



ULYSSES

2015 VINTAGE, EN PRIMEUR

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UK

The Moueix family's Ulysses Vineyard sits in the bucolic hills of southern Oakville, Napa Valley, to the west of Highway 29. Once part of the nineteenth century Charles Hopper Ranch, it is so modest, it doesn't even appear on Google Maps – which is saying something in Napa, where many wineries have valet parking.

Tod Mostero oversees both of the Moueix Californian estates, Dominus and Ulysses, the former just a mile to the south, in Yountville. Trained in Bordeaux, Mostero clearly shares the Moueix ideals of freshness and drinkability as the basis of great wine. He was instrumental in the replanting programme at Ulysses.

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, giving Ulysses a forthright richness and energy. As the only buildings at Ulysses are a simple farmhouse, the above wooden barn and a water tower, the wine is made at Dominus.

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

Guy Seddon
March 2019

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 fast-draining soil is deep gravel and clay loam. As in the Medoc, it is especially suited to Cabernet Sauvignon, which makes up 85-90% of plantings, 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. 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.

2015 VINTAGE NOTES

A wet winter, with particularly heavy rains in December, replenished the soils' water reserves. Spring was the opposite, very dry, which induced moderate shoot growth. Budbreak happened on 22nd March. Early May temperatures dropped suddenly, affecting flowering (which reached its mid-point on 9th May) and reducing the size and number of berries per cluster. *Veraison* (colour change) was observed on 24th July. The growing season was consistently warm with one severe heatwave, peaking at 41°C on 16th August. Harvest started on 4th September, finishing on the 15th. The wine was bottled in July 2017.

TASTING NOTE: ULYSSES 2015

Deep, glass-staining ruby colour. Dark cedary blackcurrant on the nose with a little gloss, brambly spice and liquorice. With time in the glass, it opens to reveal attractive red berry perfume. The palate has a fabulous sense of purity and immediacy on the entry – dark cherry and sweet redcurrant. Weight builds on the mid-palate, fleshing out and then being brought to heel by firm, fruit-coated tannins. A long finish, coming to a precise point, with a salty twist. 1,000 cases have been produced. 14.5% abv.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2023 – 2040+)

£825/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

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.

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