



Your Source of Wine for Every Occasion

Notes From The Cellar "NFTC" Newsletter March 18, 2009

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Guigal - the wines of an Icon at pretty nice prices

A while in the making, we finally have a new look to NFTC which I hope you will enjoy. Using the links at the bottom of the newsletter It is now easier than ever to update your email preferences in case that you move, or forward this to friends which may not be aware of us yet and for which we thank you.

Today we feature several wines from the Rhones most recognizable names, and one of the wine worlds most prestigious wine operations: Guigal. In John Livingstone-Learmonth's essential book "Wines of the Northern Rhône", the author describes Marcel Guigal as "the pivot of the appellation". Neal Martin writing in Parker's Wine Advocate said: "Guigal is the axis upon which the northern Rhône rests, a producer whose wines transcend all levels of the hierarchy, from simple, quaffing Côtes de Rhône ... right up to the three single vineyard Côte-Rôties produced in miniscule quantities hunted by collectors and aficionados the world over."

Étienne Guigal the founder of the empire started in the wine business in the 1920, doing menial jobs for the winery of Vidal-Fleury at age 14. He worked his way to become cellar master and broke away to establish his own firm in 1946. His son Marcel born in 1943 joined the firm at age 16 and worked his way up the ladder. It was Marcel who turned the business into a power house. Along the way acquiring Vidal -Fleury (where his father started) in the mid 1980's. Marcel's son Phillip now works for the Empire.

The secret to the success of the business has been in the quality of the product. In all levels Guigal either owns, aggressively acquires vineyards, or obtains some of the finest fruit of the region. The wines from their 3 single vineyards in the Cote Rotie -affectionately known as the "La La's" sell for hundreds of dollars a bottle and are praised by collectors world wide. Even the lower level wine from them receive the same meticulous attention. This is why the quality shines through in the final product. Some very fine grapes which are available in small enough quantities that do not justify bottling on their own make it into the village level wines. Get a Guigal from a good vintage and the wines can be exceptional in their price range, regardless of the price level.

This brings us to today's offer. Everyone is scrambling after the 2007's which was hailed as an exceptional vintage. This gives the industry the opportunity to raise prices even in tough economic times. Yet the real value to be found currently, is in the remaining stock of the 2005 vintage. On it's own another great year in the region -the 2005's where not as exuberant upon release, yet the wines have gained weight and complexity in bottle and the vintage is now generally recognized as a top vintage indeed. I have recently had several chances to taste some of the Guigal wines and I was very impressed with the overall quality and value. A recent discount in pricing on stock already in the US led us to today's offer featuring my favorites from this vintage.

\$\$\$ Today's Wine Deal \$\$\$

Guigal Cote Du Rhone 2005 our price: **\$16.50/bot.** \$178/case (that's **\$14.83/bot.**)

Last November a review in Wine Spectator magazine mentioned "better than previously reviewed."

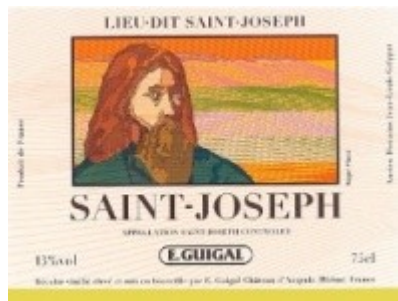
"This has nice weight, with fleshy dark plum, raspberry and licorice notes. Shows some toasty grip on the finish, but stays juicy enough." Well it has gotten even better since. One of the finest Guigal CDR in my memory, This blossomed into a wine far beyond the average quality for this low tariff. This should be very pleasurable over the next few years. A recession beating price, especially at the case price. Very food versatile this will make for



price, especially at the case price. Very food versatile this will make for an excellent house red.

Collector's Corner:

GUIGAL Lieu-Dit St. Joseph 2005 our price: **\$46-** (compare to list: \$60+)



On the right bank of the Rhône river across from the famous hill of Hermitage sit the vineyards of the Saint-Joseph appellation. Some of the finest plots were acquired recently by Guigal from the Jean-Louis Grippat estate. In the hands of Guigal the St. Joseph Lieu -Dit which are mainly planted with old wine have produced some stunning wines. A relative new addition to the line up this wine is not yet a household name. As with other Guigal offerings once this gets established expect the price to jump. Incidentally

this was the highest rated /least expensive wine in the lineup -it got an initial 92 point rating from both Robert Parker and Wine Spectator magazine -the latter wrote last June; "Bright, with a deliciously plush texture and a mélange of ripe red and black cherry fruit mixing with licorice snap, ganache and graphite notes. Juicy, pure finish. Drink now through 2013. 700 cases made".

As with the CDR above this wine is also showing much better recently. Being conservative, I would easily increase the initial rating by a couple of points, it's that good. Note: We are featuring the red wine which is much less available in the market place. The wine is at the importers warehouse in the west coast. This is a pre arrival special price subject to availability. Give us your interest and we will only bill you once the wine arrives by late Spring.

A little extra info.:

It is hard to cover Guigal's wines in such brevity. Those of you interested in more information may want to visit the Guigal web site: www.guigal.com. The following is from Robert Parker's Wine Advocate. It will give you a good idea as to what this famous wine critic thinks of the Guigal operation. "As always, a tasting at Guigal is an opportunity to receive several years' worth of wine education in one day (that's how long it takes to go through all the bottles and barrels). Marcel Guigal is obviously a brilliant businessman, but most importantly, he understands vineyards, how to get maximum quality from them, and how to make wines, at all different price levels. From his Cotes du Rhones to Cote Roties, these wines are as good as one is likely to find. When I first visited Guigal nearly thirty years ago, this was a relatively small firm. Today, his may be the most successful wine operation in France. Guigal attributes his success to hard work and never being satisfied with the status quo. He pays the highest prices of any negociant for the fruit used to fashion his Cotes du Rhone as well as other negociant wines. He has also been extraordinarily adept at buying fabulous terroirs, as evidenced by his purchase of the De Vallouit properties in Crozes-Hermitage and Hermitage as well as Grippat's top-notch vineyard holdings in St.-Joseph."

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Paul David, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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