag Gewurztraminer 'Vallee Noble'	\$25-27
2003	Haag Pinot Gris 'Vallee Noble'	\$24-26
2003	Haag Pinot Gris 'Breiterberg'	\$33-35
2003	Haag Riesling GC 'Zinnkoepfle' Marion	\$38-40
2003	Haag Gewurz GC 'Zinnkoepfle Marie'	\$48-50
2003	Haag Pinot Gris GC 'Zinnkoepfle' Theo	\$48-50
2000	Haag Gwz SGN GC l'Esprit	\$160-165
2002	Haag Gewurz VT GC Zinnkoepfle	\$70-72
1999	Haag Pinot Gris SGN GC Zinnkoepfle	\$135-140
2001	Haag Pinot Gris GC 'Zinnkoepfle' VT	\$67-69

CHAMPAGNE

Jean Laurent is co-owner with his father of this fine and distinctive Champagne Estate. The vineyards are in the Aube, an underrated district south of the Marne. However this district shares the distinctive chalky soil (with Chablis and the White Cliffs of Dover) of the heart of Champagne, which gives great potential for quality. The out-of-the-way location helps keep prices reasonable and this is where smart buyers look for the best Champagne at reasonable prices.

There are 33 acres, planted to 88% Pinot Noir and 12% Chardonnay. Ageing is a minimum of 3 years on the yeast for Blanc de Noirs, 4 years for Blanc de Blancs, 5 for Rose, and considerably longer for the vintage dated wines. This is a profoundly traditional Estate. The NV Brut is a blend of 3 consecutive vintages. Should one or more of the years be a lesser vintage, copious quantities of old reserve wine are used to keep quality at a consistent and remarkably high level. This is a producer of exceptional merit and incredible value.

Wine quality and word of mouth made Jean Laurent a success. In 2004, after years of tasting, Robert Parker posted his notes and scores on his erobertparker website. With ratings from 92 - 95+, sales exploded. Those interested in the 1996 Blanc de Noirs or the 1995 Blanc de Blancs should order quickly. They will be sold out by spring.

Jean Laurent maintains a large stock of older vintages, both Blanc de Blancs and Blanc de Noirs, as well as a complete range of bottle sizes. A list is available on request. Very large formats and older vintages can be disgorged on request and shipped by air or sea.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
NV	Jean Laurent Bl de Noirs Brut	\$40-42
NV	Jean Laurent Bl de Bl Brut	\$41-43
NV	Jean Laurent Brut Rose	\$45-47
NV	Jean Laurent Bl de Noirs 12x375ml	\$25-27
NV	Jean Laurent Bl de Noirs Brut 6x1.5L	\$98-100
NV	Jean Laurent Bl de Noirs Brut 1x3.0L	\$240-250
NV	Jean Laurent Bl de Noirs Brut 1x6.0L	\$450-475
NV	Champagne Jean Laurent BdN 1.5L wood	\$22-24
1996	Champagne J Laurent Bl de Noirs Brut	\$63-65
1996	Champagne J Laurent Bl de Noirs Brut 6x1.5L	\$135-140
1995	Champagne J Laurent Bl de Blancs	\$63-65

RHONE

Domaine du Pegau, Feraud-Brunel, Pelican, Red Note

Laurence Feraud is the hardest-workin' woman in the wine business. Running (with her semi-retired father) one of the most prestigious Estates in Chateaneuf-du-Pape wasn't enough, so with Andre Brunel she founded the tiny top quality negociant house Feraud-Brunel. That wasn't enough, so she blended Pelican Bleu, Vin de Pays. That wasn't enough, so she works with her husband on his Costieres de Nimes Estate, helping produce and blend Red Note. I saw Laurence twice in December. She has more projects in the works (of course), but wasn't able to give me any details yet.

The heart of her work is Domaine du Pegau. Many people don't realize that the size of the Estate has doubled since Laurence took over from her - and that the average vine age has actually *increased* as Laurence purchased parcels of extremely old vines to offset new plantings of Syrah.

The wines of Pegau only get better, but we have to prepare for sticker-shock when the '03 is released this fall. '01 was a small crop. '02 was even smaller; half of what was picked was declassified and what was bottled was sold at a lower than usual price. No price established yet for the '03, but between huge demand, Pegau's desire to make up for low income from the '01 and the '02, and the weaker dollar, it won't be cheap.

HPS has exclusivity for Feraud-Brunel Vacqueyras, Gigondas and Cotes du Rhone - Villages, Chateaneuf-du-Pape 'Selection Laurence Feraud', Plan Pegau, Pelican Bleu and Red Note. The last four are listed as stock items, but supplies are limited.

Domaine du Pegau is not available MN, WI, MI, OH, IN, TX, LA & NV. NX CA.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2001	Feraud-Brunel Vacqueyras	\$27-29
2000	Feraud-Brunel Gigondas	\$33-35
NV	Plan Pegau Lot 2003-4	\$16-18
2003	Feraud-Brunel Cotes du Rhone - Villages	\$15-17
2003	Selection Laurence Feraud Chateaneuf-du-Pape	\$37-39
2002	Pegau Chateaneuf	\$45-47
2003	Pegau Chateaneuf Cuvee Reservee	
1999	Pegau Chateaneuf-du-Pape	\$52-54
2002	Pegau Chateaneuf Blanc	\$42-44
2001	Pegau 'Cuvee Laurence' 6x750ml	\$117-119
1998	Pegau Cuvee Laurence 6x750ml	\$124-126
2000	Pegau 'da Capo' 3x750ml	\$250-260
2003	Pelican Bleu	\$12-14
2003	Red Note	\$19-21

Domaine La Montagnette & Les Galets (Cave d'Estezargues)

The Cave d'Estezargues is legendary among people who know Rhone wines. It is rare in that the six member Estates all keep their wines separate, as opposed to the usual Coop practice of everything in one pot. Other well-known Estates making wine here include the Domaines d'Andezon, Pierrelatte and Pierredon. Tardieu-Laurent gets their Cotes du Rhone here as well.

The best lots are bottled with the Estate name while other wines go into generic bottlings, which can offer great value. The owning Grenier family at Montagnette is large and energetic, always looking both to expand and improve their vineyards. Last year they acquired an ancient parcel of Cinsault on the next ridgeline over from their primary Grenache vineyard. I have rarely been a big fan of red Cinsault but this cuve was an eye-opener and I used the whole thing in my blend. The 2004 Montagnette is 38% Grenache, 32% Syrah, 25% Cinsault and 5% Mourvedre.

2004 was uniquely successful in Estezargues and despite the weak dollar I am buying as much of all three wines as I can afford. In a year where much of the south of France suffered from high yields and underripe hollow wines, Montagnette had their best vintage ever! Montagnette makes Villages as well as basic Cotes du Rhone, but it is the basic wine that I love, based on the old Grenache vineyards planted on a wind-swept plateau. The Villages has more Syrah, but from younger vines in terroir that I do not think is as good as the plateau. Cotes du Rhone and Villages terroir is a checkerboard here and I'm far from convinced that the INAO has every parcel right.

'Terra Vitis' is an Estate-bottled Cotes du Rhone made for early consumption. Varietal composition varies; in '04 it is 65% Grenache with Carignan and Cinsault. Much of it is from Montagnette but the other Estates also contribute some of their 'second' wines. 'Terra Vitis' is the name of a new grower's association devoted to sustainable agriculture, with severe limits on pesticide, fungicide and herbicide use. It is a perfect quaff and belongs in bistro carafes and jelly glasses. 'Les Galets' is a classy Vin de Pays from younger vines at Montagnette blended with a very old non-Appellation parcel. It has been a runaway success for HPS. Its blend doesn't vary much and in '04 is 50/50 Grenache / Carignan.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2004	Dne la Montagnette Cotes du Rhone	\$14-16
2004	Terra Vitis Cotes du Rhone	\$11-13
2004	Estezargues Cuvee des Galets VdT	\$11-13

PROVENCE

Commanderie de la Bargemone & VIGNES DE SOLEIL

Vignes de Soleil Rose is the same wine as Bargemone Rose

Bargemone is hot. After 20 years dry Rose is an overnight success in the U.S. with sales skyrocketing for this category, not only from Provence but from Languedoc, Spain, California, everywhere. It's about time. I've had Bargemone Rose cold in my fridge 24/365 for 10 years now.

Winemaking has always been good here. Two years ago winemaker Claude Marriottini hired a new assistant, Pierre Deshors. His title is assistant winemaker, but his primary responsibility is the vineyard. Improvements here have been impressive and have had a real effect on wine quality overall. The blazing heat and tiny yields of the 2003 vintage gave the rose a degree of concentration never seen before, but the 2004 is fully comparable in quality. The blend remains essentially the same at 40/40/20 Grenache / Cinsault / Syrah.

White and red wine are perhaps more improved than the rose, which has always been very fine. For white, the yields of Ugni Blanc have been cut, adding to concentration and giving more play to the lively character of Bargemone's Sauvignon Blanc. The blend is 40% Sauvignon, 35% Grenache, 25% Ugni. For red, lower yields again have made a difference as has canopy management, resulting in wine with more polish than in the past. The addition of small percentages of Cab and Syrah have also helped add subtlety. The blend is 80/10/10 Grenache, Cab, Syrah.

Due to a shipping error we have a modest stock of the surprisingly successful 2002 red. We are bringing in the '03 simultaneously and will have both vintages until the '02 is gone. This is useful as the '03 is a big brawny wine that will improve for years while the '02 has consistently shown beautifully in consumer tastings, on several occasions out-selling wines of better 'pedigree'.

Finally, we are now out of '00 Tournebride. We will have the '03 in the market late spring and it promises to be the best yet.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2004	Bargemone Provence Rose	\$15-17
NV	Vendanges de Soleil Rose	\$15-17
2004	Bargemone Provence White	\$15-17
2004	Bargemone Provence Rose 12x375ml	\$11-13
2002-3	Bargemone Provence Rouge	\$15-17
2003	Bargemone 'Tournebride'	\$19-21

BURGUNDY

Henri & Paul Jacqueson – This great Domaine is with Pegau one of the two ‘flagships’ of the HPS portfolio. It may seem strange to find a Cote Chalonnaise Estate as a flagship, but this is not only one of the great Estates of Burgundy but a rare bargain as well. Prices are high for Rully and Mercurey, but quality equals some of the finest Cote d’Ors, and taking that into consideration, prices are actually very, very low.

The Jacquesons are recognized as perhaps the best growers in the Chalonnaise. Their wines appear on the lists of many of France’s 2 & 3 star Michelin restaurants. Yields average less than 3 tons per acre and vine age averages over 30 years. Each year the wines get 10 months of barrel age in 1/2 to 1/2 new barrels (depending on vintage quality) for both red and white. We list only ‘Pucelle’ as a stock item because these wines sell out. We try to keep ‘Pucelle’ in stock, but cannot guarantee availability. Reds are in particularly short supply and we must allocate the wines by color.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003/4	Rully 1er Cru ‘Pucelles’ Blanc	\$33-35
2003/4	Jacqueson Rully 1er ‘Gresigny’ Bl	\$34-36
2003/4	Jacqueson Rully ‘Chaponnieres’ Rouge	\$33-35
2003/4	Jacqueson Rully 1er ‘Cloux’ Rouge	\$37-39
2003/4	Jacqueson Rully Blanc	\$30-32
2003/4	Jacqueson Mercurey ‘Vaux’ Rouge	\$32-24
2003/4	Jacqueson Mercurey 1er Cru ‘Naugues’ Rg	\$34-36
2003/4	Jacqueson Aligote	\$19-21
2003/4	Jacqueson Bouzeron	\$22-24

Allocation: five whites minimum for three reds

2004’s available 10/05

Michel Goubard’s family has grown wine in the village of Saint-Desert since 1600. A relatively small Domaine when he inherited, he has more than doubled the size in 20 years. Average vine age is relatively young, but yields are held to modest levels. Some of Burgundy’s price increases have caught up with this very traditional Estate, but costs and shelf prices remain reasonable, as Michel has refused to go along with much of the negotiant foolishness.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2002/3	Goubard Bg Rge ‘Montavril’ oak	\$19-21
2003	Goubard Bourgogne Blanc ‘Montavril’	\$18-20

BORDEAUX

Jean-Francois Galhaud: Chateaux La Rose Brisson & Moulin Galhaud; Maison Galhaud 'Cuvee Leon'

La Rose Brisson and Moulin Galhaud are great wines from Saint-Emilion. Prices are far from inexpensive, but the quality rivals that of fine classified growths and the infamous 'garages'. Sure, \$60 is a lot to pay for any bottle of wine but the competition is now in triple digits.

There are 15 acres of vines, 90% Merlot, 8% Cab Sauv and 2% (1/3 of an acre!) of 70 year old Cabernet Franc. 80% of the production is Chateau La Rose Brisson. The soil is sandy and chalky on the surface but just a little way down is the iron-bearing clay that is Merlot's best home. The wine is 85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. It is aged 12 months in 1/2 new, 1/2 1 year old French oak then aged a year in bottle before release. It is a classic Saint-Emilion at a very high level, the equal of most Classified growths.

Chateau Moulin-Galhaud is produced from 4 acres of 50 year old Merlot vines planted on a rare Saint-Emilion soil of iron-bearing rock. The wine is blended with the Cabernet Franc (5 - 7%), aged 18 months in 100% new French oak barrels and released with at least a year of bottle age. This wine competes with the very top wines of Saint-Emilion at barely half the price.

The owner of the property is Jean-François Galhaud with his wife Martine. Jean-François' grandfather Leon owned a successful vine nursery that sold high-quality phylloxera-resistant cuttings to growers whose vineyards had been destroyed. He bought a Classified St-Emilion. After a family reversal, Jean-François found himself a poor landless graduate of Montpellier, France's top wine school. He started Promocom, a wine brokerage which he built into a substantial business before merging it into Oenoalliance, a major Bordeaux Negotiant.

Oenoalliance has literally thousands of wines, but the one that Jean-Francois and I love is Maison Galhaud Cuvee Leon, a simply beautiful basic Bordeaux selected from the very best lots of the year and treated to a moderate dose of very high quality oak.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2001	Ch La Rose Brisson St Emilion Grand Cru	\$34-36
2000	Ch Moulin Galhaud	\$60-62
2000	Ch Moulin Galhaud 6x1.5L	\$122-125
2000	Maison Galhaud Cuvee Leon	\$18-20

TERRA ALTA

Vilalba dels Arcs is the name of the village and its cooperative. This is the mirror-image of Peña: Two small villages, same size, similar coops, varietals and range of wines. They both speak Catalan. However one is in France, just a few miles south of French speakers while the other is in Spain, just a few miles north of Spanish speakers. The similarities extend to an uncannily brilliant winemaker, with just basic training but great intuition. Joan Bada (in Catalan ‘Joan’ is a man’s name, like ‘Juan’) fills the same role as Joseph ‘Tony’ Gonzalez at Peña. The Coop was founded 60 years ago but only in the mid-90’s did they start to make fine wine. Over half of the 1800 acres are planted to mediocre white varietals but this is changing. 440 acres of Garnacha and 220 of Cariñena are old while Tempranillo, Syrah and Cabernet are still fairly young. As these mature and more are planted we can expect a wider palette of flavors and styles.

ARCS is my entry-level blend here. In ‘03 it was 88% Garnacha, 12% Tempranillo. In the good but different and difficult ‘04 vintage, the final blend will include some of the excellent Cariñena. While in Languedoc Carignan is only now gaining respect, here it is considered a premium grape. As some Garnacha lacks color in ‘04, I am being given access to some fine Cariñena for my blend.

Faristol is Vilalba’s second level red. Selected parcels from 20+ year old Garnacha are blended and bottled young without oak. Suprem is a step up. 60% Garnacha (including some of the superior Lladoner clone) is blended with 20% each Tempranillo and Syrah, and aged 6 months in 1/2 each new, 1, 2 and 3 year old American oak.

Fill de Temps ‘Gran Seleccio’ is equal parts old vine Garnacha and Cariñena spiced with Cabernet Sauvignon. It is aged a year in 1/2 new, 1/2 one year, 1/2 American and 1/2 French oak. Vall de Berrus is at the pinnacle. Early bottlings were too oaky and international, but Joan did it right in 2001. Equal parts ancient Garnacha and Cariñena are blended with the best Cabernet Sauvignon and aged 2 years in new French oak. Big but not over the top, this is the very best home cooking of the Spanish mountains.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003-4	Vilalba Arcs red	\$9-11
2001	Vilalba Fill de Temps Gran Seleccio	\$21-23
2003-4	Vilalba Faristol	\$10-12
2003-4	Vilalba Suprem Negre	\$12-14
2001	Vilalba Vall de Berrus	\$47-49

CALATAYUD

IA is our brand name for wines blended and sourced from the Cooperative of **Villarroya de la Sierra**. Today Spain can lay claim to being the world's hottest country for food and wine. Until recently, the area northeast of Madrid has not been part of the renaissance. South of the sleepy city of Zaragoza, the even sleepier town of Calatayud and almost comatose village of Villarroya de la Sierra are way off the beaten path.

But not for long! Zaragoza will host a World's Fair showcasing water and sustainable development in 2008. The vineyards of the district of Calatayud are an incredible resource that is just being discovered. The Villarroya Coop has almost 2000 acres of vines, over 75% Garnacha, with an average age of 50 years! And these are vineyards grown in some of the harshest possible conditions. The village is 2400 feet above sea level, with the vineyards at an average of 3000 feet in the Sierra de la Virgen to the north. Midday summer temperatures can easily top 100° - with nighttime temps below 50° and (rarely) below 40°! The 'soil' is pure rock. Rainfall is the minimum necessary to sustain a vineyard and rarely falls after March. In this severe climate, yields rarely exceed two tons per acre and Garnacha develops a depth and intensity of color rarely seen elsewhere.

Garnacha is not the only story. Thirty five years ago a hundred acres of Tempranillo were planted. For the past 20 years, it has been cropped at 2 - 2 1/2 tons per acre, but now yields are dropping. The color and aromatics of the Tempranillo are extraordinary.

Ten years ago about 20 acres each of Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah were planted. Early results are very promising, with Cabernet the star. This might seem counterintuitive, but the Cabernet simply shuts midday, ripening slowly for just a few hours every morning. By mid-October, it usually has both ripeness and maturity, along with a concentration that would be the envy of many 2nd tier Bordeaux. Several growers are planting more Cabernet. In general the world doesn't need more Cabernet, but will happily absorb more at this level of quality. The wines we are currently importing from Villarroya de la Sierra are of fine quality as well as being great values. However the potential for improvement may be as great as for any producer we represent.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003/4	'IA' Garnacha	\$9-11
2001/3	'IA' Crianza	\$11-13
2003	'IA' Reserva (late '05 or early '06)	tba

JUMILLA

Panarroz is our brand name for wines sourced and blended at Bodegas Olivares. Olivares is both huge and impressive. In 2003 they sold 50,000 cases of wine. In 2004, this increased to 80,000, mostly due to the success of our blend, which accounted for 22,000 cases. What is impressive is that 80,000 cases represent just 5% of the Bodega's production. This is a bulk operation with the ambition and ability to produce fine wine.

Half of the 754 acres are Monastrell (Mourvedre). 20% are Tempranillo with 10% each Syrah, Garnacha and Merlot. A few parcels of Monastrell are as old as 50 years, but most of the plantings are fairly recent, with an average age for Monastrell approaching 20 years. Tempranillo is ten years old and the others six.

What is most impressive is the siting of the vineyards. According to the website for the D.O. of Jumilla, vineyard elevation ranges from 300 - 700 metres (or from 980 - 2300 feet). The website is out of date. Most of Olivares new Monastrell is planted at **2800 feet!** Even the new Syrah and Garnacha are over 2300 feet. These elevations mean huge diurnal temperature swings, as extreme as in Calatayud. In 24 hours temperatures can range from 105° to 40° and back again.

The high vineyards are on sloping plateaux of chalk, sand and shale. Vineyards had never been planted here before. This combined with the sand allowed Olivares to plant own-rooted vines. Outside of Chile and some Portuguese vineyards on the Atlantic, there are few other ownrooted vineyards. These can only improve quality.

The '03 Panarroz was an unoaked blend of equal parts Monastrell, Garnacha and Syrah. The '04 will be blended in February. The '04 harvest was very late in Jumilla. Paco Selva finished picking on 10/15 in '03, 11/10 in '04. Unfortunately the lower Garnacha and Syrah vineyards were hit by hail. Paco is sourcing some on the open market. The '04 Panarroz will be very similar in style and quality to the '03, but the blend will change slightly; there will be a little more Monastrell, less Garnacha and Syrah and definitely a percentage of Tempranillo, a great success in '04.

A higher level bottling will be released late fall or early next year. 'Llex Obradan' is a blend of Monastrell and Tempranillo that is seeing some judicious oak treatment. It kicks the intensity up a notch.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2004	Panarroz Jumilla	\$10-12
2004	Panarroz 'Llex Obradan' Jumilla (late '05 or early '06)	tba

RIBERA DEL DUERO

Torres de Anguix has me so excited that it's hard to write at all, much less objectively. The Rubio Garcia family have been winegrowers in Ribera del Duero since 1752. In the last half of the 20th century, the family made a modest fortune in industry. They founded the Bodega in 1982. Over the next 20 years, they judiciously added old vineyards from the best terroirs and hired the best vineyard workers and winemakers of the region, seeking only those with long experience. They started bottling wine in 1999 and selling in bottle in 2001. The result is a lineup of wines of incredible quality, all sold at more than fair prices. The upper tiers are some of the most expensive wines sold by HPS. *They are bargains!*

The Bodega owns 255 acres of vines with another 99 under long term lease, all farmed by the Bodega's employees. The vines are 100% Tempranillo. 168 acres are young. These vines give the **Tinto** and **Rosado**. Even from young vines, quality is obvious. The **Rosado** tastes like a Ribera del Duero. It is rare for a rose to show terroir, but like Lancyre in Pic St Loup, Torres de Anguix achieves it. The **Tinto** is a cascade of pure fruit pleasure with great concentration and class for the price.

The average age of the remaining 186 acres is 40 years, with several centenary parcels. **Barrica**, from 20-30 year old vines, might be the star of the show for me. The depth of color and flavor, and sense of place are wonderful. I was nervous when I first tasted the **Crianza**, twice the price of the Barrica. No need to worry. It is astonishing, still young, with great precision of flavor and hefty tannins buried under the intense fruit.

Riserva is the wine to drink today. Legally Riservas must spend at least one year in barrel and can't be released for three years. Torres de Anguix Riserva spend 12 months in new American oak, then 3 months in new French oak. Bottled in January, '02, it is just being released. **d'Anguix**: Hard to describe. It is a massive powerhouse, a wine of incredible finesse and complexity, completely international, totally driven by terroir. A bundle of contradictions, including a \$60 - 70 price tag that makes it a real bargain.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003/4	Torres de Anguix Joven	\$11-13
2003	Torres de Anguix Barrica	\$11-13
2001	Torres de Anguix Crianza	\$20-22
2000	Torres de Anguix Reserva	\$44-46
2001	d'Anguix	\$57-59
2004	Torres de Anguix Rosado	\$11-13

G R E E C E

Pape Johannou is my spelling of the family winery of father Athanassios and son George Papaioannou. Growers in Nemea for 100 years, they have advanced from taking grapes to the local Coop, to making their own wine for bulk sale, to Estate Bottling some of Greece's best wine. Athanassios, in his 70's and vibrating with energy, has been responsible for the growth. George has an enology degree and is a quiet perfectionist.

They are the first to plant Assyrtico in their district, finding a cool, north-facing slope. The vineyard is named 'Ai Lia' (Saint Elias) after the dormant volcano that hosts the vines. Like Apremont, it is a struggle to find analogies for the subtle and elusive wine produced from this great varietal. I've heard mention of Riesling, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Roussanne - almost everything but Chardonnay!

The heart of the vineyard and winery are their plantings of the great Saint George (Aghioritiko in Greek) varietal, used for both their rich and ripe Estate Red (no oak, released young) and their brilliant and polished Nemeas. The 1999 Old Vine Nemea, still available, is the first Greek wine to get a 90 point or higher rating from a major American wine publication. Pape Johannou also grows surprisingly good Pinot Noir and Cabernet, both now offered. The Pinot has been successful, but seemed overoaked to me. George Papaioannou, eager to make wines tailored to our market, separated a lot of the best '03 Pinot Noir and bottled it unoaked for us. Cabernet along with the Nemeas is the pride of the house. Made from mountain fruit, it is ripe, burly and nicely oaked.

Chardonnay is another specialty of the house. Once again, I found the wine fine and well made, but thought that an unoaked version would be more suitable in the American market. Once again George was willing to produce what the market wanted. Once again we have an easy-selling winner.

For overall wine quality and value, this may be the top Estate in Greece today.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2001/3	Pape Johannou Ai Lia Assyrtico	\$15-17
2000	Pape Johannou Nemea	\$16-18
1999	<i>Pape Johannou Nemea old vines</i>	\$24-26
2003	<i>Pape Johannou Pinot Noir</i>	\$16-18
1999	Pape Johannou Cabernet Sauvignon	\$16-18
2003	Pape Johannou Chardonnay	\$16-18
2003	Pape Johannou Estate Red Aghioritiko	\$13-15

Nostos (Domaine Theodoros Manousakis) – Ted Manousakis came to the U.S. as a teenager and has made a success of three different careers. Many times a millionaire, Ted is warm and generous, giving lots to charity but also recently investing in his home island of Crete both for profit and to create jobs. His coastal hotel has been built with great environmental sensitivity. Nice guys finish first more often than legend allows, and Ted and his wife Rema are among the most gracious winegrowers I know.

I met Ted through my friend Lucie Morton, one of the world’s top viticultural consultants. She did the site planning for Ted’s vineyard. Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre and Roussanne were planted at 1300 feet of elevation. Crete is known for blazingly hot summers. The higher you go, the more temperate the climate, the more suitable for fine wine. 1997 was the first harvest and the Roussanne crop was so small and so ripe that Ted decided to put it into the red wine, which added some wonderful aromatics at no cost in color or richness. The percentage of Roussanne in the blend has dropped from 15 to 7, but it still adds brilliance to both aromas and flavors and is an integral part of the wine. As new plantings come into bearing, the percentage may creep up again.

The original vineyard was only 8 acres. An additional 3 acres of Syrah were planted a few years later on an adjoining parcel. As the potential for quality became clear, Ted made the momentous decision to move to the top of the mountain. 8 more acres of Syrah and 5 of Roussanne have been established, by Herculean labor, at 2500 feet. ‘05 will be the first harvest for these vines. Yields up here may never reach 2 tons per acre (the current parcels yield about 3).

Ted’s original model was Chateauneuf-du-Pape, but the world increasingly demands varietal wines. Syrah, Roussanne and Grenache have been huge successes in Greece and some of the next vintage will come here. The market will finally decide how the production is divided. Ted spares no expense and intends to make great wine. He has had a range of consultants over the years, each of whom has brought new abilities, ideas and insights. Last year I introduced Ted to a young woman who has a vineyard in Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Ted’s original model. She and her husband will bring great talent and experience with Ted’s varietals to the project. They may be the final piece to the puzzle.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
1999	Nostos, Manousakis Winery	\$17-19
2001	Nostos, Manousakis Winery	\$17-19
2002	Nostos, Manousakis Winery	\$19-21
2004	Nostos Roussanne	tba
2003	Nostos Syrah tba	tba

ARGENTINA

Viña Maipu is a profoundly old-fashioned Argentine Bodega updating at a rapid pace. Carlos Aranda Garcia's winery is in Santa Blanca, 20 miles east of Mendoza, dusty country far from the multinational modernity nearer the city. The winery building is old but well equipped and well maintained. Several hundred acres of vineyards stretch around it - mostly Sangiovese and Bonarda for the entry level red, Viña Antigua - as close as we get to 'Two Buck Chuck'. Further west and higher up are several hundred more acres of Cabernet, Malbec, Barbera and Chardonnay giving wines of nice quality at lower than reasonable prices. The major addition to Carlos Aranda's lineup this year is a wide range of wine made from **organically grown grapes**. Carlos is a hardheaded businessman who is also a passionate ecologist. Proud as he is of his vineyards and winery, it is the 180 year old Eucalyptus and 200 year old Ombu trees on the grounds that he loves the most.

The hard-headed businessman's basic wines are **Viña Antigua**. Now available in two flavors, the red is 50/50 Sangiovese / Bonarda while the white is one third each Chardonnay, Chenin and Ugni Blanc. Cropped at seven tons per acre, these wines have the highest yields of any sold by HPS (the average for California Chardonnay is 6 tons/acre). Still, they not only have aroma and flavor, the aromas and flavors are pleasant.

We also stock the basic **Chardonnay** and **Malbec**. Cropped at 4 tons/acre from higher altitude vineyards, these are wines that will appeal to knowledgeable consumers looking for good varietal character in wines priced with only one digit left of the decimal.

The latest addition to the lineup is **Primé**. This sparkling wine is the project of Carlos' son Vicente and the first release is amazingly good. A 50/50 blend of Chenin and Chardonnay, it is aged one year on the yeast and is a lovely and lively example of Methode Champenoise at a reasonable price. The vineyards that provide the base wine are the finest that Carlos has. Even from this first release it is obvious that fine sparkling wines will become a signature of the winery.

The range of organic wines are being brought in to order. The first releases are of fine quality, coming from a variety of vineyards. Carlos has contracted with growers in several parts of Mendoza to not only farm organically but to limit yields as well. Depending on sales, the program can be expanded quickly. Organic Pedro Ximenez is not exactly the most mainstream wine in the HPS portfolio, but orders are already in hand.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2004	Vina Maipu Chardonnay	\$8-10
2003	Vina Antigua Tinto	\$6-8
2002	Vina Maipu Malbec	\$8-10
2004	Vina Antigua Blanco	\$6-8
NV	Rime Brut	\$12-14
2004	Vina Maipu Pedro Ximenez organic	\$8-10
2004	Vina Maipu Chardonnay organic	\$10-12
2004	Vina Maipu Torrontes	\$7-9
2004	Vina Maipu Syrah organic	\$10-12
2004	Vina Maipu Bonarda organic	\$10-12
2004	Vina Maipu Bonarda/Syrah organic	\$10-12
2004	Vina Maipu Merlot	\$8-10
2002	Vina Maipu Malbec Sublimis	\$12-14

Viñas de Vila – The Vilas are a grand old family of Argentine wine. There have been Vilas in Argentina since the Conquistadors and the family has been growing wine since at least 1850. In an industry dominated by Italian immigrants, Spanish Basques and multi-nationals, this is one of the few old Castilian families.

Brothers Francisco and Hernando Vila farm vast acreage in Mendoza. They continue to produce bulk wine sold to all of Argentina’s biggest bottlers. The reputation for quality is impeccable and their bulk offerings command the highest prices in the market.

Five years ago the kids decided that they wanted to expand into bottled wine. A sliver of the best family vineyards (about 400 acres) was turned over to them. An imposing 100 year old brick winery with a vast cellar and a bulk capacity of 500,000 gallons was purchased and renovated. The beautiful old building disguises a bare-bones winery with totally modern equipment. The first winemaker, Monica Calderón, has been succeeded by a brilliant young Mendoza graduate, Sebastien Onofrio, assisted by Susana Vila.

Only red wines are produced. About 35% of the acreage is planted to Malbec, 25% to Cabernet Sauvignon with the balance in Bonarda, Merlot and Tempranillo. The basic wine is Tinto Fundación. A blend of 50% Bonarda and 25% each Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon, it is cropped at 4 1/2 tons per acre and aged in a combination of cuves with innerstaves and 2 - 5 year old barrels. It is rich for the price and surprisingly polished.

Malbec, Bonarda and **Malbec Premium** are the other stock items. More Premiums are in the works and by March we may be able to add some Bonarda as well as a first release of Tempranillo. As a new winery with old vines, the potential is just starting to be realized.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2002/3	Vinas de Vila Tinto Fundacion	\$8-10
2003	Vinas de Vila Bonarda	\$9-11
2002/3	Vinas de Vila Malbec	\$9-11
2001/2	Vinas de Vila Malbec Premium	\$16-18
2002	Vinas de Vila Merlot	\$9-11
2002	Vinas de Vila Cabernet Sauvignon	\$9-11
2002	Vinas de Vila Bonarda Premium	\$17-19
2002	Vinas de Vila Tempranillo Premium	\$17-19

Altura 1024 is different than Vila or Maipu. This is a true boutique! Two engineers (Abel Macor and his cousin) decided to live the dream. They saved enough money to buy and plant 40 acres (but with no mule). 'Altura 1024' is the altitude of their vineyard. In Mendoza there is a psychological as well as physical barrier that is crossed at 1000 meters (3280 feet) above sea level. If you are that high or higher, you make a serious statement about quality. The cooler air, rockier soil and steeper slopes make viticulture harder and yields lower, with a corresponding increase in quality. In other countries, such a vineyard site would automatically mean high prices. In struggling Argentina, two people with a small investment can make fine, reasonably priced wine.

Varietals are Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot - 20 acres of each, planted pretty densely at 1450 vines per acre. Last year 20 acres of Malbec were added. The original vineyard is now 6 years old. Yields in 2002 averaged 3 1/2 tons per acre (slightly higher for Merlot, lower for Cab), slightly less in '03 and '04. There is no winery - the wine is custom crushed at a new, medium-sized thoroughly modern facility only a few miles from the vineyard.

The wines are shockingly good for the price, with Cabernet the star. It is dark, peppery, cedary, solid, dense, mouthfilling and screamingly varietal. Rare for Cabernet, it is totally untouched by oak. It is a treasure at a very reasonable price. The Merlot is equally good (but there is less good Cabernet in this price range) - soft but solid with nice touches of plums and black cherries. It is also completely oak free. A few barrels of each were oak-aged. The results were fine, but the world is in far more need of carefully made pure varietals of this quality than of more expensive oak-aged versions.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2003	Altura 1024 Cabernet Sauvignon	\$10-12
2003	Altura 1024 Merlot	\$10-12

Primacia is one of four brands produced by an historic Mendoza Bodega, Cavas de Conde. For decades, **Cavas de Conde** (Cellars of the Count) was one of the most prestigious wines of Argentina, with most sales to top shops and restaurants in Buenos Aires. The collapse of the economy hit Cavas de Conde harder than most. With little export business and much of their key clientele impoverished, it was a question of rapid adaptation or bankruptcy. Daniel Gonzalez was brought in to manage the Bodega. His previous jobs had all been with medium sized Bodegas, mostly in export sales. Abel Furlan, an ex-President of the Argentine Society of Enologists and considered one of Argentina's top winemakers, was brought in to oversee the cellar.

Even before the collapse, the Bodega had excess capacity. Daniel Gonzalez quickly made part of it into one of Argentina's first Custom Crush facilities. On my first visit, it was unsettling to walk through with Daniel and Abel, taste some fine lots, ask the price and be told that they had no idea how much the wines would cost. They had made the wine, but they didn't own it. The vineyard owners would have to be consulted. The 24 hours after that visit involved some long, complicated games of phone tag. In the end, I got what I wanted at the prices I wanted to pay. A hallmark of the Argentine wine industry below the multinational level is an eagerness to do business.

Cavas de Conde remains the top brand, fine and lavishly oaked wines the do not yet fit in the HPS portfolio. More gently oaked, the Piedra de Molino label may be next to make its appearance. Grand Bouquet, as you might guess from the name, is the entry level wine, sold only in Argentina and not likely to hit American shores any time soon.

Primacia is between Grand Bouquet and Piedra de Molina. Reds from fine vineyards, some independent, some under contract to Cavas de Conde, are grown and vinified to make ripe, solid wines with good density (yields rarely exceed 4 tons/acre). They are bottled young and fresh with no oak. They are screaming values. My first visit came just as wines were being put on the market. I had missed out on some whites, but hope to add these to the portfolio soon. In the meanwhile, sales of the best reds have been so good that we will soon be out of Malbec/Cab and Merlot.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2004	Malbec / Cabernet Sauvignon	\$8-10
2004	Syrah	\$7-9
2004	Merlot	\$7-9
2004	Cabernet	\$7-9
2004	Bonarda	\$7-9

CALIFORNIA

Travis Chardonnay, Monterey unfiltered has become a staple of the Hand Picked Selections portfolio. The fruit for this wine comes from **Riverview Vineyard**. Vineyard designation has become a popular gimmick in California, implying distinctive character or high quality without necessarily offering either. The parcel of Chardonnay leased by Travis is special indeed.

Riverview Vineyard is in the Salinas Valley, the heart of Monterey County's best Chardonnay terroir. The sandy loam soil, comprised of decomposed granite, is only marginally fertile but provides excellent drainage. Summer temperatures rarely reach 90°, allowing for the slow ripening so important to fine Chardonnay. Harvest is at the end of September, at an average of 24 brix and a Total Acidity of 0.85. Few of the world's Chardonnay vineyards can offer this combination of full ripeness and fine acidity. The 25 acre parcel under contract was planted by Paul Masson Winery in 1969. Chardonnay vineyards 30 years or older are rare in California. The parcel is planted to the rare Spring Mountain clone, prized for its spicy, 'musque' character. Yields average less than 3 tons per acre, half the average for Monterey Chardonnay.

This wine is **not** fermented or aged in oak, to emphasize its brilliant fruit. The wine is **not** inoculated for malolactic fermentation to preserve its lively, refreshing natural acidity. This is one of California's finest and most distinctive Chardonnays, at an incredible price.

The 2001 vintage is sold out. The 2002 has been selected by Legal Seafoods as an unoaked Chardonnay glass pour. It is the current release, side by side with the 2003. Style is reasonably consistent from year to year. The '02 won high praise from the Wine Advocate. The '03 is similar but has an even stronger mineral component than previous vintages, none of which were lacking in this characteristic, so important to fine Chardonnay. I am tempted from time to time to expand production or add to the lineup. Previous efforts have not been successful, while the basic Travis Chardonnay has started the long journey to 'cult' status. This ain't broke and I have no further plans to fix it.

VINTAGE	WINE	SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
2002	Travis Chardonnay, Monterey unfiltered	\$16-18
2003	Travis Chardonnay, Monterey unfiltered	\$16-18