Soon the last drop will be poured. On that sad day a bit of history will vanish. But tonight, at The Herbfarm, you can still revel in ...

The Oldest Wine in the World

Found in a castle

For 100 years I lived in a Scottish castle. Though born on the island of Madeira, I spent most of my years in that stone cold cell. I was discovered by a gentleman from London. He tells me I am among the very last of my kind. He says I am memory— the essence of my time—all bound up in my bottle.

The year was 1795

Come with me. It is my year, 1795, the year of my creation. See that young man? That is Davy Crockett, nine years of age and already honing his frontier skills in the dells of Tennessee. Forty years from now, he will die out West, outnumbered by 6,000 men as Santa Anna’s army overpowers the Texas Alamo. Sshh! Hear that deep whoomp? That was the drop of a guillotine in old Par-ee.

America’s first wine

I was born in the autumn of 1795 of rare Terrantez grapes grown on the mountain isle of Madeira. The wines of my motherland were the most popular of all in the British outposts around the world, including the American colonies for 400 years. The end of an era

Few of us, they say, remain now. Perhaps 20 in the world. Perhaps fewer. I am new your only means of tasting my time, a reminder of the past that has survived in cask and bottle over the passing centuries.

Partake of me

Taste another time. They say I am among the greatest of the Madeiras who ever lived. Taste the great depth of my age and the vigor of my youth. Drink of me and partake of history, before I am gone, before it is too late.

Frequently Asked Questions

1795? It can’t be good, can it? Because of the way it was made, fine old Madeira wine is essentially immortal. No wine other than Madeira can improve for so long.

When we served a 1795 Madeira at our Millennium Dinner, it was one of the greatest wines ever tasted. Some tasters cried. The 1795 Madeira was better than good. It is exquisite.

Is this the oldest wine in the world? Just about. There is a bottle of Chateau Lafite-Rothschild from 1787. It’s probably not palatable, but we can secure it for you for $124,900.

The singular 1795 Madeira, however, is the oldest wine we know of in both spectacular condition as well as being offered as an affordable tasting experience that can’t be duplicated.

Taste the 1795!

The General’s Staff Carafe

This 5-ounce carafe creates total immersion for 6 to 6 people and can allow up to 20 people to par take in this remarkable event. The carafe experience comes with a large, personalized certificate to commemorate the event. $1795

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An Ounce of Ascension 1 ounce of liquid 1795 with tasting card and a personalized certificate. Can be split in half or quarters, if you like. $365

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Once known as “the Montrachet of the Loire,” Coulée de Serrant is as much an enigma as an icon. Today it is considered the greatest of all dry Chenin Blanc. But for eight-hundred years, it was the world’s premier sweet Chenin Blanc. The turning point came in 1977, when Nicolas Joly took the reins of the estate instituting a stringent regime to lengthen the span of time during which his fruit ripens. At the same time, on a ski vacation, Joly discovered the tracts of Rudolf Steiner, Austrian philosopher and father of biodynamic agriculture. Struck and smitten by his reverence to the natural, sloping amphitheater offers perfect southwest exposure. Except for the fact that he ferments his wines to dryness, Joly’s harvest mimic those of the best producers of the region. Grapes are picked on many passes over 5 weeks through the vineyard. Fermentations are with wild yeast in large tanks. Dryness is typically achieved by January or February. But the wines can go through odd phases. Some think Joly spends too much time talking biodynamic and not enough making the wines. Sometimes the wine tastes oxidative, which Joly insists is merely maturity. But among aficionados around the world, Coulée de Serrant ranks among the world’s great wine revelations. $169

The Essence of Classic Piemontese Winemaking
1997 Giuseppe Mascarello Barolo Monprivato

MAURO MASCARELLO IS A BAROLO TRADITIONALIST dedicated to long fermentations and aging in old wood fotti. Mauro recognized that his family’s Monprivato Vineyard is one of the crown jewels of the region. It is capable of making compelling wines of prodigious perfume and abundant richness. Yet, amazing as it is, he took over the estate in 1970, the family had always blended the fruit with other holdings. At approximately 15 acres in size, Mauro’s white and gray marl soils offer textbook conditions for Nebbiolo. A perennial star of Italy’s Piedmont, the 1997 Barolo Monprivato shows a sweet nose of black fruits, earth, tar, and rose petals. Though the legendary Nebbiolo tannins are still in evidence, double decanting helps smooths the sassy wine. Parker 93 points. $280.

The Golden Queen of Heaven’s Nectar
Since the Middle Ages, a small piece of land in Bordeaux near the south-western coast of France, has graced the world with a sweet wine exceeding all others. This is the hallowed plot of earth that is Château d’Yquem, the foremost Sauternes on earth. When affected in the autumn by botrytis—the beneficial noble rot—it takes 150 pickers many weeks to harvest the grapes at just the right moment. Up to 20 passes are made through the vineyards. On some days, no grapes are picked at all.

The thrill that is America’s most-coveted Syrah

THIS SYRAH MADE BY A FRENCHMAN—born not in the Rhône, but in Champagne—tops many a “most-wanted” list. It hails from a rocky ancient river bed near Walla Walla in Washington State. It is also one of the hardest wines to source in America. Until Christophe Baron arrived, the vineyard was an apple orchard. Christophe found the site by accident in 1996. Astonished by the Châteauneuf-like stones that littered the ground, he instinctively knew he could make great wine here. He planted Syrah, making his first vintage in 1999. And ever since planting his vines, he has practiced chemical-free viticulture. His vineyards are now 100% biodynamic, and he relies solely on native yeasts, with partial whole-cluster fermentation and yields of 1.2 to 2 tons per acre. Today, he uses very little new wood. All Cayuse reds now see only 15 to 20% new oak. He is also gravitating toward larger barrels. For years he has been buying used 600-liter puncheons from Rene Rostaing and is experimenting with aging in large 1,200-liter foudres, di la Auguste Clape. Co-fermented with 4% Viognier, it’s showing leather, game, bacon and...