

TROPHY WINES

They make great investments but do they taste great? **Jen Shek Voon** samples a rare selection

EMIL TEO, THE PROPRIETOR OF THE TASTE WINE Group, and I have been having this long-running debate about trophy wines. We talked about their value from a drinking-well point of view versus their value-enhancing investment potential. The latter wines are often reduced to minute tasting portions in a horizontal or vertical tasting, which is not the way such wines should be enjoyed.

So Emil decided to arrange for a range of trophy wines for us to taste. We met in the comfort of Privé to enjoy ourselves and share the tasting notes with *Prestige* readers.

The best dish at lunch time was the aged beef, done rare, which went very well with the wines we had.

1. **Domaine Marc Sorrel, Tain L'Hermitage, 2000 Le Greal, Syrah, Northern Rhone**

The Syrah has a deepening purple centre with sensual scents. On entry, one immediately tastes the fruit's ripeness that is not overtly concentrated but balanced with the blackberry flavours of the grapes from vines more than 50 years old, and the minerals of the red Hermitage iron-rich clay, which predominates in the Les Greffieux region. (Marc Sorrel adds some of Les Greffieux Syrahs to his Le Gréal wine.)

2. **Domaine Zind Humbrecht, 2002 Brand Riesling, Turckheim, Alsace**

The lime colour of the Brand Riesling lifts the nose with its scent of green ripening apples, and the effervescent leanness of the wine, on entry, gives a remarkable sweetness to the finish. The year 2002 was wet throughout. But the harvest in Alsace was far from a disaster. The grapes were affected by the rain and the cold. The year saw the lowest yields since 1996. And the cooler temperatures produced extraordinarily high levels of acidity.

3. **Chateau de Beaucastel, 1999 Chateauf-neuf-du-Pape, Hommage à Jacques Perrin, Southern Rhone**

This wine has a remarkable nose, filling it with tones of fresh garden herbs and lavender. On entry, there is a fresh lightness followed by incredible depth and structure in the ending. The blend of 60 percent Mourvedre, 20 percent Grenache, 10 percent Counoise, and 10 percent Syrah gave a wondrous combination to the finish.

4. **Ken Wright Cellars, 2006 Carter, Pinot Noir, Oregon**

The hue of the Pinot is a clear light ruby-pigeon red, with the fresh earthy scent of the Pacific coastal strip. The richness of the black fruits provides a long welcoming finish. This bottling is comprised of the Wadenswil, Dijon 777, Dijon 667, Dijon 115, and Pommard clones.

5. **Domaine Gramenon, 2004 Vinsobres, Grenache, Côte-du-Rhône, Michelle & Philippe Laurent**

The colour is a deep purple and the bouquet is full of rich scented blackberries, and on entry, there is the thick concentrated luscious taste of the berries in the ripened grapes. In the 1990s this domain became a well-known producer of Côte-du-Rhône.

6. **Giacomo Conterno — 1999 Barolo Monfortino Riserva**

The nose of the Monfortino grapes brings on thrilling aromas of fresh rose petals, spices and liquorice. The wine, which has a deep purple colour in the glass, glides smoothly onto the palate where complex layers of dark ripe fruit move around the mid-palate to provide an endless counterpoint of flavours and tastes. □

