



Your Source of Wine for Every Occasion

## Notes From The Cellar "NFTC" Newsletter

Feb 11, 2010

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**Priorat fans, check out this 2004 "close-out" from Monstant Spain.**

***"For those looking for Priorat-styled wines without the lofty price tag, Montsant is the place to search..."*** Robert Parker in *The Wine Advocate* Feb. 2009

Well Parker was spot on. Priorat wines took the wine world by storm. What made Priorat one of the hottest wine regions in Spain since the late mid 90's, was a unique combination: First the fruit- Very old Carignnan & Granache vineyards which due to their age produce very little, but super concentrated fruit. Since the roots of these ancient vines go into very poor soil (-mostly schist or slate) they developed over many years, and can go as deep as 90 feet. This helps give the wines a wonderful structure and complexity of drawn mineral to compliments the concentrated fruit. Combine these old native varieties with additions of Cabernet Sauvignon or Syrah to give additional dimension. Use nice new French oak, and clean and modern wine making, and you get complex, fruity, polished and elegant wines which have tremendous international appeal.

The problem was that there were not that many of these old vineyards left. As Priorat became more famous, those vineyards got gobbled up. While new vineyards were aggressively planted, the oldest & best fruit started to get allocated to the top cuvees - often bottles costing \$100+. Wines using less of the old fruit are now priced in the mid levels of \$40-70 and the basic cuvees are priced up to the mid 30's.

Monstant is the wine producing area bordering most of Priorat. In some of it, the topography and climatic conditions can mirror Priorat. There were some old vineyards in Montsant as well, and you guessed it -they started getting snapped up as well. Today's wine comes from one of the top wines produced in Montsant, located in the foothills just below Priorat. And established in the 90's as the area was exploding onto the wine scene.

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

## Mas de l'Abundància Montsant (Spain) 2004

**Special pricing \$34-/bottle, or \$32-/ bottle- with our cash discount** (checks are ok)

This is the estate's top wine made from old vines, and from the amazing 2004 vintage. The idea was right; Originally priced at \$45 this offered solid value when compared to the big Priorats, often costing more than double.

Interestingly you will find this wine from 2 lesser vintages (2002,2003) still offered in the market place at this price range as some retailers still have small quantities left. Yet, the better 2004 vintage which we are offering pretty much disappeared.

**The Deal:** Starting with the 2005 vintage, released as the economy was entering the recession, the importer decided to concentrate on bringing in a less expensive wine from this producer. ( called Fluminus which they can retail in the mid to 20's range). Yet there was a tiny parcel left of **the top juice from 2004** -which we managed to get at a deeply discounted price. So today we have a unique opportunity, **a top of the line wine, perfectly aged since release, priced over 30 % below the original release price.** Quantities unfortunately are very limited....

A recent bottle I consumed showed Lots of dark red & black fruit- this is a big wine, in an international style, for those who like big fruit. Yes, there is still room for more development as some of the new barrique oak is yet to integrate, That said, the core is solid and with a few hrs. of decanting you also get that nice mineral extraction on the finish.. The few years of additional bottle age have made this ready to drink, and tasty. I followed the wine over several days keeping the open bottle in the fridge and the wine held out beautifully which indicates it's ability to age as well yet there is nothing wrong with drinking it tonight.

Here is the review from **The Wine Advocate** on release feb 2008: 92 points Drink: 2011 - 2020 :

*"The 2004 Mas de l'Abundancia is composed of 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Garnacha, and 25% Carinena (the latter two varieties from vines over 80 years of age) and aged for 13 months in 40% new French oak. Deep purple in color, it offers up a classy bouquet of wood smoke, mineral, scorched earth, black raspberry, and black currant. This leads to a full-bodied wine with a plush texture, layers of spicy black fruits, licorice, soft tannins, and exceptional depth and length. It will evolve for several more years in the bottle and drink well through 2020."*



I am out of the office for a few days, but can be reached via e-mail or on my cell.

**Have a Happy Valentine's day and a great President's Day weekend!**

**Thanks for all your support and referrals.  
Tell your friends, share the wine, & spread the good vibe. Cheers!**

*Paul David*, Chief Fermented Grape Taster.

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