



Bacchus Importers Ltd.

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Review Round-Up

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Chateauneuf du Pape

About 80% Grenache and the rest Syrah and Mourvedre, has deep ruby/purple color and a sweet nose of *crème de cassis*, kirsch liqueur, licorice, Provencal herbs, and toasty oak. The wine is modern-styled, full-bodied, but has good acidity and enough tannin to suggest 2-4 years of cellaring is warranted.

89-92 Points

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Chateauneuf du Pape Vieilles Vignes

Comes primarily from the farmed sector of Chateauneuf du Pape known as La Crau. This is a beautiful wine that is more elegant than the regular Chateauneuf du Pape, with raspberry and kirsch liqueur notes, a deep ruby color, finesse, acidity, and ripe tannin. It seems to be a *terrior* based statement of Chateauneuf du Pape that cuts a style midway between the traditionalists and the modernists.

91-93 Points

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Speciale

Reveals notes of tree bark, blackberry, kirsch, licorice, pepper, and roasted meats. It is full-bodied, tannic, has zesty acidity, and a gripping, muscular structure. This is a wine that needs to be forgotten for a good 6-8 years before consumption.

92-93+ Points

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Cotes du Rhone Guy Louis

Primarily Grenache, is full-bodied and a real sleeper selection among Cotes du Rhones. With a dense ruby/purple color, plenty of kirsch liqueur, raspberry, and spice, this wine is heady, medium to full-bodied, fleshy, and should drink well for a decade or more.

90-92 Points

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Gigondas Vieilles Vignes

Gigondas is perhaps the biggest pig-in-a-poke appellation of the southern Rhone and that's a shame since there are more splendid *terroirs* than splendid producers to be found there. Tardieu-Laurent has obviously sourced the grapes/wine that went into this cuvee from top-notch people.

89-92 Points

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Rasteau Vieilles Vignes

80% Grenache and the rest Syrah, Carignan, and Mourvedre. This wine has that roasted scorched earth character that is not dissimilar from a top-notch Graves in Bordeaux, but the kirsch liqueur and black chocolate clearly suggest Rasteau, the wine has tremendous. Full-bodied with more finesse-styled tannins than normally found in Rasteau, the wine has tremendous intensity, is big, mouth-staining, should benefit from 2-3 years of cellaring.

91-93 Points

2005 Tardieu-Laurent Vacqueyras Vieilles Vignes

Is a dense ruby/purple colored wine that reveals wonderful *crème de cassis*, black cherry, licorice, and camphor and spice. It is heady, rich, full-bodied, and luscious.

91-93 Points

2003 Le Macchiole Le Macchiole

Irresistibly plump and full of flavor, with suggestions of dark fruit, spices and menthol, and a sleek stylish personality. Beautifully proportioned, the Sangiovese seems to give the wine outstanding freshness considering the vintage. Already open and delicious over the next five to seven years, perhaps longer.

90 Points

2003 Le Macchiole Paleo Rosso

Plump and juicy, it presents attractive suggestions of super-ripe dark fruit, sweet toasted oak and minerals with outstanding length and plenty of personality. Over the last few months this wine has continued to improve, integrating its tannins and gaining greater focus.

92 Points

2003 Le Macchiole Scrio

Another terrific effort from Le Macchiole. Packed with clove, cinnamon, sweet dark fruit, toasted oak and mint notes, it is opulent and concentrated yet light on its feet, boasting extraordinary length an eternal finish defined by a lingering note of sweetness. It, too, has improved considerably over the last few months and there is plenty of fruit to balance the tannins of the vintage.

93 Points

2003 Le Macchiole Messorio

Simply stunning. Voluminous and expansive on the palate, it offers rich layers of jammy dark fruit, plums, cassis and toasted oak with extraordinary length and an utterly seductive personality. While it may not have the complexity or detail of the very finest vintages, it does offer much pleasure in the very ripe style of the vintage.

93 Points

2002 Le Macchiole Paleo Rosso

An excellent effort for the vintage. It is a fairly compact Paleo with pretty aromatics and notes of smoke, tar, herbs and dark red fruit on a medium-bodied frame. Although it displays good length and balance, some rough edges remain and bottle aging will only help to a limited extent.

89 Points

2002 Le Macchiole Messorio

Presents dark fruit, tar and licorice notes along with a powerful, brooding personality. While it doesn't have a the young volume or expansiveness of the finest vintages, it is nevertheless an outstanding effort showing notable harmony as well as balance.

90 Points

2005 Poggio Argentiera Morellino Di Scansano Bellamarsiglia

Is lovely and fresh, with pretty aromatics and a core of plump, juicy fruit, displaying excellent length and a slightly bitter note on the finish. It is a delicious wine to enjoy every day as well as an excellent value.

88 Points

2004 Poggio Argentiera Morellino Di Scansano Capatosta

High-class all the way. Rich and layered, it is a big, muscular Morellino packed with ripe dark red fruit intermingled with subtle notes of earthiness, licorice and toasted oak, showing outstanding length and very fine overall balance.

90 Points

2003 Poggio Argentiera Morellino Di Scansano Capatosta

Displays more overtly ripe aromatics as well as a decidedly opulent personality. It is expansive on the palate, where it offers plenty of jammy dark fruit with excellent length, although it closes with the slightly drying tannins that are characteristics of the vintage.

89 Points

2003 Poggio Argentiera Finisterre

Exhibits super-ripe, almost raisiny notes of blackberry jam, currants, chocolate, licorice and sweet toasted oak on a full-bodied, unctuous frame of great elegance. Made in an extreme style, it will appeal most to readers who enjoy very ripe wines.

89 Points

2004 Le Pupille Morellino Di Scansano

Plump, juicy effort with notes of ripe dark fruit intermingled with sweet toasted oak, flowers and minerals on a medium-bodied frame of notable purity and finesse. It is a lovely wine to drink over the next few years, as well as a good value.

88 Points

2005 Le Pupille Morellino Di Scansano

Big, tarry, powerful Morellino that seems to combine the size of the 2003 with the elegance, freshness and delineation of the 2004. Tasty notes of black cherries, smoke and earthiness complemented by a nice sense of freshness on the finish round out this delicious wine, which is also a good value.

88 Points

2004 Tenuta Dell' Ornellaia Le Volte

The entry-level wine, is fresh, vinous effort with pretty aromatics, sweet ripe red fruit and herb flavors and an accessible personality.

87 Points

2004 Tenuta Dell' Ornellaia Le Serre Nuove

Offers beautiful harmony in its ripe fruit, outstanding length and fine tannins. It is a great example of the level of quality achieved by the second wines in this vintage.

91 Points

2004 Tenuta Dell' Ornellaia Ornellaia

A lively dark ruby, it is a vibrant effort bursting with expressive aromatics and layered, well-delineated fruit, showing much purity on the palate and closing with a long, finessed finish. Readers hoping to catch this wine's full array of nuances will have to wait at least another few years as the wine remains quite primary today.

95 Points

2003 Tenuta Dell' Ornellaia Ornellaia

Presents a dramatic contrast to the 2004 in its super-ripe, open nose and jammy dark fruit. Ample and warm on the palate it is clearly the product of very hot great overall balance and a lingering note of sweetness on the finish.

93 Points

2003 Tenuta Dell' Ornellaia Masseto

Opens with a huge, expressive super-ripe nose. Ample and expansive on the palate, it displays much opulence in its generous fruit, with awesome concentration, outstanding length and a lovely vein of minerality which provides a level of freshness that is surprising for the vintage. A lingering note of sweetness punctuates the long finish.

93 Points

2002 Bodegas Alion Ribera Del Duero

Saturated purple in color, it offers up an exotic nose of coconut, espresso, herbs, black currants and cherries. Rich and complex on the palate with lots of glycerin and layers of black fruit flavors, it has a pure, long finish that goes on and on.

94 Points

2003 Bodegas Alion Ribera Del Duero

It has a similar personality but with more depth and concentration as well as structure. The ripe tannins suggest much more will be revealed with another 6-8 years in the bottle.

96+ Points

N.V. Cava Avinyo Brut Reserva

A fruity, yeasty nose is followed by a wine with crisp notes of pear and peach. The finish is surprisingly long.

89 Points

2004 Bodegas Hornillo Ballesteros Mibal

A glass-coating opaque purple color, the wine's aromatics need to be coaxed from the glass, a demonstration of this wine's youth. On the palate the raw materials are there, densely packed and tightly wound. The ripe black fruit flavors are still undeveloped but very promising.

91+ Points

2004 Bodegas Hornillo Bassesteros Mibal Seleccion

A barrel selection of the best lots and spent 14 months in French oak. It further raises the bar with its saturated, glass-coating purple color, super-expressive, exotic nose of *pain grille*, spice box, wild blueberry, smoked meat, and licorice. On the palate, this thick and opulent wine has gobs of spicy black fruit flavors.

93 Points

2005 Bodegas Hornillo Ballesteros Mibal Tinto

An awesome value. Fermented and aged in stainless steel, it exhibits a dark ruby/purple color. The expressive nose delivers notes of smoke and grapy black currants followed by a silky smooth wine with layers of ripe, sweet fruit and no hard edges.

90 Points

2005 Senorio De Barahonda Barahonda Tinto

Raised in stainless steel, this dark ruby-colored wine has an attractive nose of forest floor, mineral, and blueberry. It has a supple palate-feel, sweet fruit, and excellent balance but is just a bit more compact on the mid-palate and shorter on the finish than the Carro. Nevertheless, it is a superb value.

89 Points

2005 Senorio De Barahonda Bellum El Principio

Comes from 65- to 85-year-old vines and is aged 9 months in French oak. Dark ruby colored, it offers an exceptional perfume of toast, blueberry, blackberry, roasted game, and black cherry. Full-bodied, with a supple texture, the wine is dense and pure with a 30+ second finish.

90 Points

2004 Senorio De Barahonda Bellum Remate Late Harvest

From 85- to 90-year-old vineyards aged for 8 months in French oak, in fairness to reader I should point out that Robert Parker rated the 2003 vintage considerably higher than I rate this 2004. Deep purple in color, the wine offers abundant flavors of blueberry jam and other sweetened fruits as well as licorice.

88 Points

2004 Senorio De Barahonda Bellum Providencia

Raises the bar even higher. Made from over 50-year-old Monastrell vines and aged 8 months in French oak it yields a remarkable aromas array of lavender, blue and black fruits, blackberry liqueur, and grilled meat. Generously layered on the palate, this smoothly-textured wine has no hard edges. Hedonistically styled, readers who are not into pleasure should beware of this wine.

91 Points

2005 Biurko Gorri Arbanta

Offers superb value, among the best in my Spanish tastings. It is 100% Tempranillo, tank fermented and aged. Medium ruby in color, it exhibits remarkable aromatic complexity for its price point with cherries, red currants, and spice in evidence. The wine is elegant, balanced, and fruity right through the lengthy finish.

89 Points

2004 Clos Figueras Clos Figueres

From the vineyard's older wines, is a knockout starting with its saturated purple color, intense nose of vanilla, spice box, blackberries and blueberry liqueur, and layered, concentrated flavors. Full-bodied, with ripe tannins and a very long finish.

93 Points

2004 Clos Figueras Font De La Figuera

A blend of white Grenache, Viognier, and Chardonnay with aromas of mineral, slate, citrus, and melon. It offers up some complex flavors in a medium to full-bodied style with adequate acidity. It is not a subtle wine but does pack a punch.

91 Points

2004 Clos Mogador Clos Mogador

More saturated purple color as well as a more expressive perfume of mocha, coffee, and flowers in addition to toasty oak, earth, and blue and black fruits. More extracted and backward than the 2003, it demands a decade of cellaring and should drink well for an additional 20 years.

96+ Points

2005 Bodegas Enguera Distinto

Composed of equal parts Tempranillo and Syrah. Dark ruby-colored, the wine has a lovely violet and blueberry-scented nose. On the palate the wine is soft and supple with no hard edges. Drink this excellent value over the next 1-2 years.

89 Points

2003 Falset Marca Falset Old-Vines

Composed of 85% Garnacha and 15% cabernet Sauvignon aged 12 months in 50% new French oak. Purple-colored, it delivers attractive aromas of spice box, and kirsch liqueur. Mouth-filling, with very good concentration and moderate tannin, the wine is a bit compact in its finish, likely due to the extreme heat of the vintage.

88 Points

2003 Celler Laurona Laurona

Composed of 60% Grenache and 40% Carignan, has a multifaceted nose of minerals, earth, soy, black currants, blueberry, and licorice. This full-bodied effort is mouth-filling, sweet from glycerin, and supple, with layers of flavor.

92 Points

N.V. Emilio Lustau Jerez Oloroso Pata De Gallina Almacenista Garcia Jarana

Also a dark amber, offers smoke, earth, and almonds. It would also make a fine match with game.

91 Points

N.V. Emilio Lustau Jerez Rare Amontillado Escuadrilla

Medium amber with a dry, nutty character and excellent grip.

90 Points

2004 Mas Martinet Clos Martinet

Is not as dense as its older sibling but it offers more aromatic complexity and cuts a broader swath across the palate. It is a rich, plushy textured, full-flavored wine that merits 2-4 years additional bottle age after which it should drink well for at least 15 years.

94 Points

2004 Mas Martinet Martinet Bru

Purple-colored, it has a splendid nose of mineral, pencil lead, toast, vanilla, blueberry and black currants. Full-bodied and layered, it has gobs of black fruit flavors, ripe tannin, and superb focus and concentration leading to a long finish.

91 Points

2004 Bodegas Mauro Crianza

What appears to be a great vintage, is opaque purple in appearance. It emits scintillating aromas of smoke, toast, herbs, kirsch, and black fruits. It is a full-bodied large-scaled effort with oodles of fruit and enough structure to age effortlessly for 6-8 years.

92 Points

2002 Bodegas Mauro Vandimia Seleccionada

Nonetheless a superior effort. It too is black purple in color with expressive aromatics and layers of blue and black fruits. However, it is more forward than its less expensive sibling as well as less opulent.

91+ Points

2003 Bodegas Naveran Cava Naveran Dama

It is slightly darker-colored and fatter on the palate. It reveals bready, toasty notes aromatically, a steady stream of tiny bubbles, crisp, dry, lemon-like, apple, and pear flavors, and a lengthy finish.

90 Points

2004 Bodegas Ostatu Crianza

Was aged for 12 months in a mixture of French and American oak. From a superb vintage, the wine is purple in color with aromas and flavors of smoke, spice, black cherries, black currants, and a whisper of iodine. It offers a medium body with well integrated tannins and a long finish.

88 Points

2005 Bodegas Vinos Pinol Ludovicus

Was aged for 3 months in French and American oak before being bottled and unfiltered and unfiltered. Dark ruby-colored, it offers a complex bouquet of cedar, spice box, pepper, black cherry and blackberry. Supple-texture, with medium-body, the wine has layers of sweet red fruit flavors, good depth and excellent length. It is a superb value.

89 Points

2003/2004 Bodegas Vinos Pinol Mather Teresina

Is a blend of two vintages. Composed of nearly equal parts of six different grapes, it exhibits a dense purple color and a brooding array of blueberry, blackberry, and black currant aromas. Backward on the palate and tightly knit, there are notes of mineral, leather, and earth as well as layers of unevolved fruit.

92 Points

2004 Bodegas Vinos Pinol Portal Roble

Composed of equal parts Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha, Merlot, Tempranillo, and Syrah aged for 6 months in French, American, and Hungarian oak before being bottled and unfiltered. It is purple-colored, with an impressive array of aromas including vanilla, spice box, pepper, cassis, black cherry and blackberry. Cutting a broad swath on the palate, this opulent wine has tons of flavor, ripe flavors, light tannin, and a pure, lengthy finish.

90 Points

2003 Bodegas Pintia Toro

Tight, firm, and a bit austere but a few years of bottle age should bring things into harmony.

92+ Points

2004 Bodegas Pintia Toro

Comes from a superior vintage. Similarly styled to its older sibling, it is simply more flamboyant and opulent. The temptation is to drink its heady effort now but those who can delay gratification for a few years will be amply rewarded.

95+ Points

2000 La Rioja Alta Reserva Vina Alberdi

Medium ruby in color, it exhibits a nicely developed and expressive nose of cedar, spice, and red currants. Light to medium-bodied, seamless, elegant, and ripe.

88 Points

2001 Rottlan Torra Reserva

Aged 24 months in French and American oak, is dark ruby in color with scents of cherry, earth, and black currants with toasty vanilla in the background. The wine has good depth and balance with complex dark fruit flavors and ripe tannins.

89 Points

2003 Vina Sastre Crianza

Aged 18 months in new French oak and bottled unfiltered. It is purple in color with plenty of toasty oak and spicy black fruit aromas. The winery was able to handle 2003's extreme heat without difficulty reflected in the depth and layering of fruit, ripe tannins, and excellent length.

88 Points

2005 Vinos Sin-Ley G1

It offers ample ripe cherry-flavored fruit and good length in a medium-bodied package. It is just a bit compact on the mid-palate but pleasing overall.

85 Points

2005 Vinos Sin-Ley G2

It is more aromatic with a supple texture and good black cherry flavors. It should be drunk over the next 12-18 months.

87 Points

2005 Vinos Sin-Ley G4

Raises the bar significantly. It exhibits more aromatic complexity, greater depth and concentration, and enough structure to drink well for 2-3 years.

90 Points

2005 Vinos Sin-Ley M1/Monastrell

Reveals an attractive earthy, kirsch-scented nose, medium-body, and layers of tasty fruit. It is an easy-drinking crowd pleaser that should be consumed over the next 12-18 months

89 Points**2005 Vinos Sin-Ley M2/Monastrell**

Too green and compact to recommend.

82 Points**2005 Vinos Sin-Ley M3/Monastrell**

Has a lovely nose of forest floor, blueberry, and blackberry. This seamless wine has excellent flavor and a lengthy finish.

90 Points**2005 Vinos Sin-Ley M4/Monastrell**

From Bullas is slightly suppler than its predecessor with additional depth and concentration. It has exceptional length for its humble price.

91 Points**2005 Vinos Sin-Ley M5/Monastrell**

Is the class of these wines. It has a lovely kirsch-scented nose, oodles of fruit, excellent balance, and a long, pure finish. It should be consumed over the next 2 years.

92 Points**2005 Vinos Sin-Ley Zestos**

It offers plenty of sweet red fruits in a forward, easy going style.

86 Points**2005 Vinos Sin-Ley Zestos Especial**

Raised in stainless steel. It has a more expansive bouquet, darker fruit, and is richer and fatter on the palate. It, too, is meant for near-term consumption.

88 Points

2005 Bodegas Torremoron Tinto

Unoaked cuvee of 100% Tempranillo from 60- to 90-year-old vines. Medium ruby-colored, it has a terrific perfume of wild berries including raspberry, strawberry, and cherry. On the palate the wine is youthful, very concentrated and structured. The finish is long and fruity. It seems unlikely that many people will cellar a \$10 wine but this amazing effort should continue to evolve 1-2 years.

90 Points

1995 Bodegas Vega Sicilia Unico

A worthy successor to the profound 1994. Opaque purple in color, it has aromatic complexity which nearly defies words. There are notes of earth, licorice, hard wood charcoal, and black currants. Full-bodied, and powerful the wine has beautiful balance with a multi-dimensional character and the structure to last for 25-40 years.

97 Points

1996 Bodegas Vega Sicilia Unico

It seems more developed aromatically with elements of coffee and mocha but not quite the richness of fruit of the 1995. It is more supple on the palate but with less depth.

95 Points

2001 Bodegas Vega Sicilia Valbuena

Especially good because of the wine normally reserved for Unico went into this bottling. It has a similar personality to the 2002 but with more of everything as if it has been on an extended workout regimen. Youthful in appearance and with classic aromatics, it has the extract and the structure to blossom for 6-8 years and drink well for another 20.

93+ Points

2002 Bodegas Vega Sicilia Valbuena

From a supposedly average vintage, is purple in color with an expressive nose of *pain grille*, earth, herbs, lead pencil, and blackberries. It offers layers of ripe fruit, excellent depth and concentration, and enough stuffing to drink well for the next 10+ years.

92 Points

2005 Hermanos Del Villar Oro De Castilla Verdejo

Fermented and raised in stainless steel. Medium straw-colored, it offers lovely aromas of melon, honey, and citrus with a hint of mineral in the background. It is almost creamy on the palate with excellent depth and richness, lacking only the complexity necessary to merit an outstanding rating.

87 Points

2005 Bodegas Vizcarra Ramos Roble

Aged for 6 months in French oak. Dark ruby/purple-colored, it coats the glass with legs and emits expressive aromas of toast, spice box, blueberry and blackberry jam. This is followed by a packed and stacked wine with well integrated oak, tannin, and acidity. The finish is long and pure.

89 Points