



AURIC PACIFIC

*“selling wine with passion!”*

## Auric Pacific Fine Wines

Dated: January 19, 2007

Hi Oenophile,

### Bordeaux 2004

Issue 33

Written by Andy Tan



Our second half of 2000 Bordeaux took place at my favorite **Sage Restaurant** in Robertson Walk. Due to the highly satisfying part-one 2000 Bordeaux tasting conducted some months ago. The part-two, which featured wine mostly from the right bank and three first-growth from Medoc, came with high anticipation and expectation. However, to some of the attendees, it was a letdown!

First of all, 2000 vintage despite suffering from hydric stress. It was nothing compared with the heatwave of 2003, with super-ripe, sometime baked fruit character. In my view, it also lack the profoundness, the immediate sexiness that contributed by the over-achieved Merlot in 2005. 2000 to me, is a classical vintage that's more in-line with say, 1995. The flamboyance and profoundness of **2000 Chateau Margaux** was an exception. The 2000 Latour, Lafite & Mouton were all made in long haul, less precautious style. However, one is not difficult to detect the intensity, the concentration of fruit that await to be burst, if only, they were not been stop by the sounding acidity and formidable structured. **2000 Mouton** display their usual cedar, blackcurrant, spice and mineral. Very well pitched, thanks to the adequate acidity, which also give the wine that sense of elegance. **2000 Lafite** give off that neat, refreshing, burgundy-like purity. Showing more pure currant, less of that Mouton's cedar, leather element. More austere, but better precision and burgundy-like transparency and details. Not a wine for weight and textured, but instead elegance and finesse. **2000 Latour** is obviously the most massive of all. More cassis, mint and hint of bitter-chocolate. The dense and lush palate, making the tannin less noticeable and suave. This is clearly the most powerful, more obvious alcohol first-growth of all. I will be brief on the following garagiste, **2000 Clos L'Eglise**, more hyper-ripe element, liqueur-infused blackfruits. Lush, creamy, seamless, yet surprisingly structured. I agreed with **Jancis**, the dark raspberries, blackberries, with spice and sexy personality does recalled some of Domaine Leroy's Vosne-Romanee. **2000 Pavie-Decesse**, I knew **Jancis** hated this wine, she called it, "one is experiencing human effort rather than nature, it's a formula"! To me, more chocolaty, more-port-ish, prune, almost band-aid like nose. Tarry, medicinal, viscous, and evolved rapidly in the glass. Drink-up! **2000 Canon La Gaffeliere**, Thank god! We are back to more classic St.-Emilion. Satin smooth, with lovely sweet-berries fruit that is both gentle and edge-free on the palate. Quite floral, with Vosne-like spices, and marked by liveliness and exclusive balance, especially after the two chunky garagistes. **2000 Angelus**, initially look like one of those garagiste dark-raspberries, mocha element. Fortunately, more steel-like-mineral kick in. On the palate, is mouthfilling rich and fat, yet, it has the precision and inner-mouth energy to bring back the wine in focus. In fact, after some aeration, it shown better purity and acid-spine. **2000 La Conseillante** some how brought back the La Conseillante I remembered. I must said, I am less enthusiast with the current Rolland's regime style. Thick and sexy, at the sametime, firm and structured. Quite kirsch-like, yet the blackraspberry/ blueberries fruit look tangy, bracing. This reminded me a lot like the 1985 La Conseillante, which I enjoy immensely for many years.

**2004 vintage** has being sandwiched between the two of the more illustrated vintages of 2003 & 2005, is destined to be over shadowed. However, the British press has, from the start supported this rather classical vintage of Bordeaux, which featured extreme lateness of harvest, and produces more traditional-style Bordeaux for their firm tannins, vibrant acidities, food-friendly style. Since 2003, and especially 2005 announced their exorbitant opening price, for the fraction of price, 2004 came as an good value today, much like the previous 2001 & 2002 vintages. In the recent **Wine Spectator Insider**, many 2004

were given a higher-than-previous score, **Ausone (95 points), Latour (95 points), Haut-Brion (95 points), Leoville Las Cases (95 points), Cos d'Estournel (94 points), Pontet-Canet (93 points)**. **James Suckling** in his personal blogs has also shown optimism how 2004 has developed since it was bottled. "I think that 2004 is going to please a lot of people. They are typical Bordeaux with lovely perfumes of berries and flowers and medium to full-bodied palates, with refined tannins and a long finish". Let look at some of the crucial element that make-up the stylistic and quality of 2004 Bordeaux.

The **2004's features extreme lateness and extreme abundance**, accordingly to Bordeaux wine merchant **Bill Blatch**, which is the person that provides Jancis Robinson, Robert Parker, James Suckling (and, everyone else) the primary assessment on each vintage of Bordeaux. Here is the summary of 2004, where I gather the information from Jancis Robinson & Bill Blatch - Lateness in vintage, translate better accumulation of acidity, often produced wine of traditional-style that features firm tannins, refreshment and elegance. Unlike such early-harvested years like 1989, '90 & '03, where the hot vintages produces warmers-style of softness, fatness, obvious ripeness and profoundness. 2004 also suffered from some downpour in August, with 11 mm above average of rain, which explains the vintage favored well-drained, heat-retentive, warmer gravel soils rather than the heavier, cooler late ripening clay soils (the opposite scenario of 2003). The vintage started off with very late budding (three weeks behind) due the low pressure coming from northerly wave, which lasted till mid-March. This early sign has already shown the delay-harvest vintage for 2004. Despite late-budding does not necessarily mean inferior vintage. However, by the end of April, the over fertile budding (there was even a third bud) has indicated a potentially huge-crop ahead. For Chateaus who remove those excessive buds, appear to make better wines this year. The flowering was effective and rapid due to the early June heatwave. However, vineyards were suffering from drought. July and August were depressing, with showers and overcast weather. The interchange of heat and damp weather has caused the grapes to swell, the enormous load of grapes, which required the *eclaircissage* - second crop-thinning. However, fewer Chateaus could afford to thin and crop their vineyard, especially, most Frenchmen believe in holidaying solidly rather than working solidly in July and August - said **Alain Vauthier of Chateau Ausone**. The delay vintage of 2004 has caused some major shortage of vineyard workers (of-course, all on holiday). "Once again, as in 1986 and 2002, Bordeaux made a vintage that was saved by the bell", said **Bill Blatch**. The return of high pressure in September that lasted till October 10th gave the grapes its well needed heat to evaporate the excessive water, and to diminish the size, further concentrate and as well as ripening the fruits. The very cold nights of September 16, 17, 18, also said to have gave the wine freshness, which is the hallmark of this vintage. Merlot and Cabernet Franc were brought in at idea ripening condition, avoiding the October heavy rain. However, the late-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon was picked during when the rain started, and finish at around 14-15 October, before the rain ended. "If you find anyone in the Medoc who claims that they didn't pick in rain, then send them to me," said, manager of **Chateau Latour, Frederic Engerer**. This is the vintage favor those who work hard in their vineyards, doing shot pruning, de-budding, crop thinning. In addition, those Chateaus whose wines sell at the higher prices, whose could afford the luxury of paying pickers to wait for the right moment to pick and harvest parcel-by-parcel made the best wine of the vintage. "The best 2004s are just so delicious, even if they may not have the intensity of the 2005s, and offer refreshment rather than opulence," said **Jancis Robinson**.

Most of the 2004 will be released between now till February. The attached list are our remaining stock for 2004. Prices indicated are subjected to 5% GST charges (subject to the increase of 7%, if the wine was brought back when the new tax implemented) and the shipping/custom handling cost of S\$13.00 per bottle (by reefer container). We also offer alternate storage service to be store at Octavian in London, if you do not wish to ship back the wine. For those who has previous purchased the 2004 en primeur will be contacted by us when all the 2004s are ready to take delivery.

### Leeuwin Estate Chardonnay

Among all the Chardonnay made in Australia. I admire the recent work of **Sandro Mosele** racy, chalky, Chablis-like Fautline Chardonnay; **Rick Kinzbrunner** delicious, leesy Giaconda Chardonnay; **Geoff Weaver's** restrained, aged worthy Leeswood Chardonnay; Turbo-charged, oaked, Meursault-like **Vanya Cullen's** Chardonnay; Recently, **Jeff Grosset** has also been turning out some sumptuous, almost Giaconda look alike Piccadilly Chardonnay and with some luck, you might find a bottle or two of European-inspired, very

fine Chardonnay from **Sorrenberg**. However, there are still many monotonous, one-dimensional, overly-wooded, overly-acidified, yeast-driven fruit cocktail, uninspiring chardonnay coming out from Australia. Also, some over hyped, over priced chardonnay such as **Penfold's Yattarna** Chardonnay and **Mount Mary** Chardonnay, which try to emulate burgundy, making more subtle, elegant, so-called Puligny-Montrachet-like chardonnay. However, beside the obvious acidification, which could somehow resemble the 04 white burgundy malic-component, they lack the real material to support and balance those acidity! Ridiculously, they are charging for a primeur or grand cru burgundy price.

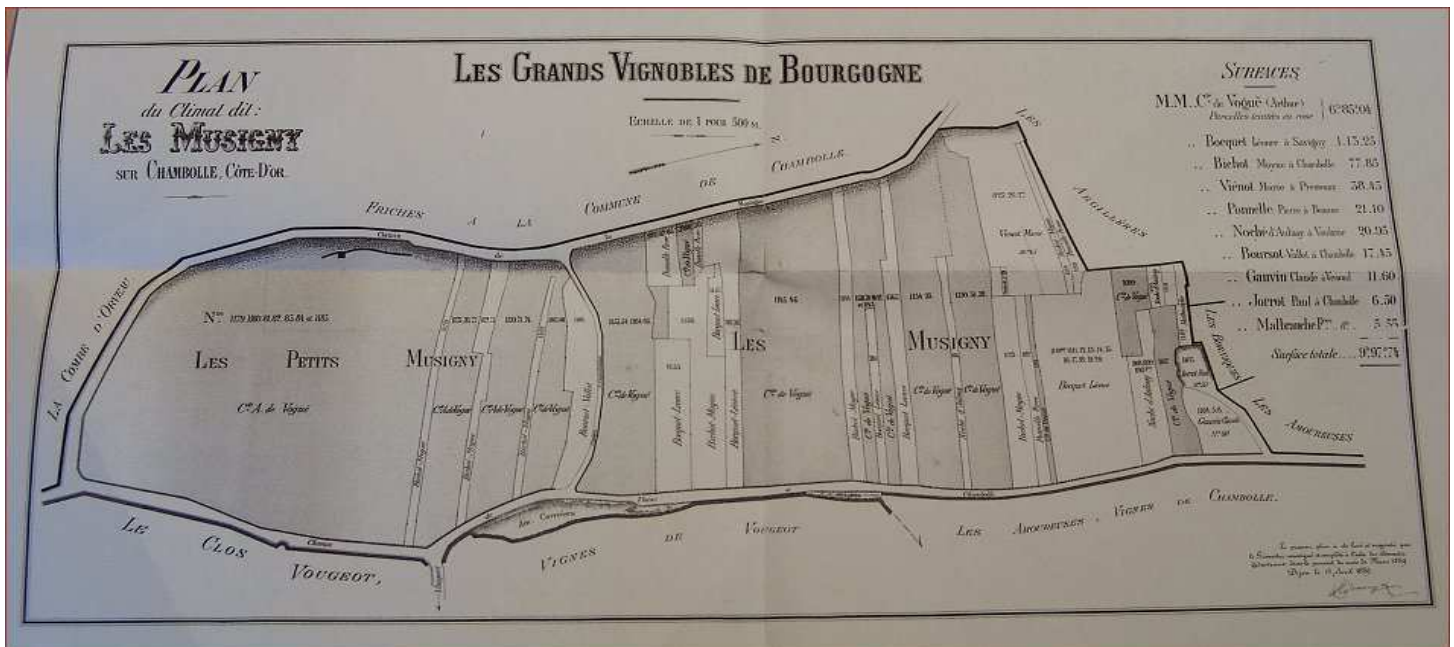
Over the years, I have come to appreciate Chardonnay made by Leeuwin Estate in Margaret River. Granted, there were years that, the chardonnay could be too full-blown, too fat, too butterscotch-ish (too much batonnage) for my liking. However, they have witness their chardonnay aged amazingly well, despite the precarious personality. Having been tasted in few occasion of their 1980, 1984, 1987, 1990, and interesting, either due to their fruit has better integrated with the woods, or the early oily, fatty baby-fat has disappeared? Those chardonnays seem to turn more refine and elegant with age. In a number of occasion, I have even mistaken it for burgundy!

Few years ago, I have the privilege to be invited by **Leeuwin Estate** to participate in the chardonnay blending exercise with the former serious winemaker of Leeuwin and now, winemaker for **Chalice Bridge Estate** and consultant for Leeuwin, **Bob Cartwright**. Bob is the guy that largely credits his success of creating one of the nation best chardonnay. He told me that, he has adopted all the burgundian technique when it comes to making his chardonnay. That means, preliminary cold soak, cold settling before fermentation takes place in barrel. Several yeast strain is inoculated. Malolactic is carry out but rarely 100%, in year, they might block the malos to preserve better acidity. After fermentation, the must remained with its lees, and batonnage (yeast stirring) is constantly carried out for the next 12 months. For Leeuwin estate Chardonnay, each plot of fruits is vinified and treated separately. Toward the end of elevage, the team of Leeuwin winemaking team will come up with the final blend. However, block 20, due to it's old-vine quality (30 over year-old with clone that's originally from Houghton vineyard) has consistently been the backbone, component blend for Leeuwin Chardonnay.

We have received a small allocation for Leeuwin Estate Chardonnay 2003. The price is our final, regrettably, no further discount will be given.



**72 bottles 2003 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Chardonnay, Margaret River at 105 nett each (rated 94 points by Wine Spectator)**



courtesy of The Burgundy Report

### de Vogüé Musigny Vertical

**Allen Meadows** called Musigny, "one of the two or three most gifted pieces of dirt in Burgundy".

**Anthony Hanson** said, "subtle nobility".

**Clive Coates** noted, "a great Musigny is heaven in a glass".

**Matt Kramer**, "the most convincing wine of Burgundy".

**Remington Norman** wrote, "the epitome of the finesse of which Burgundy is capable".

In Burgundy, Pinot Noir grown on clay soils gives more weight and body, as opposed to those from the lighter soils of more limestone, rock, which offers more finesse and aroma complexity. The **Bajocian** rich Gevrey-Chambertin, Nuits-Saint-Georges (most prime vineyards) display richness and structured, where else, the **Bathonian** dominant of Vosne-Romanée, Volnay and especially Chambolle Musigny, is all about perfume and finesse! As what **Matt Kramer** has wrote, Romanée-Conti or La Tâche of Vosne-Romanée is known for their dramatic, opiate spice qualities and **Allen Meadows'** would unapologetically called Volnay as among the purest, most elegant wine that build on the base of finesse and minerality. But, for Musigny, it seem to combine the very best of both. It has the seductive red fruit of Vosne-Romanée but without the forcefulness spice; it shares the same finesse and minerality of Volnay, but is more substantial in power and richness. The sweetness found in Musigny is unlike grand crus of Vosne-Romanée, which they literary knock you on your face. It is more subtle, ethereal and builds slowly, eventually it leaves your palate with the sweet impression that lingers in the memory for days. Equally can be said about the richness found in Musigny. Whether is it due to its underlying body, or the highly pitched personality, it comes across as more subtly and finely balance. A supreme sense of richness without weight.

One talk about Musigny, is unavoidably, **Domaine Comte de Vogüé** will come immediately in mind. The ancestors of the family has been occupying the 66.5% of the entire Musigny vineyard since 1766. The *lieu-dit* of Les Petits Musigny is a *monopole* of the family. To many fanatics of burgundy, Musigny literally means, de Vogüé!

On the night of **February 4th, 2007**. I have co-organized a charity dinner featuring six vintages of de Vogüé Musigny. We also have the privilege of having the estate manager, **Jean-Luc Pépin** as our guest of speaker for that evening. The following are highlights of my tasting note.

### **2003 de Vogüé Bourgogne Blanc (previously Musigny Blanc)**

According to Jean-Luc, the last Musigny Blanc was produced in 1992. Since then, due to the previous old vines being replanted with younger vines, and winemaker François Millet felt that, the current white did not live up to the grand cru status and decided to declassified all to Bourgogne Blanc. However, having tasted this chardonnay again after 4-6 months. I found them developing nicely. The early Chablis-like austerity has gave way to a more oily, fat, glycerin-coated palate. Still, the wine is pure and crisp at start, with attractive ginger, coconut-toasty aroma. It has however turned more fleshy, with some aging honey-caramel sweetness emerged with air. Very little evident of acidity, however, quite viscous.

### **2000 Musigny Vieilles Vignes**

Beautiful crushed berries aroma, that is both pure and fresh. The nose could easily be mistaken for being a Vosne-Romanée due to its spicy qualities. This wine does not have the usual depth and scale, but has the Musigny hallmark of delicacy and elegance. It was nonetheless sexy and gorgeous to drink, and it went down my gullet effortlessly. 2000 vintage is characterized by the abundant crop that can potentially dilute the fruit quality.

### **1998 Musigny Vieilles Vignes**

Initially more underbrush, tarry, stalky element, with aeration, turned more pristine. Its clearly more massive and has more impressive density. The fruit is also leaning towards more intense black fruit, with obvious viscosity and spirit-like palate. However, there is good balance in this wine, as well as the sap showing up at the end. According to Jean-Luc, the key to success in 1998 is grape sorting. There were uneven grapes ripeness within a cluster of grape.

### **2001 Musigny Vieilles Vignes**

This vintage is everyone's favorite. It has the captivated ripe, candied fruit character, the thickness and lace of fruit that is so irresistible. Layer-after-layers and cool, seamless, gorgeous, palate-caressing sweet, blackberries fruit that keeps hitting every sweet spot of your palate. Amazingly, your palate is not fatigue, the balance is amazing, and despite the wine generosity, there is this sense of precision that kept the wine well together. I remember François Millet considering the 2005 vintage to be a wine that combines the warm and cold effects (concentration of sweetness, with precision and energy), which he describes his 2005 reds as - vintage of sorbet! I think, he would agree with me, his 2001 is equally reminded of those qualities.

### **1991 Musigny Vieilles Vignes**

The bottle tasted that night was clearly less fresh and somehow tired. Very tarry nose, with unclean meat-stock, smoke element. The palate also shows a sense of rusticity, more pliant, and fruit has more oxidized influenced of plum rather than berries. It was however rich, and quite massive. There are some aged game quality and noticeable acidity that gives the palate some chewy feel. The finish is however dry, which was clearly coming from dehydrated grape, or what would be said, a taste of hail caused by damaged grapes (*goût de grêle*, or *goût de sec*)?

### **1999 Musigny Vieilles Vignes**

This wine clearly has a lot of reserved! Dark black and raspberries, but tangy and transparence. Clearly larger scale than all the previous Musigny. The huge intensity and power were somehow trapped at this point, but one should not have any trouble to spot the potential. The current sounding acidity has give the wine detailed personality, and so does the unmistakable Chambolle-mineral quality. Here, we are not talking about Orlando Bloom, more promising than happening. 99 is more like Colin Farrell, a putative star who has yet to produce a major hit. Only time will reinstate it glory.

### **1996 Musigny Vieilles Vignes**

This clearly is more linear, details and edgy. The density and potential of this wine is buried by the formidable frame, making this wine more in common with the late-show grand crus from Morey-St.-Denis. This is backward, larger-than-usual scale Musigny. However, the wine is both very fine and elegant. Slightly more four-square, chewy than usual, but the mix of red and black berries fruit indicates that,

there is no sign of decline and still remained fresh and vibrant at this age. This is a serious Musigny that will age for a long time.

Here are some of our De Vogue that is available for sale. All prices are per bottle value and are subjected to 5% GST charges.

- 12 bts. 2003 Bourgogne Blanc at 158 instead of 165 (Burghound's 89)
- 12 bts. 2004 Chambolle Musigny at 130 (Burghound's 89)
- 7 bts. 2003 Chambolle Musigny at 140 (Wine Advocate's 88)
- 24 bts. 1999 Chambolle Musigny 1er Cru at 265 instead of 272 (Tanzer's 91)
- 3 bts. 1996 Chambolle Musigny 1er Cru at 245 instead of 255 (Burghound's 91)
- 3 bts. 2004 Chambolle Musigny 1er Cru Les Amoureuses at 408 instead of 450 (Burghound's 90-93)
- 18 bts. 2003 Chambolle Musigny 1er Cru Les Amoureuses at 515
- 6 bts. 2004 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 385 (Burghound's 93)
- 33 bts. 2003 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 499 (Wine Advocate's 94)
- 11 bts. 2002 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 485 instead of 508 (Tanzer's 94+)
- 16 bts. 1999 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 500 (Tanzer's 93+)
- 5 bts. 1998 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 340 (Tanzer's 92+)
- 9 bts. 1995 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 430 instead of 500 (Tanzer's 93+)
- 10 bts. 1980 Bonnes-Mares, Grand Cru at 448 instead of 500
- 3 bts. 2004 Musigny Vieilles Vignes, Grand Cru at 490 instead of 550 (Burghound's 96)
- 1 bt. 2003 Musigny Vieilles Vignes, Grand Cru at 590 instead of 650 (Wine Advocate's 98)
- 10 bts. 1998 Musigny Vieilles Vignes, Grand Cru at 568 instead of 615 (Tanzer's 95)

All prices quoted for per bottle in Singapore dollar. Prices indicated "in red" are inclusive of 5% GST.  
Free delivery for purchases of S\$350 and above, otherwise S\$15 per delivery will apply.

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