



Dominus and Napanook *2007 Vintage En Primeur*

The name Christian Moueix resonates in the wine world, principally as a result of his achievements as head of the Libourne-based company Etablissements J-P Moueix, founded by his entrepreneurial father, the late Jean-Pierre Moueix. The business combines the role of a traditional *négociant* House with the ownership and management of many stellar properties, including Châteaux Trotanoy, La Fleur Pétrus, Magdelaine and Hosanna, amongst others.

The right bank of Bordeaux is not however the only region in Christian's sights as, whilst studying in the late 1960s at UC Davis, he fell in love with the Napa Valley and with a particularly classical style of wine produced there. It took time to find the right property but, in 1981 he came across the historic vineyard Napanook, at the foot of the Mayacamas Mountains. This was part of the old Inglenook Estate, the wines from which had originally attracted Christian's attention and admiration.

It was by no means plain sailing in the early years and critical onlookers allowed very little slack, despite Christian battling with a vertical learning curve and knowing little about either the vineyard or the Cabernet grape. There was not even a winery. Faced with this dilemma, Christian turned to his tried and tested philosophy, founded on the fact that wherever wine is made, the vineyard assumes supreme importance and the quality of the grapes is paramount. Here in the Napa the vines are assiduously cosseted. Crop-thinning is standard, either once or twice each year, depending on the growing season. This is to ensure balance and to concentrate the remaining fruit. Between 20% and 30% is generally removed. The grape clusters are separated to facilitate the circulation of air and *nettoyage* is exercised before harvest, that is, removing fruit which does not meet the Moueix's exacting standards. Canopy management and leaf plucking are also the norm and given the rain-free, dry summers, the grapes are even given a gentle wash before harvest to remove any summer dust and to aid the final maturation process.

No effort is spared to produce the very best quality crop possible and this approach soon began to convert the skeptics, with the wines attaining worldwide acclaim.

In 1996 Christian elected to release a proprietary blend, made from blocks of vines which produce more accessible, early maturing wines, with exuberant fruit supported by soft tannins. This was to become Napanook, a wine created to be enjoyed in its youth. Napanook has developed its own trajectory, enjoying an elevated reputation in its own right. Both wines have a hugely faithful following – well-deserved.

Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
January 2011

2007 Vintage Notes

The 2007 vintage started with rather dry, cold weather which continued through to spring so that there was around 40% less rain than average. April and May were, in addition, warmer than normal leading to early bud-break, flowering and fruit-set. The whole of the summer carried on with mild, coolish weather and despite a heat spike towards the end of August, temperate conditions remained dominant throughout the growing season. The dry weather is responsible for both small clusters and small berries – making for impressive concentration.

Napanook 2007

Corney & Barrow Score 18

This year's Napanook blend is 85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Cabernet Franc and 7% Petit Verdot, aged for 15 months in barrel, 20% of which were new. Deep plum-ruby in colour, this combines dark, earthy, brooding fruit with hints of pomegranate, incense and spice. The palate delivers similar aromatics, adding a certain floral intrigue, all set within a supple, cream texture. This is a substantial Napanook, balancing innate power with finesse and elegance and maintaining a precise focus throughout. Rich and generous it has an extraordinarily protracted finish - lovely wine, impeccably pitched. This Napanook will hit the ground running but, equally, has the capacity to age in the mid-term. Christian advises decanting in order to realise the wine's full potential.

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2020+

£315/case of 12, in bond UK

Dominus 2007

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18++

The blend is 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, aged for 18 months in barrel, 40% of which is new oak. A lustrous, intense plum-shot ruby, this is immediately inviting, clinging to the glass. The nose is inviting, offering hints of warm cherry pie, grenadine and tobacco, lightly spiced. The palate is fresh, brisk even, on attack, a spearhead of aromatics leading the way for layers of intense red- and black-fruit, supported by beautifully-integrated, ripe tannins. Powerful, this is multi-layered, elevated, precise and beautifully perfumed at one level whilst maintaining a darker, more sedate, serious side which promises the capacity to age.

Recommended drinking from 2012 to 2025

£395/case of 6, in bond UK

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TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

14-16 A very good to excellent wine.

16-18 An excellent to outstanding wine.

18-20 An outstanding to legendary wine.

- Wines are judged within their peer group.
- A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread' (e.g. 14 - 16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A '+' adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.