



Dominus and Napanook *2006 Vintage En Primeur*

Dominus 2006 is the very best definition of a great wine: it transcends time and place.

Christian Moueix, January 2010

The Dominus Estate lies at the foot of the Mayacamas Mountains, in California's revered Napa Valley. Dominus is, in fact, one part of a historic vineyard - Napanook - which dates back as far as 1836. Christian Moueix, better known for his work in Pomerol and St Emilion, had fallen in love with the Napa Valley while studying at Davis University in California. In 1983 he embarked on this, his Napanook venture. Christian would be the first to admit that he had a lot to learn initially, the conditions and *terroir* in the Napa being so different to those of his native Bordeaux Right Bank. Christian's fundamental philosophy would however stand him in good stead; wherever wine is made the same principles applies, namely the vineyard is all important and the quality of the grapes is paramount.

Certainly here in the Napa, the vines are cosseted like extended members of the family. Crop thinning is standard, clusters are separated to facilitate the circulation of air and *nettoyage* is exercised before harvest, removing fruit which does not make the Moueix high standards. Canopy management and leaf plucking are also the norm and the grapes are even given a gentle wash before harvest to remove any summer dust and to aid the final maturation process.

Alison Buchanan

Associate Director, Buying

January 2010

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 'plus' adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.

2006 Vintage Notes

2006 was a rather unusual year, beginning with an exceptionally wet and cold winter and early spring, which delayed the start of the growing season. Mid summer however brought in very hot weather – the catalyst necessary for accelerating the growing season. By the end of July the vines were able to settle into their normal growth cycle and everything looked very encouraging. August fulfilled its promise with beautiful, warm, sunny days and cool nights – perfect late-season ripening conditions. September and October followed in suit with cooler, fair weather which allowed for a prolonged harvest, starting on the 29th September and extending through to the 18th October – ideal for ensuring optimal ripeness and complexity. This is a very exciting year for this estate and demand is likely to be very high. With just 6000 cases of Dominus and 3500 cases of Napanook for the whole world, quantities are limited so an early response is strongly advised.

Napanook 2006

Corney & Barrow Score 17 plus to 18 plus

Back in 1996, Christian Moueix elected to produce a wine destined for earlier drinking and Napanook made its debut. The blend is produced from parcels which produce accessible, earlier-drinking wines – vibrant exuberant fruit, supple tannins and obvious finesse. Inviting and attractive in youth, especially if decanted, Napanook nevertheless has an impressive capacity to age. The 2006 blend is 87% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot and 3% Merlot, aged for 17 months in French oak barrels, 20% of which were new. This is a rich plum-cherry in colour, intense and inviting. The nose presents an intriguing combination of red and black fruit, cream, tobacco, almonds and leather. The palate, echoing the aromatics of the nose, offers clearly defined bramble fruit, black cherry compote and currants. This is rich, yet lithe, and supported by cocoa-like sandy tannins which are beautifully integrated. An explosion of berried fruit mid-palate is sustained throughout a prolonged, layered finish – a very fine Napanook.

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2020 plus

£295/case of 12, in bond UK

Dominus 2006

Corney & Barrow Score 18 plus to 19

The 2006 blend consists of 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, which spent 17 months in French oak barrels, 40% of which were new. Fathomless plum-cherry in colour, this is immediately appealing. The nose presents a classical array of pepper-spiced red and black fruit. Gradually other elements emerge, with hints of undergrowth and truffles adding to the complexity of the nose. The palate is refreshingly breezy and elegant despite obvious concentration and power. The tannins are rounded and ripe and almost imperceptible, disguised by a wealth of silken fruit. There is a wonderful purity here, allied to a beautiful definition, which tantalises the taster, refusing to reveal its innate strength. Dark chocolate and morello cherry fruit make for a fine crescendo on the finish.

On reflection we have been rather conservative with drinking dates, as recent tastings of older vintages have shown. We have therefore extending them slightly, with reference to past vintages.

Recommended drinking from 2012, with decanting through to 2024 plus

£355/case of 6, in bond UK

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