

THE WORLD'S LEADING FINE WINE MAGAZINES

NO. 15

€30

Fine

- THE WINE MAGAZINE



FINE LIFE AWARD - DIRK NIEPOORT

BORDEAUX 2012 • CENTURY TASTING 1900-1999 • IGNACE LECLEIR • LIV-EX • PAGANI

Century

During the 20th century the world around us both grew and shrank. Cars, aeroplanes, visual communication and the Internet broadened our view of the world, but also made it smaller by bringing everything close and within reach. Even the moon was suddenly close enough to visit.

For people, the world grew concretely smaller thanks to urbanisation. The space that used to hold farmhouses and fields suddenly pulsed with high-rises and their hundreds of residents. In the cities, work and leisure became clearly separated. To balance a heavy day at work people sought entertainment among movies, sport and television. Entertainment became an industry and mass culture was born, with wine becoming an important part of the phenomenon.

The wine industry was not spared notable changes. The winemaker's senses and experience had to give way to science, which tried to fight nature's whims and imperfections. Modern winemakers were able to achieve almost total control of every stage of winemaking – from harvesting and fermentation to bottling. Advances in technology ensured that this trend continued throughout the entire 20th century, with more countries producing more wine. And better wine. Or was it?

Tasting 1900–1999 Part two

TEXT: Pekka Nuikki PHOTOS: Pekka Nuikki

We wanted to find out about this matter and therefore organised a tasting, the kind of which had never been experienced before. Our aim was to taste and experience the whole century, all at once. We selected, searched and purchased the best wine, in our opinion, from each year of the 20th century, as well as several 'extras'. The work carried out was quite extensive, not least since the century includes some years when wine production throughout the world was almost non-existent. To make things even more difficult for ourselves, we made the decision that each wine brand could only be represented once throughout the whole century. It took us two years to find a presumably drinkable wine from each year of the century. When everything finally was ready, we invited a group of our wine friends to experience a whole century in three days.

The experience was dumbfounding and very rewarding. We were also very lucky with our wines; only four wines out of the 156 enjoyed were not in a drinkable condition. This is quite a performance considering that the average age of the wines was over fifty, that the biggest technological leaps in wine production were only experienced at the end of this fascinating century.

The wines portrayed on the following pages were chosen to represent their year of birth. This issue will present the wines from 1950 to 1999, with the former years printed in FINE's last magazine. The bottles pictured with the tasting notes are not necessarily the ones tasted in the Century Tasting.

Century 100 Tasting Vintages

91p



1950
Château Lafleur-Pétrus
(FRANCE)

91p



1951
CVNE Imperial Gran Reserva
(SPAIN)

93p



1952
Inglenook Cabernet
Sauvignon Cask J-9
(USA)

98p



1953
Château Lafite-Rothschild
(FRANCE)

90p



1954
Madeira Malvasia
(PORTUGAL)

95p



1955
DRC Romance-Conti
(FRANCE)

75p



1956
Viña Undurraga Cabernet
Sauvignon Reservado
(CHILE)

89p



1957
Domaine Huet Vouvray
Sec Clos du Bourg (FRANCE)

93p



1958
Château Haut-Brion Blanc
(FRANCE)

92p



1959
La Rioja Alta 890
(SPAIN)

90p



1960
DRC La Tâche
(FRANCE)

98p



1961
Château Latour
(FRANCE)

92p



1962
Krug Vintage Champagne
1962 (FRANCE)

89p



1963
Cockburn's Vintage Port
(PORTUGAL)

96p



1964
Salon Vintage Champagne
Magnum (FRANCE)

88p



1965
Ferreira Barca Velha
(PORTUGAL)

94p



1966
Guigal Côte-Rôtie
La Mouline (FRANCE)

83p



1967
Biondi-Santi Brunello
di Montalcino Riserva (ITALY)

92p



1968
Tenuta Sassicaia
San Guido
(ITALY)

86p



1969
Barolo Monfortino
Conterno (ITALY)

92p



1970
Henri Jayer Vosne-Romanée
(FRANCE)

93p



1971
Gaja Sorì Tildin
Barbaresco (ITALY)

94p



1972
Penfolds Grange
Hermitage (AUSTRALIA)

89p



1973
Château Mouton-
Rothschild (FRANCE)

99p



1974
Heitz Martha's Vineyard
Cabernet Sauvignon
(USA)

Century 100 Tasting Vintages

97p



1975
Château Lafleur
(FRANCE)

96p



1976
Clos des Goisses
Philipponnat Magnum
(FRANCE)

90p



1977
Château Musar
(LEBANON)

89p



1978
Henri Bonneau Châteauneuf-
du-Pape Réserve des
Celestins (FRANCE)

93p



1979
Louis Roederer
Cristal (FRANCE)

93p



1980
Quinta do Noval Nacional
Vintage Port (PORTUGAL)

87p



1981
Château Smith-Haut-
Lafitte Blanc (FRANCE)

96p



1982
Château Léoville-
Las-Cases (FRANCE)

94p



1983
Domaine Rousseau
Chambertin
(FRANCE)

94p



1984
Caymus Special
Selection Magnum
(USA)

91p



1985
Ornellaia Tenuta
dell'Ornellaia Magnum
(ITALY)

92p



1986
Jean-Louis Chave
Hermitage Blanc
(FRANCE)

94p



1987
Gaja Barbaresco
Sori San Lorenzo (ITALY)

92p



1988
Dalla Valle Maya
(USA)

98p



1989
Château Haut-Brion
(FRANCE)

98p



1990
Hermitage La Chapelle
Paul Jaboulet Aîné (FRANCE)

93p



1991
DRC Montrachet
(FRANCE)

94p



1992
Domaine Leroy
Richebourg (FRANCE)

95p



1993
Le Pin
(FRANCE)

93p



1994
Harlan Estate
(USA)

95p



1995
Château de Beaucastel
Hommage à Jacques Perrin
(FRANCE)

94p



1996
Krug Clos du Mesnil
(FRANCE)

97p



1997
Screaming Eagle
(USA)

94p



1998
Coche-Dury Corton-
Charlemagne (FRANCE)

91p



1999
Cloudy Bay Sauvignon
Blanc (NEW ZEALAND)

1974 Heitz Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

Often compared to the 1945 Château Mouton-Rothschild, the most prestigious vintage of the exquisite Heitz, Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon comes from a small vineyard in a location that was long kept a secret. So secret was the spot, that the owners chose not to have their addresses in the phone book or on their mail box. In short, it is the best wine ever made in America; 38th on the list of the world's finest wines of all time. Unlike today, in the early 1970s there was still plenty of vacant land for wine growing in the Napa and Sonoma valleys. During that time, the hills were covered with lush orchards, olive groves and vast forests, which were later forced to make way for more productive vineyards.

From the days of prohibition, the wine market was dominated by the "four greats": Inglenook, Charles Krug, Louis Martini and Beaulieu. It was not until the 1960s that these giants had competition to fear, when a new generation of wine growers with determined visions of making the best Cabernet Sauvignon wines in the world made their way to Napa, and new vineyards sprung up. The most famous of these newcomers were Robert Mondavi, Joseph Helps, Paul Draper, Warren Winiarski and Joe Heitz.

Their first years in the business were not easy, as the growth of the wine market, which had begun in the early 1960s, came to an abrupt halt in 1974.

President Nixon's resignation and the oil crisis took their toll on the U.S. stock market, and the depression was a trying time for winegrowers.

The weather that year was very much favourable for wine growers. The early part of the year was dry and mild in the Napa Valley. The spring saw fairly little rain and it was hotter than usual, with the average temperature staying at roughly 24 degrees Celcius. It was a most opportune time for plants to bloom. During the summer, the temperature stayed at a nearly perfect level and there was little rain. Only twice did the mercury rise over 32 degrees. In October, the crops were harvested in absolutely ideal conditions.

When the 1974 vintage became available in 1978, the California wine market had gone through yet another surprising change, which, this time, was a positive one and, rather surprisingly, brought about by the French. The correspondent of the *Decanter* magazine, Steven Spurrier, held a revolutionary tasting in Paris in the autumn of 1976. In that tasting, the new California wines were pitted against the best French wines, and, surprisingly, the Cabernet Sauvignons from California swept the board. The attention of the wine world and the press suddenly turned to the Napa Valley and its new winegrowers. When the superb 1974

vintage came out later in the decade, all doubts about the quality of the Napa Valley wines were quickly dissolved.

The year 1974 also gave birth to the wine which in my opinion is the finest and most well known California wine of all time. The credit for the achievement must be given to the Heitz Cellar and Martha's Vineyard.

In 1968, when Heitz Wine Cellars brought out their first vintage of Martha's Vineyard wine from 1966, the wine garnered deserved attention. Since then, Heitz Wine Cellars has been one of the leading wineries in California.

Joe Heitz began his wine career in the Napa Valley in the late 50s by initially working as a wine packer. Early on in his career, Heitz worked in various jobs at different wineries. The most decisive period for him proved to be the time he spent at the Beaulieu Vineyard with the most prestigious winegrower of the time, André Tchelistcheff.

In 1961, Joe Heitz was set to establish a vineyard of his own, Heitz Wine Cellars. He invited his acquaintances, Tom and Martha May, to be his partners in the venture, which gave him exclusive rights to the ten-hectare Martha's Vineyard grapes was produced in 1968. For a long time, the location of the vineyards was known only to a select few and the general public was kept in the dark. Joe Heitz wanted to protect Tom and Martha from the public eye and removed their names from the phone book and the mail box. He also refused to divulge what kind of vines were planted on the vineyards. The lack of available information served to give the winery a mystical quality, which in turn helped make its wines more desirable.

Joe Heitz himself was a colourful person and a first-rate salesman. Among tales of his exploits, his disputes with critic Robert Parker have become legendary. Once, Parker criticised the fragrance of his wines for lack of aroma. Vexed by the critic's comment, Heitz decided to deliver a truckload of tissues to Parker. The purpose of the gesture was to help Parker clear his "stuffy" nose.

It may come as a surprise to many that the legendary Martha's Vineyard vintage of 1974 was not produced by Joe Heitz, but by his son David.

David had helped his father on the vineyards and in the cellar since he was a small boy and discovered he enjoyed the work. In 1974, David graduated with a degree in oenology and started work immediately. His father had been in an accident and was hospitalised due to severe back pains. For the first time, David took care of the harvesting and wine manufacturing process on his own. The rest, as they say, is history.

Taster's comment: *Very smooth and polished with extremely fine tannins. Exquisite, long and lingering ending. I could still taste it a long time after it was gone. What can I say, a legend from Heitz and for me the wine of the tasting.*

Taster's comment: *I love it! What it lacks in complexity it makes up for in outright voluptuous eucalyptus power and intensity.*



99p

1974 Heitz Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (USA)

AVERAGE AUCTION PRICE	€900+
BOTTLE CONDITION	A1
COLOUR	Deep, intense, opaque, healthy
NOSE	Open, intense, cassis, dark chocolate, minty, spicy, green pepper, eucalyptus
PALATE	Powerful, elegant, full-bodied, earthy, delicate, perfect balance, complex, super intense, sweet.
FINISH	Fragrant, endless, harmonious
IN A NUTSHELL	A perfect cross between Pétrus 1982 and Mouton 1945
BUY OR NOT	Absolutely
TASTED	30 times, last in 5/2012
DECANTING TIME	45 minutes
GLASS TIME	1.5 hours
WHEN TO DRINK	Now – 2025
FOOD PAIRING	Fried scallops
FAKE FACTOR	At the moment very low, but be aware in the future.
INSIDE INFORMATION	Highest ranked New World wine in the 1000 Finest Wines Ever made book.
OR TRY THIS	1974 Lafleur
FINAL VERDICT	The best wine of the century – today.

