



# ULYSSES

## 2013 VINTAGE, EN PRIMEUR

*"I will drink life to the lees."*  
Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Ulysses*

---

Christian Moueix's Ulysses Vineyard is nestled in the hills of southern Oakville, Napa Valley. It lies to the west of the main highway, where the likes of Opus One, Robert Mondavi and 'our' Cakebread Cellars are to be found. Once part of the famous nineteenth century Charles Hopper Ranch, it is modest in the extreme. The estate buildings consist of a simple farmhouse, a wooden barn (pictured above) and a water tower. Brilliant yellow flowers grow between the vines. The Napa of a bygone era.

Tod Mostero is Christian Moueix's man on the ground in California, overseeing both Dominus and Ulysses. Trained in Bordeaux, Mostero clearly shares Moueix's ideals of freshness and drinkability as paramount to a great wine. He has been instrumental in the recent replanting programme at Ulysses.

Ulysses is just a mile north of Christian Moueix's Yountville estate, Dominus. Indeed, it is made at the Dominus winery. The vines are planted on a mineral-rich alluvial fan at the foot of the Mayacamas Range. Although the soil is similar, the climate is more 'continental' than Dominus, lending Ulysses a forthright richness and energy, this being balanced by quite beautiful precision and refinement.

Corney & Barrow is proud to be the exclusive UK agent of Ulysses.

**Guy Seddon**  
September 2017

---

## **2013 VINTAGE NOTES**

2013 was a stunning vintage for Napa Cabernet. A very dry spring and a consistently warm summer heralded an early autumn. Only 160mm of rain was recorded from January to June (versus 450mm on average). The dryness of the soil constricted vine growth. While average temperatures remained warm throughout spring and summer, there were no heat spikes in July, August or September. The season was 18 growing degree days ahead of average at the beginning of harvest. The grapes were harvested from 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> September. The wine was bottled in June 2015. The equivalent of 960 cases of 12 bottles was produced.

---

## **TASTING NOTE: ULYSSES 2013**

Deep, glass-staining ruby in colour. A sweetly spiced, darkly fruited nose, demonstrative and firmly rooted in the world of 'Napa Cabs'. Tea leaf, exotic spices and some nutmeg. The palate is powerful, virile on the attack, but refined, the initial potency giving way to nuanced, melding tannins. Wonderfully fresh acidity provides balance and sets off the bright blackcurrant fruit. Give this 3-5 years to hit its stride and for the youthful sprightliness to gel. It promises great things and shows a tantalising glimpse of this estate's potential.

## **CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**

**18.5**

**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2020 – 2040+)**

**£695/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

---

## **THE VINEYARD**

Ulysses is a 14 hectare plot just west of Highway 29, Napa Valley's main north-south thoroughfare. Whilst the San Pablo Bay exerts a moderating influence on the more southerly areas of Napa, in Oakville the Yountville hills buffer the coastal effect. This makes summer hotter and winter colder.

After Christian Moueix's acquisition, in 2008, of what would become Ulysses Vineyard, an in-depth analysis of the soil and microclimate was undertaken. This was followed by painstaking vineyard restoration. The distinctive lyre trellising system of Dominus has been adopted as the model at Ulysses. The resulting high canopy keeps the fruit zones shaded. Fanned 'cross-arms' measuring two feet across at the top of the canopy further protect against the sun. Narrow rows act as a brake on Napa's natural vigour, driving competition for nutrients. The ubiquitous Napa dust is rinsed off in the vineyard.

As at Dominus, 'dry' (unirrigated) farming is fundamental. This encourages the vine roots to dig deep and develop drought resistance. The soil is composed of deep gravel and clay loam. This fast draining

soil, as in Bordeaux's Medoc, is especially suited to Cabernet Sauvignon. Indeed, this venerable grape makes up the lion's share of plantings, at 85-90% as at the 2013 vintage, the remainder being Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

Given that Cabernet excels here, it is not surprising that the Moueix team chose to replant the vineyard's Merlot vines with Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc. (Possibly they also feel they have enough Merlot back on the right bank of the Gironde.) New clonal material has been introduced, including from unspecified top chateaux in Bordeaux...

---

## **WINEMAKING**

The approach is best described as 'minimalist'. Watching, learning and intervening only where necessary. Harvested at optimal ripeness, individual clusters are selected, before an even more detailed berry selection takes place in the winery.

Gentle and steady are the watchwords during vinification. Around 50% new French oak barrels are used. The majority of Ulysses' barrels are made by the Taransaud cooperage, with the remainder coming from Seguin Moreau and Demptos. A long, light toast is used to ensure only minimal oak charring influence on the wines.

---

## **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.

Wines are scored out of 20. Customers seem to like it and it has the benefit of simplicity. We will often use a range of scores (e.g. 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a '+' is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine. A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.

---

## **TO ORDER**

**PLEASE CALL**

**020 7265 2430**

**LONDON**

**01638 600 000**

**EAST ANGLIA**

**01748 828 640**

**NORTH OF ENGLAND**

**01875 321 921**

**EDINBURGH**

**OR EMAIL**

**[SALES@CORNEYANDBARROW.COM](mailto:SALES@CORNEYANDBARROW.COM)**