

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner  
~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

1

## Terroir in Napa? Part I

Amazing how things change with the passage of time. For instance, who would have thought Napa winegrowers would become so interested in *terroir*, the reciprocal notion that soil, geography, climate, and human intervention played such a vital role in the production of unique, world-class wine? But here we are, in the autumn of 2011, with most serious Napa growers speaking of nothing but *terroir*, and how the sub-appellations of the valley have come to be recognized as a crucial, if not limited, aspect to the development of less generic, better crafted wine.



Now, as a crucial part to understanding how *terroir* is interpreted in the Napa Valley, an ideal place to start is by looking at the fifteen sub-appellations that comprise the region as a whole. Oftentimes demarcated more as a matter of climatic convenience than outright physical geography, the sub-appellations of Napa serve as a very useful tool in grasping the fundamentals of this surprisingly varied—particularly in terms of soil—winegrowing region.

Let's start with **Carneros** AVA, located in the southernmost part of the valley and shared with Sonoma County to the west. This is the coolest sub-appellation in Napa, heavily exposed to the cool winds coming off the San Pablo Bay and thus home to superb examples of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, as well as



some of the finest sparkling wines in California. Indeed, Carneros is often considered the most significant exception to the rule that Napa is incapable of producing world-class Pinot Noir and cool-climate Chardonnay. Shallow clay-loam soils dominate the area—much less fertile than the Napa Valley floor.

Northeast of Carneros, we come to the **Oak Knoll District** AVA. Established as an official sub-appellation only relatively recently, here lies an additional cool-climate area of incredible

## The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner 2

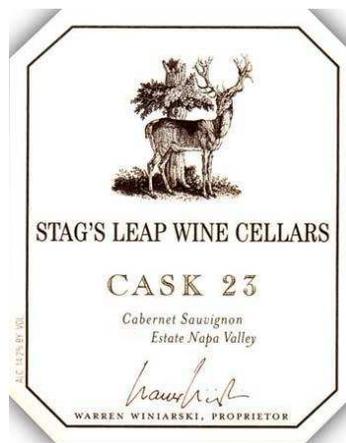
~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

potential. At present, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Chardonnay have each performed splendidly, though virtually every other major varietal seems happy here. Soil contents vary from volcanic deposits in the northwest to varying traces of gravel-clay loam in the south and east.

West of here is **Mount Veeder** AVA, a superb sub-appellation located in the Mayacamas mountain range separating Napa and Sonoma. With elevations reaching as high as 650m (important for day-night-time temperature variation), the speciality of Mount Veeder is flavourful, well-structured Cabernet Sauvignon-blends, often capable of significant aging. Soil contents are quite high in acidity and boast heavy volcanic deposits; most are also textured by sandy-loam traces.

Heading back down to the valley floor, we now arrive at **Yountville** AVA (located just north of the Oak Knoll District). This is Cabernet Sauvignon and (particularly) Merlot territory, the latter greatly benefiting from the clay-rich alluvial deposits to be found throughout the AVA. While the sub-appellation extends right up into the hills, directly bordering Mount Veeder, most vines are found on the valley floor. I rarely encounter wines made exclusively from Yountville grapes.

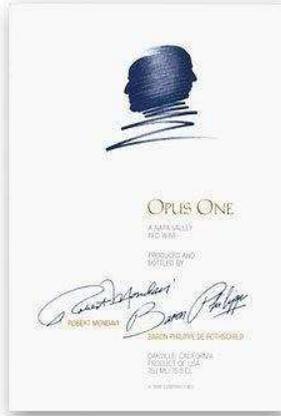
Directly east, however, I have often happened upon some superlative bottlings from the much-heralded **Stags Leap District** AVA. This is where some of the most elegant Cabernets in the entire Napa Valley are produced, despite elevations only reaching 123m. Moderated by marine breezes from the San Pablo Bay, wines from Stags Leap are usually very supple, oftentimes bordering on silky, displaying dark black cherries and capable of aging for decades. Soils are reasonably fertile, containing volcanic gravel-loams that allow for particularly good drainage on the hillsides.



North of Stags Leap District, we arrive at what some would designate the heartland of Napa Cabernet-blends: **Oakville** AVA. This is where some of the most powerful examples of this noble grape can be found, where Robert Mondavi began his quest of producing world-class wines more than fifty years ago. Though some marine influence can still be felt from the San Pablo Bay,

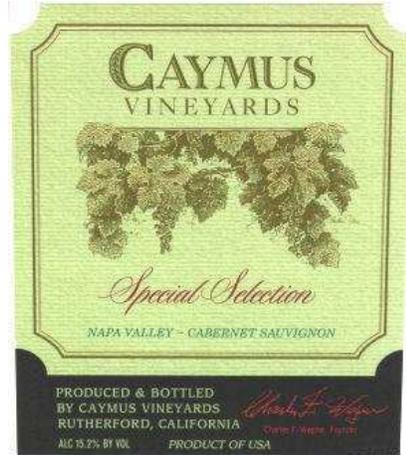
The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner 3  
~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

ripening is fairly simple to achieve on the valley floor; temperatures here are among the hottest in the entire valley. Head to the western (Mayacamas) hills, however, and conditions provide for



good drainage and lower fertility—this is where the iconic Harlan Estate is located. For the most part, alluvial fans dominate in the western vineyards, while the eastern portions tend to feature heavier soils intermixed with volcanic deposits—the latter is where Screaming Eagle is located, (arguably) the most sought-after wine, in terms of price, outside of Europe.

North of Oakville, we come to **Rutherford** AVA, probably the most famous of the Napa sub-appellations. Some would argue that Rutherford represents the epitome of Napa Cabernet Sauvignon: powerful, ageworthy, and extremely ripe. Rutherford is also where Cabernet has been grown the longest, some operations having been established more than seventy years prior. With exception, the best vineyards are found in the west, on the so-called 'Rutherford Bench,' with slightly higher elevations and soils comprising gravel-sand deposits and alluvial fans. Over the years, tasters have often detected mineral traces in wine from the bench, referred to as 'Rutherford dust.' On the east side, gravel deposits can also be found, though they will often be intermixed with volcanic soils of greater fertility. Like Oakville and Stags Leap, Rutherford wines have no difficulty aging.



Retracing our steps just for a moment, if we head to the hills east of the Stags Leap District, we come to **Atlas Peak** AVA. By most accounts, the creation of this particular, and peculiar, AVA is the result of one man and his quest to perfect Sangiovese in the Napa Valley: Marchesi Piero Antinori and his founding of Atlas Peak Vineyards. Unfortunately, results for Sangiovese quickly proved a non-starter for this otherwise legendary individual; but the area has shown reasonable promise as a reliable location for sturdy, sprightly Cabernet Sauvignon. With elevations reaching

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner  
~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

4

as high as 792m, soils are largely volcanic in origin and very thin. Breezes from the San Pablo Bay are able to reach here with virtual ease.

Northeast of here lies yet another lesser-known area: the **Chiles Valley District** AVA. Another outpost for would-be vignerons, Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel have both shown particular promise in this reasonably warm yet cooler winegrowing region. On the valley floor, alluvial soils and clay deposits predominate, while the hillsides show more clay-loam and stony-clay compositions.

By comparison, the **Howell Mountain** AVA, north and parallel to the Chiles Valley, is much more famous. Historically recognized for its Zinfandel, this isolated sub-appellation is nowadays best known for some of the most elegant Cabernet Sauvignon-blends in all the hills of the valley, particularly the offerings of Dunn Vineyards. Reasonably free of fog at elevations reaching up to 675m, the Howell Mountain benefits from superb day/night-time temperature variations and infertile, well-drained soils, much of which is volcanic and shallow in composition.



Returning to the valley floor, north of Rutherford is the **St Helena** AVA. A sub-appellation of contrasts, while St Helena is home to some of the largest wine businesses in Napa, the area also boasts a fair number of cult operations. Warmer than Rutherford and the largest of Napa Valley's towns, Cabernet Sauvignon predominates; yet other grapes such as Merlot and Zinfandel have also fared well. Soils in the south and west are largely based on gravel and clay, while northern soils are more volcanic in origin.

West of here is the **Spring Mountain District** AVA. Boasting a similar climate to that of Mount Veeder, the sub-appellation benefits from both altitude and proximity to the Pacific Ocean. With elevations reaching as high as 675m, Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay are the main trump cards of the region. Soil deposits are composed primarily of weathered sandstone and shale.



Head north and we arrive at the **Diamond Mountain**

5

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner  
~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

AVA, one of the northernmost outposts of Napa. With elevations reaching up to 530m, the best growers in this remote area, such as Diamond Creek Vineyards, have been those best able to exploit the remarkable diversity of volcanic-based soils to be found throughout this reasonably cool sub-appellation. For my part, I have often thought Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon to be among the most elegant in this part of California. Good Chardonnay, too.

Finally, we arrive at **Calistoga** AVA, one of the most recently designated sub-appellations. Encircling Diamond Mountain and serving as the northern continuance of St Helena, this part of the valley benefits from both cool ocean breezes and being almost entirely surrounded by mountains. Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, and Chardonnay are all found in abundance. Soils are almost entirely volcanic in origin.

So there you have it: the sub-appellations of the Napa Valley in their entirety, a positive sign that Napa winemakers do, in fact, have some interest in the notion of *terroir*. Of course, in reality the sub-appellations of Napa are nothing like their counterparts in the Médoc, where restrictions of vine densities, yields, grape varieties, and minimum natural alcohol levels are clearly defined. Even in Napa sub-appellations, vintners have a free hand in most of their doings—hell, only 85% of the actual grapes have to come from any specific sub-appellation in order for it (i.e. the sub-appellation) to be included on the label. But at least a sub-appellation like Carneros (cool-climate) or Oakville (hot climate) or Diamond Mountain (elevation) will provide some indication as to how the wine will probably taste. For Americans, greedily *laissez-faire* as they are, this can be deemed an excellent start.

[Click here for a few gems from the 29 October 2011 Vintages Release and other items](#)

## A few gems for collectors:

### White Wines:

**Domaine Servin 2009, Chablis Premier Cru Vaillons AOC, Burgundy, France:** In need of an elegant, vibrant Chablis of Premier Cru status? If so, then the 2009 Vaillons of Domaine Servin should easily foot the bill. Starbright, pale-light straw-lime in colour, the wine displays beautiful, delicate floral-based scents of yellow pears, green apples, minerals, lemon, chalk, and a hint of 'flinty' nuts and orange zest (very mild). Complex, with lovely intensity, vibrancy of fruit, balanced acidity, and a crisp, characterful hint of delicate lemon and minerals on the finish. A wine of marvellous intensity and style (for its

## The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner

6

~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~

Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

type)—if only I came across more bottlings like this. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2011)

**90++ \$33.00 (#250779) Vintages Online Exclusives**

**Olivier Leflaive 2008, Meursault AOC, Burgundy, France:** The nephew of now-deceased Vincent Leflaive (no need to quote the title of this famous domaine), the wines of Olivier Leflaive have always been something of a work in progress; yet there has never been any dispute of the potential quality to be had. Take the 2008 Meursault: starbright, pale lime in colour, a trace of sulphur at the outset eventually gives way to appropriately refined scents of hazelnutted quince and pears, lemon, mild white flowers, lime, green apples, and caramel. Complex, with poised, elegant fruit, balanced acidity, and a refined hint of hazelnutted pears (very zesty) on the finish. Ultimately: a truly tempting wine at its core; plus decanting should help with initial traces of sulphur. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, August 2011)

**90 \$59.00 (#250738) Vintages Online Exclusives**

**Hoopenburg 2007 Integer Chardonnay, Stellenbosch WO, South Africa:** Over the past dozen years, South Africa has time again proved itself as a superb producer of fresh, well-priced Chardonnay, with even a few premium examples now and then. Starbright, light greenish-lime in colour, the 2007 Integer is nicely toasted, with engaging scents of almond-infused pears, lemon, light butterscotch, apricots, delicate vanillin, and a hint of dried quince. Complex, with very fine fruit, milder acidity, and a polished hint of pears on the finish. A Chardonnay of splendid fullness and flavour without excessive use of oak. Now-2015+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**89 \$21.95 (#174672) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Jean-Max Roger 2010 Cuvée G.C., Sancerre AOC, Loire, France:** While perhaps not overtly compelling as previous vintages, the 2010 Cuvée G.C. nonetheless remains a truly admirable—if not tarter—Sancerre in its own right. Starbright, pale straw-lime in colour, the wine displays lovely scents of lemon and gooseberries, switching to minerals, gunflint, white grapefruit, and a hint of white flowers. Reasonably complex, with intense, vibrant fruit, balanced acidity (thought somewhat tart), and a delightful hint of lemon and minerals on the finish. Definitely assertive yet refreshing. A more curious example, to say the least. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**89 \$25.95 (#189126) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Anne Boecklin 2009 Réserve Gewurztraminer, Alsace AOC, France:** One of the finer cooperative contributors of Cave Vinicole Kientzheim-Kaysersberg, the wines of Anne Boecklin have a proven track record of excellent value for money. Starbright, pale lime in colour, the '09 Reserve Gewurztraminer exhibits more restrained yet delightfully self-assured notes of lychees-laden peaches and pears, plus a little gingerroot, lemon blossom, and spice. Good fruit showing on the palate, coupled with balanced acidity, and hint of peaches and lychees on the finish. Round and fresh—always a pleasure. Now-2014++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**88 \$19.95 (#141226) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Mas des Bressades 2010 Cuvée Tradition Blanc, Costières de Nîmes AOC, Rhône, France:** Starbright, pale lime in colour, the 2010 Cuvée Traction Blanc displays pleasant notes of mildly herbed peaches, apricots, stony beach pebbles, and a hint of green

# The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner

7

~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~

Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

apples and fern leaves. On the palate: good, refreshing fruit, balanced acidity, and a nice, crisp hint of gently herbed peaches on the finish. Solid and fresh; very fine value. On the website: 50% Roussanne, 30% Grenache Blanc, 10% Marsanne, and 10% Viognier. Now-2012. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2011)

**87+ \$14.95 (#701094) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

## Red Wines:

**Domaine Saint Damien 2009 Les Souteyrades, Gigondas AOC, Rhône, France:** The flagship cuvée (out of two) of Saint Damien, the 2009 Les Souteyrades is an utterly outstanding Gigondas of unbelievable temptation and beauty—one of the best I've ever tasted. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine displays considerably enticing, wonderfully regional aromas of 'forested' black raspberries, kirsch liqueur, plummy blueberries, leather, licorice, incense, and spice. Amazingly complex, with abundant, deliciously rich fruit (not excessive), firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lasting, resplendent hint of black raspberries and 'dusty' kirsch on the finish. Near-magnificence for its type; most Gigondas doesn't taste nearly as good as this. 80% Grenache and 20% Mourvèdre. Now-2025++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2011)

**93 \$31.95 (#130476) Vintages Online Exclusives**

**Barnett 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, Spring Mountain District (Napa Valley), California:** For the type of wine this is, the 2007 Barnett Cabernet Sauvignon will flawlessly appeal to collectors in search of a more elegant yet potent (Californian) type of wine. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, it starts out beautifully toasted, featuring enticing aromas of slightly raspberried currants and plums, flowers, black cherries, mulberries, licorice, mild mocha, vanilla, and spice. Definitely complex, with superb forward, sumptuous yet even slightly refined fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a lingering, delicious hint of flowery currants, plums, plus a little mocha on the finish. Excellent, characterful, and expressive. Also contains 3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot. Now-2019++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2011)

**92+ \$74.95 (#221812) Vintages Online Exclusives**

**Domaine Grand Veneur 2009, Châteauneuf-du-Pape AOC, Rhône, France:** Over the past fifteen years, Grand Veneur has legitimately risen to one of the most admirable second-tier domaines in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, with the '09 vintage serving as the latest example of why this is so. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine, almost blockbuster-like in style (though handling itself excellently), features marvellous aromas of blackberries and dark raspberries that slowly give way to kirsch, forest floor, incense, and just the slightest hint of Provençal herbs and spice. Very complex, delivering extraordinary, delicious fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an exquisite, lingering hint of blackberries and black raspberries on the finish. Luxurious, fully loaded (which may not be to everyone's taste), yet ultimately pure in its style. Now-2024+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**92+ \$44.95 (#41954) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Domaine Saint Damien 2009 Cuvée La Louisiane Vieilles Vignes, Gigondas AOC, Rhône, France:** One of two cuvées from this fast-improving producer, the 2009 La Louisiane represents astonishing value for collectors, plain and simple. Brilliant, dark-opaque ruby in colour, the wine reveals an abundant array of gorgeous aromas:

~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~

Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

'forested' kirsch, blackberries, blueberries, plums, raspberry crumble, crushed rocks, lavender, vanilla, and spice. Very complex, delivering delicious, powerful fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a lengthy, widely expressive hint of 'forested' kirsch and dusty minerals on the finish. In the end: sumptuous, terrific Gigondas; definitely built to last. 80% Grenache, 15% Mourvèdre, the rest Cinsault and Syrah. Now-2022+-. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, July 2011)

**92 \$31.95 (#169151) Vintages Online Exclusives**

**Hazyblur 2006 Kangaroo Island Shiraz, South Australia, Australia:** Located off the coast of South Australia, about an hour or so from the beautiful, European-like city of Adelaide, Kangaroo Island is better known for its wildlife than it is for its wine. And yet, the 2006 Hazyblur Shiraz would seem to indicate multiple usages for this particular locale. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine is generously toasted, with engaging aromas of milk chocolate and eucalyptus that both shortly give way to plums, cherries, incense, licorice, loamy earth, vanilla, and spice. Complex, delivering sumptuous, velvety forward fruit and tannins, mild acidity, and a lasting, appetizing hint of milk chocolate, eucalyptus, and plums on the finish. Tempting island wine, to be sure. Now-2020+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

**91 \$44.95 (#144642) Vintages Online Exclusives**

**Pahlmeyer 2007 Pinot Noir, Sonoma Coast, California:** As with his other reds, Jason Pahlmeyer seems just as adept with Pinot Noir as he is with his (most famous) Proprietary Bordeaux blend. Brilliant, dark ruby in colour, the '07 displays intrinsically seductive, fragrant aromas of raspberried cherries, plums, strawberries, violets, subtle crushed flowers, licorice, spicebox, and a hint of vanillin and incense. Very complex, with deliciously silky fruit, elegant tannins, and a superbly poised hint of raspberries and cherries on the finish. Excellent varietal character, style, even finesse—I would have scored the wine even higher were it not for the supercharged 14.9% alcohol. Now-2016. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**91 \$64.95 (#235986) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Stonestreet 2006 Alexander Mountain Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Alexander Valley, California:** If I'm not mistaken, the 2006 Alexander Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon represents the first wine I have tasted from this operation; and thus far I remain extremely impressed. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour, the wine is finely yet abundantly toasted, revealing tempting aromas of dark mocha, currants, plums, forest floor, graphite, crème de cassis, and just a hint of herbs (extremely mild), vanilla, and spice. Complex, with great fruit, firm tannins, milder acidity, and a well-structured, truly satisfying hint of currants and black cocoa powder on the finish. Unquestionably robust, appetizing offering, with well-honed grip to boot. Now-2019+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**91 \$39.95 (#4002) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Château Tronquoy de Sainte Anne 2006, St-Estèphe AOC, Bordeaux, France:** Second wine of Château Tronquoy-Lalande, now under the same ownership as Château Montrose; to taste this wine was indeed a beautiful treat. Brilliant, dark ruby in colour, the 2006 Sainte Anne is lightly toasted, expressing engaging aromas of black currants and blackberries, giving way to leather, licorice, incense, forest floor, and a hint of raspberries and spice. Complex, with superbly elegant fruit, firm tannins, balanced

~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~

Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

acidity, and an almost ‘ennobled’ hint of currants on the finish. Truly impressive: extremely well structured and refined—my type claret. Now-2019. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**90++ \$28.95 (#241224) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Baron Ricasoli 2007 Rocca Guicciarda, Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Tuscany, Italy:** At long last, Baron Ricasoli is performing in a manner befitting its pedigree—the family has been making wine since the twelfth century. Brilliant, opaque ruby in colour the 2007 Rocca Guicciarda offers beautiful aromas of black plums and reddish blackberries that shortly give way to roasted meat, forest floor, dried black cherries, undergrowth, earth, vanilla, and spice. Complex, with great fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and an elegant, lingering hint of black cherried plums on the finish. Superb, more modern-style Riserva, yet the overall character and style still seems to remain one of traditionalism. Now-2018++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**90 \$24.95 (#943613) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Meandro do Vale Meão 2008, Douro DOC, Portugal:** Second wine of Quinta do Vale Meão, the '08 Meandro is a lovely full-bodied offering that collectors should definitely seek out. Brilliant, opaque ruby (plus a touch of purple) in colour, it boasts beautiful aromas of finely toasted oak and ‘purple’ blackberry compote, giving way to plums, incense, black leather, delicate pepper, and a lovely hint of vanilla and spice. Complex, with very fine fruit, firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a rather fulsome hint of ‘purple’ blackberries on the finish. Impressive, robust, and sincerely well done. Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Sousão, Tinta Amarela, and Tinta Cão. Now-2019. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, October 2011)

**89 \$23.95 (#244731) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Finca el Origen 2009 Gran Reserva Malbec, Uco Valley (Mendoza), Argentina:** In terms of sheer value, the wines of Finca el Origen represent some of the best offerings (currently) in Argentina. Brilliant, extremely dense purple-ruby in colour, the 2009 Gran Reserva Malbec is finely toasted, offering lots of dark plummy currants, mocha, violets, ‘purple’ leather, white pepper, vanilla, and spice. Mouthfeel: fine forward, extracted fruit showing, with firm tannins, lighter acidity and a lingering hint of ‘purple’ currants on the finish. Admirable, hefty Malbec; very tasty. Also contains 4% Cabernet Sauvignon. Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**88 \$19.95 (#65425) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Château Croze de Pys 2008 Prestige Malbec, Cahors AOC, Southwest, France:** As I have stated in the past, wines from Cahors have improved by leaps and bounds over the past dozen or so years. Brilliant, opaque purple-ruby in colour, the 2009 Prestige Malbec reveals delightful ‘purple’ black fruits, switching to cassis, violets, fresh leather, asphalt, and spice. On the palate: good fruit showing, with firm tannins, balanced acidity, and a nice hint of really dark currants and violets on the finish. Very youthful at present, with plenty signs of life. A collector’s ‘everyday wine,’ perhaps? Now-2017. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**87+ \$15.95 (#681668) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**

**Sparkling Wine:**

The Successful Collector – By Julian Hitner 1  
~ Napa Sub-appellations – the importance of division ~  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**Pol Roger Vintage 2002 Rosé Brut, Champagne, France:** From the greatest vintage of the new millennium thus far (my opinion), the Pol Roger 2002 Vintage Rosé is definitely a wine with its own personality and persuasion. Starbright, light pink-salmon in colour, it reveals unquestionably elegant, individualistic scents of spice-infused brioche, switching to dried cherries, grapefruit, orange blossom (unusual in my experience), jasmine, and graphite. Complex, with beautiful, highly attractive fruit, balanced acidity, and a deliciously crisp hint of biscuits and ‘cherried’ pears on the finish. Superlative uniqueness of style, crispness, and refinement. Now-2016++. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, June 2011)

**91 \$99.95 (#82495) Vintages Online Exclusives**

### **Dessert Wine:**

**Château Lafaurie-Peyraguey 2007, Sauternes AOC, Bordeaux, France:** A candidate for wine of the vintage, the 2007 Lafaurie-Peyraguey is a sticky of outstanding richness, elegance, and style. Starbright, light-medium gold in colour, it offers extraordinary scents of honeysuckle and almond-laced apricots that subsequently makes way for poached pears, marmalade, maple, shortbread, and spice. Excitingly complex, with supremely elegant, almost serene fruit, balanced acidity, and an exquisite hint of pure honeyed nuts on the finish. An absolutely marvellous Sauternes, with real character, finesse, and longevity. The vineyard is planted to 90% Sémillon, 8% Sauvignon Blanc, and 2% Muscadelle—why do they make it do difficult to discover the exact percentages of the vintage? Now-2035+. (Julian Hitner, The Successful Collector, September 2011)

**94 \$37.00 (#99812) Vintages 29 October 2011 Release**