

September 2, 2013

# WINE News

*Finding that perfectly aged wine is a daunting task these days. Forget restaurant lists, come to the K&L website or visit our auction site. We have just the perfect wine for you.*



## SEPTEMBER 2, 2013 FEATURES

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## Old and Rare Wines: Best Bang for the Buck?

By Clyde Beffa Jr.

Whether it is an old Spanish Rioja that sells for less than \$30 or a classic Bordeaux from a great vintage that sells for \$500+, there is an old and rare wine for any of our customers' pocketbooks. Older wines are such a treat to enjoy, fully mature with a nice bouquet and silky fruit on the palate. But all too often we drink our wines too soon—before the tannins have softened and the sweet fruit has emerged. Most restaurants do not have a very good selection of old wines these days, either. They buy and sell the recent vintages long before they can be enjoyed properly. They just can't afford to hold wines for years. In contrast, I remember going to the Tour d'Argent a few times in Paris and reading through their massive list. I was told that I could *only* buy red wines that were at least 10 years old. Now that was certainly an exception to the standard restaurant wine list.

In this issue I will write about some of K&L's best-value old and rare wines from around the world. Of course, we have a lot of inventory of old and rare wines from Bordeaux, but we also have decent amounts from California and other regions. Our auction/old wine department is receiving older wines from personal cellars daily. I would check our website often, as these bottles tend to disappear quickly.

Let's start by mentioning some great older wines from Bordeaux—for all pocketbooks. We have good stocks of the following wines and I heartily recommend them all—I have tasted them all and often.

**1998 Grandis, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** Wow! What a surprise this is. We have never seen this château in our 30 years of trips to Bordeaux, and the first time we tasted any of their wines was last year. We just got the last 50 cases of it. All fruit here—delicious and a steal.

**1997 Fugue de Nenin, Pomerol (\$29.99)** From the most underrated vintage of the century, this wine is perfect right now. Tons of blackberries—so elegant and subtle. This is the first vintage made under the leadership of Jean Hubert Delon of Las Cases fame.

**2005 Barde Haut, St-Emilion (\$44.99)** Here is a very sexy, black fruit-driven wine that begs to be consumed a few years from now (though you can enjoy it now with two hours decanting). Mr. Parker gave it 93 points.

**1999 Lynch-Bages, Pauillac (\$169.99)** Robert Parker wrote in 2011: "A charming, lush, round, generous Lynch Bages, the 1999 offers plenty of sweet black currant fruit...this fully mature effort is a somewhat underrated vintage for this estate. Enjoy it over the next decade."

**1989 Léoville-Las Cases, St-Julien (\$249.99)** 96 points *ST*, 97 points Clyde Beffa. I have drunk this wine at least five times this year—what a delicious, ready-to-drink wine from a great vintage. Packed with sweet fruit—no edges. Tanzer says: "Full-bodied, delivering firm tannins and a very fresh palate. Long and flavorful, this is a thoroughly complex wine. Muscular."

**2005 Léoville-Las Cases, St-Julien (\$279.99 — elsewhere \$400)** One of the top wines of the vintage with scores all the way to 100 points. Best to cellar this at least five more years.



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## JIM'S SEPTEMBER GEMS *Old and Rare Edition*

### 2003 Verdignan Saint-Seurin de Cardonne, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)

I get a kick out of how most of my colleagues and many wine writers talk about how extreme (cold to hot to very hot) the “historic” weather conditions during the summer of 2003 were in Bordeaux (and Europe). Look at where many of the alcohol levels of the wines of 2009 are, particularly the Right Bank (14.5% to 15+% ABV) and ask yourself, “What are they talking about?” This 2003 Gem is sitting at 13% ABV and provides lush, viscous, complex, silky fruit on the palate, lovely aromatics of currants and cassis, with an almost earthy undertone, an excellent core of well-integrated fruit, and a finish that is long, warm and satisfying. Rusty has informed me that this Gem will be one of our house reds for the month. 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

### 2005 Verdignan Saint-Seurin de Cardonne, Haut-Médoc (\$26.99)

Medium-deep ruby in color, this wonderful Cru Bourgeois from a truly great vintage offers tons of complex flavors and opulent aromatics. Cassis, currants, and antiqueish cedar-like tones abound in the nose and across its viscous palate impression, with violets and truffles and forest floor notes, integrated tannins, excellent acid structure, and a finish that refuses to give up. Rusty has informed me that this Gem will be one of our house reds for the next three to five years. Great value for a wine with some age. 13% ABV. 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

**1998 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** This production is medium ruby in color, with aromas of currants and cherries, and creamy, cedary notes. In the mouth, this Gem is soft, integrated, fleshy and long. A nice

wine for near-term consumption. Rusty has made this Gem one of our house reds for the month. 13% ABV. 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

**2004 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (\$19.99)** Back in February 2013, when this rustic Bordeaux arrived directly from the library cellars of Lanessan, I wrote on our website and in our newsletter: “In a so-so vintage, Lanessan has created a wonderfully balanced wine that is soft and round in the mouth, with blackberry to currant-like fruit, with portobello and earthy notes, and a clean, warm finish. This Gem will be one of our house reds for the month, according to Rusty.” You should taste this Gem now! It has evolved into a silky, lush, velvety, complex wine in the last six-plus months, and you will find it incredibly hard not to go back for another glass and another after you try it... Drink it, enjoy it and love it. 13% ABV. 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

**2002 La Tour De By, Begaden-Médoc (\$19.99)** From one of my favorite minor producers, this medium-deep ruby Bordeaux offers lovely aromatics of cassis and currants, while in its moderately complex mouthfeel you will be treated to a fairly complete, well-integrated, near-term wine that is quite satisfying and enjoyable. This Gem is meant to drink near-term, and Rusty has informed me that we need to stockpile cases of this wine to hold us over for the coming winter. 13% ABV. 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷

Enjoy this month's selection!

—Jim Barr, Rusty, Eby, the Bean and Rizzo

### Old and Rare Wines (Continued from Page 1)

Let's not forget the large format bottles of older wines—plenty of aged wine for four to 40 people. We have a huge selection of 3L and 6L Bordeaux that came direct from the property. Check our website for the likes of: **2000 Prieure Lichine**; **1997, 1987 and 1992 Pichon-Lalande**; and **Pape-Clément**—various vintages. Below are some magnums that are very affordable and quite delicious.

**1997 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (1.5L \$39.99)** and **1998 Lanessan, Haut-Médoc (1.5L \$39.99)** Our biggest-selling chateau for old and rare values wines from the 1990s. Spectacular quality for so little money. We have sold thousands of bottles of these two vintages from Lanessan. These magnums are from the property. The 1997 is soft and elegant while the '98 has a bit more grip. Depends how you like your Bordeaux or what you are serving them with.



**2000 Labégorce, Margaux (1.5L \$79.99)** We have sold more than 2,400 bottles of this wine in 750ml—now we have a few more magnums. Right from the property, this wine has the finesse of the Margaux commune with the strength of the vintage. Tons of red berry flavors. Decant and enjoy with a steak dinner.

**2005 Chauvin, St-Emilion (1.5L \$99.99)** Parker scores it 90-92 points and Clyde scores it 94. Unknown property that makes great wines—only a few cases available. Can cellar this another five years easily.

**1989 Phélan Ségur, St-Estèphe (1.5L \$199.99)** A great Bordeaux vintage, especially in St-Estèphe. This wine sings right now—begs to accompany a rack of lamb. Of course the bottles came direct from the property.

### More 750ml Buys

**2005 Pavie, St-Emilion (\$279.99)** A classic wine, this got 100 points from WS: “I love the purity of fruit...with perfectly ripe blackberry, blueberry and raspberry on the nose. Complex and full-bodied, with hints of new oak and wonderfully polished tannins that caress the palate. Long, long finish.”

**2001 Malescasse, Haut-Médoc (\$24.99)** Also discovered on our 2012 buying trip, this wine is superbly elegant like many of the 2001 Bordeaux. Sweet, with no hard edges. A must try.

**2000 Terrey Gros Cailloux, St-Julien (\$32.99)** The last of this great value oldie. The property has been sold to Ducru-Beaucaillou. A must-buy by the case.

**1989 Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$179.99)** and **1990 Ducru-Beaucaillou, St-Julien (\$199.99)** Two great vintages and Ducru made outstanding wines in both. The 1990 is a bit more tannic, but totally delicious now. The 1989 was quite big for the vintage, but has softened up quite a bit in recent years. Both are good values.



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## JEFF GARNEAU'S *Bank Shot*

Bordeaux lovers speak in hushed, reverent tones about the greatest vintages — 1945, 1961, or 1982 — recounting “once in a lifetime” bottles enjoyed on special occasions with friends and family. However, unless you are one of those rare individuals fortunate — and foresighted — enough to have a cellar full of these treasures, you are going to pay a premium for the very best wines from the most sought-after vintages. Happily, “lesser” vintages produce many great wines that can be enjoyed for significantly less, and often much earlier. Currently, the vintages that I most often look to for good, drinkable claret at affordable prices are 1997, 1999, and, increasingly, 2001.

The 2001 vintage is one to keep an eye on. Most wines from the vintage are solidly good to very good in quality and generally very well-priced. More so than one would have thought when the wines were first released, these are aging somewhat precociously with many wines ready to drink and the very best needing perhaps another five to eight years in the cellar.

**1999 Labégorce, Margaux (\$29.99)** This Cru Bourgeois property, which sits just north of Château Margaux itself, has a history every bit as venerable as its more prestigious neighbors. This 1999 vintage is attractively priced and eminently drinkable, with sweet, upfront fruit and soft tannins. Ripe cherry and plum notes grace a wine both charming and elegant in style.

**1997 Potensac, Médoc (\$26.99)** This overachieving Médoc property benefits both from its excellent situation and from its long association with the Delon family, owners of second growth Léoville-Las Cases in Saint Julien. While most of the wines from this early-maturing vintage are already exhibiting bottle notes of cedar and saddle leather, this 1997 Potensac remains steadfastly youthful in character, displaying a deep purple to red color and pleasingly ripe, sweet red and black fruits. There is good underlying structure here to support further aging, although the wine is perfectly drinkable now with about an hour in a decanter.

**2001 Potensac, Médoc (\$34.99)** A hint of spicy herbaceousness on the nose gives way to a lovely ripeness and weight on the palate. Lots of generous black fruits here, ripe cherry and plum. Firm tannins frame the finish. This will be at its best with another one to three years in the cellar.

**2001 Sarget de Gruaud-Larose, St-Julien (\$34.99)** Another great, near-term cellar candidate from the 2001 vintage. This second wine of Second Growth Gruaud Larose is classic in style with tart, fresh-picked blackberry and rich, dark cassis notes. Nicely integrated oak adds a bit of toast. Finishes with firm tannins.

**2004 Peyrabon, Haut-Médoc (\$15.99)** From a property immediately west of Pauillac (seven hectares of the property actually sit within the Pauillac appellation with the wine sold as La Fleur Peyrabon). This is, quite frankly, astonishingly good. Loads of ripe, dark fruit: bright, tart blackberry and sweet, black plum. Smoothly textured, rich and round, with fine tannins. Ready to drink.

— Jeff Garneau

## AUCTION UPDATE

### 2013 Trends

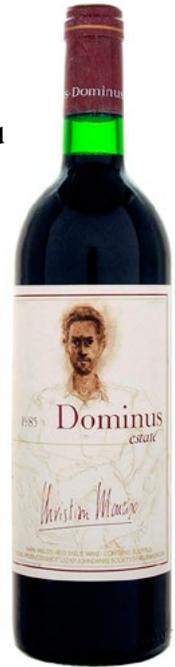
In the K&L Auctions Department, we're often asked by potential sellers what is the best time of year to sell wine. A seemingly straightforward question, but the notion of seasonality in wine auctions is quite different than when speaking about retail trends. People often buy wine from auctions for their personal cellar, perhaps a bottle they have been seeking out for months, as opposed to stocking up for an upcoming party. That being said, there's no denying that the fall and early winter is our busiest time of year in the stores and online. The increased web traffic also means more eyes on the available auction lots and increased bidding activity. In addition, we get the largest number of consignments during the fall, so our offerings are the most plentiful and diverse. If you're looking to get your wine into our fall auctions, please submit your list by September to Auctions@KLWines.com so that we have plenty of time to appraise, inspect and get the bottles on the site before Christmas.

Turning to the health of the market, the second quarter of 2013 seems to have shown an uptick in global auction trends since the beginning of the year. *Wine Spectator* reports that while the number of lots offered by all major auction houses is about 15% less than the second quarter of 2012, the percent sold rate was at a strong 94%. It's been about two years since the peak of sales in 2011 when First Growths, led by Lafite and Mouton, were achieving astronomical prices. Since the bubble burst, the Bordeaux Firsts and their second wines have retreated some 25%-30% from their unsustainable high. However, other regions have benefited from the shift in demand. In recent months blue chip California wines rose 7.2% with 1985 Dominus as the biggest winner, up 34%, and cult wines are up 6.1% according to *Wine Spectator*. If you do want to liquidate your Firsts, we would suggest looking towards selling those that are 2005 or older, as the newer, more expensive vintages may not yet be able to bring the kind of hammer prices that would deliver a substantial profit.

Lastly, we've been trying to make bidding on K&L Auctions as easy and accessible as possible. K&L recently launched a new and improved mobile site that allows customers to safely buy bottles from our inventory. In addition, you can also place bids on any auction lot from the convenience of your smartphone so you're not tethered to a computer in the critical final moments of an auction. Potential buyers can also track any lot on the site and receive a 24-hour reminder notice to place a bid, further assisting you in making sure that perfect bottle doesn't slip through your fingers. Remember to sign up for the Auction Email Alert (found on the Auctions home page) to receive our weekly lineup of new lots. We have several large consignments in the works from pristine cellars, so make sure to check the site often as new lots go up daily.

Cheers!

— K&L Wine Auction Team



## SOPEXA Value Bordeaux Tasting at Alexander's Steakhouse

Our annual Bordeaux Value tasting will be held in San Francisco this year on Saturday, September 21. Join us for a trade-style tasting featuring the 15 best Bordeaux buys and delicious appetizers from Alexander's Steakhouse. Wines will include 1997 Potensac, 2001 Potensac, 2004 Peyraron, 2001 Sarget and 1998 Lanessan, plus many more. This great value tasting will sell out quickly, so purchase tickets now. \$30 per person.



September 21, 2013

1:30–3:30pm

\$30 per person

### Old and Rare Wines (Continued from Page 2)

#### Domestic—Old and Rare

Whether you want to drink a nice red with your hamburger tonight or buy the best California cult wine available, we have a huge inventory of all vintages and price levels. Check our website for more.

**2005 Cristom “Louise Vineyard” Willamette Valley Pinot Noir (375ml \$24.99)** 91 points *Wine Spectator*.

**2005 Ramey “Larkmead Vineyard” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$94.99)** 93 points *ST*: “Dark red. Intensely perfumed scents of kirsch, blackcurrant, dried rose and tobacco. Round and pliant, with juicy dark fruit flavors, velvety texture and slow-mounting tannins. As big and weighty as this is, there’s also excellent balance and clarity.”

**1992 Stag’s Leap Wine Cellars “Fay” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$119.99)** and **1993 (\$119.99)** Both of these outstanding wines received 93 points, but K&L goes a point higher. One of the more famous Napa properties. I fondly remember the great Heitz “Fay” vineyard Cabs in the ’70s.

**2002 (\$74.99)** and **2004 Heitz “Trailside” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$69.99)** A Rutherford vineyard that Joe Heitz developed in the 1980s. The wines are exceptional—not as minty as Martha’s, but fine values. The 2002 and 2004 are a couple of our favorites.

**2004 Heitz “Martha’s Vineyard” Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon (\$149.99)** A legend in Napa Cabernet, Martha’s Vineyard in the Valley’s Oakville appellation is now certified organic by CCOF. 93 points *WS*.

### K&L REDWOOD CITY

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### Italian Gems

**1999 Frescobaldi “Castelgiocondo” Brunello di Montalcino (\$74.99)** 93 points *WS*: “This has wonderful aromas, with sweet berry and flowers on the nose, turning to raspberry and blueberry. Full-bodied, with soft, silky tannins and a delicate finish. The nose is amazing, and the palate beautiful. A joy to drink.”

**2000 San Guido “Sassicaia” Bolgheri (\$199.99)** 95 points *ST*: “Deep, bright red-ruby. Aromas of ripe red cherry, dark plum and kirsch are complicated by sexy woodsmoke, eucalyptus and bay leaf.”

### Spain and Port—Superb Value Regions

Vintage Port offers the most bang for the buck when it comes to old wines, especially in great vintages like 1977 and 1985, and the wines are extremely well priced. Spain still has the best value for old and rare wines.

**1977 Dow Port (\$139.99)** 93 points *RP*: “This is an extraordinary house that seems to have been particularly successful with its vintage port since 1977.”

**1977 Taylor Port (\$189.99)** 96 points *RP*: “This house must certainly be the Latour of Portugal... remarkably backward yet still impressive when young.”

**1985 Gould Campbell Port (\$79.99)** *RP*: “One rarely sees this brand stateside. The 1985 is one of the surprises of the vintage.”

**1999 Bodegas Puelles Gran Reserva Rioja (\$19.99)** I just served this wine at a tasting and everyone loved it. So elegant and refined—perfect right now. What a value! 91 points *RP*, too.

**1997 Bodegas Las Orcas Solar de Ranz Reserva Rioja (\$29.99)** Classically styled, this wine shows all the nuances of flavor and elegance one could hope for in a mature, medium-bodied red. Warm, earthy and subtly spicy aromas show loads of dark cherry and savory, meaty nuances, not unlike many of our favorite 1997 Bordeaux.

### Old and Rare Pre-Arrival Burgundy!

**2005 Domaine Moillard Vosne-Romanée 1er Cru “Malconsorts” (PA \$64.99)** Usually we sell young wines pre-arrival, but we could not pass up this beauty. This is the very last vintage of this wine. It’s lovely and complex on the palate, with substantial structure, a note of unsweetened cocoa, and a bright and pretty red fruit character. As it opens, it gets more mid-palate weight and richness. Clearly an apt candidate for cellaring, but delicious tonight with a rack of lamb or venison. One of the best Burgundy vintages in memory from one of the best Premier Crus in Vosne-Romanée, perfect provenance, and yesterday’s pricing. If you snooze on this one, you will surely lose! The wine should arrive before Christmas. —*Keith Wollenberg*

### K&L HOLLYWOOD

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### K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host regular evening and Saturday tastings in each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar of upcoming events and tastings, go to [KLWines.com/Local-Events](http://KLWines.com/Local-Events).

### K&L SAN FRANCISCO

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