

Selections



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Reintroducing the Popular Wines of Château Saint Jacques d'Albas and Champagne Forget Brimont

To mark the occasion of our food and wine pairing events held at Bodega Restaurant on November 22nd and 23rd (sold out – thank you; see participants' remarks near the end of this newsletter), we are pleased to reintroduce the two wineries featured on those evenings: **Château Saint Jacques d'Albas** and **Champagne Forget-Brimont**.

Château Saint Jacques d'Albas

We visited Graham and Beatrice Nutter at their beautiful estate in the Minervois in October. They are superb hosts and would welcome a visit from any of our wine club Members. If you would like to stay for a few days, they even have a couple of beautiful “gîtes” for rent (to see the one we stayed in, click on www.chateaustjacques.com - it is the “mill” in the second picture under ‘History’).

In addition to taking an extensive tour of the vineyards, the very modern winemaking facilities and the private wine cellar (with security that would do Fort Knox proud), we naturally took the opportunity to re-taste many of Graham's wines in his grand tasting room. We are pleased to report that they taste the same there as here – the long voyage apparently does them no harm. Since the 2006 Minervois Rosé will not be ready for shipping until next March, we will close our next order for Graham's wines on February 27th, 2007 (unless demand for the reds warrants an order before then).



Héléne and Graham - out standing in his field

2006 Saint Jacques d'Albas Minervois Still Rosé - (13.5% Alc./Vol.)

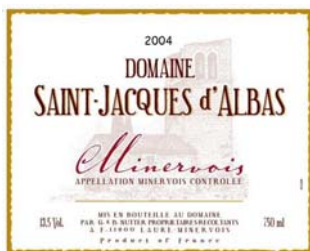
\$13.95



Of course, we haven't tried the latest vintage, but Graham tells us that the 2006 harvest was a smashing success. He expects the wine will again be made of equal parts Syrah and Grenache. Graham makes a lovely, serious Rosé that many of our Members have said is the best they have ever tasted. We delivered 1,000 bottles of the silver medal winning 2005 vintage and have reserved more of the 2006. Only 12,000 bottles will be produced and word is out about this wine. Order your **twelve bottle case(s)** now to make sure you have your share for next summer.

2004 Domaine Saint Jacques d'Albas Minervois Red – (13.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$16.95



Made of 20% Syrah, 40% Grenache and 40% Carignan, this wine was traditionally fermented for over twenty days and the Syrah aged in oak barrels for over six months. This is a very expressive, well balanced wine that is drinking wonderfully now and will keep quite happily for several years. It has been a big hit with everyone who has tried it, including professional restaurateurs. Only 7,000 bottles were produced, so order now to get one of the last remaining **twelve-bottle cases**.

2003 Château Saint Jacques d'Albas Minervois Red - (13.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$23.95



This wine is 60% Syrah (in oak barrels for over twelve months) and 20% each of Grenache and Carignan. Acclaimed by the British wine writer Jancis Robinson, this wine is deep ruby red with an aroma of fresh red berries, licorice and spices. It is quite closed now, but still exhibits a fine balance of fruit and tannins with a hint of vanilla. While pleasant to drink now, this wine will benefit from a couple of years in the cellar. 12,000 bottles were produced, so there is still plenty for everyone. Click here to get a **six-bottle case** for your cellar.

2003 La Chapelle Saint Jacques d'Albas Minervois Red - (13.5% Alc./Vol.)

\$34.95



This lovely, powerful (fruit bomb is not overstating things), nicely oaked wine is comprised of 96% Syrah (barrel-aged for 18 months) and rounded off with 4% Carignan. 2003 was an extremely hot vintage, producing spicy, perfumed wines. Graham picked later than most of his neighbours, under the lower September night temperatures, which allowed him to capture natural acidities that provided a perfect balance to the high sugars. Jancis Robinson has just published an article on “50 Great Value Reds” after having recently tasted hundreds of them. The 2003 La Chapelle made the list. Here’s what Jancis said about it, “**Very impressive old vine cuvée from an English-owned Languedoc domaine**”.

This wine will age gracefully in the cellar and will amaze and delight the most discerning collector. However, those who have already taken delivery have not been able to resist temptation. They say it tastes great now! No wonder. It took the **Grand Gold Medal** at the prestigious Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2006. Acquire one of the last remaining **six-bottle cases** for posterity.

Champagne Forget-Brimont

We didn’t visit Champagne Forget-Brimont this fall; Champagne Forget-Brimont came and visited us! Actually, it was Eva Schubert, Business Manager of our favourite Champagne house who spent an evening with us and eight of our good friends at a beautiful Bastide in the French countryside near Avignon (if you are interested in renting an absolutely superb and luxurious country home in southern France, please let us know). Eva brought a mixed six-pack of Michel Forget’s beautiful Champagnes with her, much to our delight. It had been six months since we last tasted them last and they have all aged most gracefully. Eva surprised us with a **Grand Cru** Chardonnay called Champagne Forget-Brimont Grande Reserve Blanc de Blancs that greatly impressed us all – so much so that we are introducing it right now. See www.champagne-forget-brimont.fr for the complete story on the winery.



Eva, Michel Forget and Jim

The marvellous Forget-Brimont champagnes come **six bottles to the case**. NV means non-vintage; these wines are blends of three harvests and grape varieties designed to provide a distinctive, enduring House style. We will place our next order for these superb Champagnes on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2007.

Forget-Brimont 1^{er} Cru, Brut, NV – (12.0% Alc./Vol.)

\$40.95



Delicious Premier Cru champagne with Grand Cru grapes in the blend for significantly less (\$10 to \$25) than you would pay for regular champagne! Believe me, **this is a great wine for a great price.**

The grape composition is 60% Pinot Noir, 20% Pinot Meunier and 20% Chardonnay. It has masses of cushiony bubbles and exhibits a very refined, delightful taste of toast, walnuts, butter, a hint of apples, pineapple and strawberries and delicate citrus fruit. This was a Silver Medal winner at the International Wine Challenge in London. [Click here](#) to order some for your special occasions (or any other reasonable excuse).

Forget-Brimont 1^{er} Cru, Extra Brut, NV – (12.0% Alc. by Vol.)

\$43.95



This is really excellent Apéritif Champagne in a delicate and refreshing style. Also comprised of 60% Pinot Noir, 20% Pinot Meunier and 20% Chardonnay, it is a golden champagne with a wonderfully persistent bubbles. It has an engaging nose of citrus and preserved fruits. In the mouth, the wine is round, full-bodied and well-balanced. There is a hint of pineapple and green apples on the lingering aftertaste. It has a crisp, very dry finish. **Decanter Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆**. [Click here](#) for a real favourite of our Bastide companions.

Forget-Brimont 1^{er} Cru, Rosé-Brut, NV – (12.0% Alc). By Vol.)

\$43.95



This is the champagne for those most festive occasions. It is also an ideal aperitif. Its rosé colour comes from adding red wine from Brouzy to the Forget-Brimont reserve cuvée. The grape composition is the same as the previous two wines. In the glass, the beautiful light orange, pink colour provides an ideal backdrop for its steady stream of tiny bubbles (please, no Don Ho impressions!). In the mouth, it is a soft, yet powerful and round, exhibiting ripe red fruit (strawberries) and, again, just a hint of pineapple. It too won a Silver Medal at the International Wine Challenge in London and received **91/100** and “**Top Value**” rating in this December’s issue of the **Wine Spectator**. [Order](#) some of this most cheery wine now.

Forget-Brimont 1^{er} Cru, 1999 Vintage Cuvée Prestige – (12.0% Alc./Vol.)

\$52.95



An exceptional champagne for exceptional events. Made from 60% Chardonnay and 40% Pinot Noir, this wine is a blend of Têtes de Cuvée (the best wines) made from grapes grown and harvested in 1999 and kept in the Forget-Brimont cellars for more than six years.

This lively, fine, elegant wine has a pronounced nose of ripe strawberries which carries through to the taste (along with gentle citrus, biscuit and earthy undertones). It has a rich and subtle composition that will be appreciated by champagne connoisseurs. This is a superb **vintage** champagne for less than the price of most regular champagnes! [Click here](#) to acquire a most impressive Champagne.

Forget-Brimont Grande Réserve Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru – (12%.0% Alc./Vol.) \$56.95



This very special wine was bottled in the spring of 2003 (a blend of the 2000, 2001 and 2002 harvests) and is made entirely from Chardonnay. It has aromas of honeysuckle and other white flowers, grapefruit and honey. It is beautifully balanced with lively bubbles and a lingering taste of citrus fruit and warm brioche. It is drinking sublimely now and will develop even more complexity if cellared for a year or two. The winery says it is perfect as an aperitif or an accompaniment for crayfish and baked oysters. We had it with a fruit flan for desert – **sheer ambrosia!** Order a real touch of class now.

All of these champagnes will keep nicely for at least two years and will develop more intense bread, nut flavour as they evolve.

Pricing note: Since we first offered these wines, the dollar has dropped against the Euro and fuel price increases have caused shipping rates to rise. Also, we overlooked the fact that the Federal duty for Champagne is ten times that of still wines! So, regrettably we have had to increase our prices a bit. However, we hope you agree that these wines still represent great value.

A Minervois Evening (or two)

Our first wine and food pairing event was a wonderful success thanks to Graham Nutter, owner of Château Saint Jacques d'Albas, Paul Biggs proprietor head chef of Bodega Restaurant, Leona Gardener, General Manager of Bodega, the fine staff at Bodega, David and Gail Moorcroft who on behalf of The Honourable Company of Freeman of the City of London of North America were instrumental in organizing the event and most importantly to all those epicureans who attended. Here's what they said about the two evenings:

- “It truly was an incredible evening. The food was so delicious and created an excellent foil for the outstanding wine selections. Both my guest and I thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.”
- “A great night and certainly superb cuisine and wines. True value for the money. My guests were very impressed. Always enjoy the ambiance of Bodega. Chef Paul is creative and the pairings were well thought out. Leona and the team were first class. The meal was a delight, served by a friendly and highly efficient staff. Graham was an essential part of the evening and kept the information to the basic essentials of wine tasting. What the aficionado and the layman need to know about his growing business. This has to be an annual event for the Freeman if it can be arranged.”
- “I just wanted to thank all of you - Jim, Helene, David and Gail - for an evening of wonderful food, drink and camaraderie! From my perspective, the evening went off without a single "hitch" - you should all be congratulated for a job well done.”
- “Just a quick note to thank you both for organizing such a great evening, probably one of the best Freeman events I have attended. The combination of food, wine, company and location worked very well together and all at my table expressed thanks and congratulations to all involved. (My wife) and I both want to return to Bodega as we enjoyed the food, ambience and service. And Arthur's Cellars will definitely become a source of excellent wines and no doubt a catalyst for future such events.”
- “Awesome evening! Had a great time. Just what the doctor ordered! Everyone had fun and we were a great group. Can't wait to do it all again. Cheers!”

- “(My wife), son and I very much enjoyed the dinner and tasting and of course, meeting you as well as Graham Nutter. The wines and food were all excellent. We liked the 2004 Dom. Saint Jacques best, followed by the 2003 La Chapelle. La Bodega did a very good job and we liked the atmosphere. The only minor criticisms might be that the food could have been warmer and the dressing for the rilette was too vinegary for the Ch. Saint Jacques. All in all it was a very successful evening, our compliments to all involved.”
- “Hi Jim, just wanted to say what a wonderful time we had at the dinner at La Bodega last night. My thanks to you, Helene, Graham & Paul for creating such a wonderful evening.”
- “On the subject of the dinner – (my daughter) and I had a wonderful evening. The meal and the accompanying wines were superb, and the company we had at our table made it even more enjoyable.”
- “Mr. Walker, first off kudos on an outstanding event last Thursday night. A good time was had by all!”
- “My wife and I and our family greatly enjoyed the evening at Bodega with the fine French cuisine and great wines provided by Graham Nutter. An event like this really helps to put Toronto on the map: although we all know Toronto is a great city such an event goes that extra distance to enhance our culture. The wines and food were beautifully presented and we were very pleased to be able to join the wine club.”

We are already plotting our next food and wine pairing evenings for February. Watch for news!

Michael Vaughan – A Matter of Taste

Graham Nutter and I spent a most interesting afternoon with Michael Vaughan, wine writer for the National Post (and so much more). As noted in his excellent publication, ‘**Vintage Assessments**’, “With more than three decades of writing, teaching and tasting experience, Michael Vaughan is an internationally-accredited wine judge and Founding Director of the Society of Wine Educators. Since 1999, his weekly National Post *Drink* column has appeared in Saturday’s Toronto section. Numerous articles appear in many other publications. Current restaurant reviews, travel articles (under Vintage Destinations) and lifestyle features are also posted on the www.fbti.org website.”

Michael knows his wine. Each month he publishes ‘**Vintage Assessments**’ in which he reviews every product present at each bi-weekly VINTAGES release. In most instances his tasting notes are based on two bottles each. This greatly increases the accuracy of reviews, as up to 15% have cork related problems. He pulls no punches and owes no allegiances. We highly recommend this publication to anyone who regularly purchases from the LCBO’s VINTAGES sections.

‘**Vintage Assessments**’ by e-mail costs a very reasonable \$75 per year, or \$110 for e-mail and the print edition. Michael is currently discounting these prices by \$25, so they become \$50 and \$85 respectively. To sign up, please send Michael your name, address, telephone number, fax and e-mail address along with your cheque made payable to FBTI at: 29 High Park Gardens, Toronto ON M6R 1S8. You can also contact Michael at www.mbv@total.net or (416) 769-1674. You will be glad you did. Don’t forget to mention that you are an Arthur’s Cellar Wine Club Member.

Delivery Updates

We are constructing a new section of our website to provide you with delivery progress reports on the wines you have ordered. It is expected to be completed within the week. In the meantime, here is the latest news on the whereabouts of your wine:

Cave de Lavilledieu du Temple – These should all be delivered by now. If you don’t have your wine, please contact your local LCBO outlet.

Champagne Forget-Brimont – These should all be delivered by now. If you don't have your wine, please contact your local LCBO outlet. Please let us know what you think of these wines.

Château Saint Jacques d'Albas – Our fourth d'Albas shipment should all be delivered by now. If you don't have your wine, please contact your local LCBO outlet. Also, please let us know what you think of these wines.

Château Beauferan – Has arrived and been cleared by the LCBO. Local deliveries have started and cases destined for out-of-town are on their way. Please contact your local LCBO outlet if you haven't received them by Christmas – and let us know how you like the wines.

Château Robin – Has also arrived and been cleared by the LCBO. Local deliveries have started and cases destined for out-of-town are on their way. Please contact your local LCBO outlet if you haven't received them by Christmas – and let us know how you like the wines.

Domaine Palon – Left the winery November 3rd and was scheduled to arrive at the LCBO December 8th. This will likely be a January delivery.

Thank you and cheers,

Hélène and Jim

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