



# PLUMPJACK

WINES

## WINE CLUB January 2007

Oz Clarke is one of my favorite wine authors. His writings always remind me how important it is to taste with an open mind and not get caught up in trophy-hunting the latest high-scoring wines. He writes, “let me state categorically that the only way to approach wine is to want to enjoy it. Every other wish is subordinate to that.” Whereas the Yellow Pages allow our “fingers to do the walking,” our wine club allows our organoleptic senses the opportunity to travel the world. Our wines this month come from Italy and Spain, two countries renowned not only for the quantity, but also the quality of wine produced. While the Amalfi Coast and Yecla have long histories in viticulture, it is only recently that technological advances in vineyard management and vinification methods have brought wines from these areas to the attention of the international wine market. Our featured wines may not make it to the “Top 100” list of any publication, but in my world of enjoyment, they certainly are contenders!

***2005 Cantine Marisa Cuomo  
Costa d'Amalfi Ravello Bianco DOC  
Furore, Italy***



***2005 Bodegas Señorío de Barahonda  
Heredad de Candela  
Yecla, Spain***

Campania is the gateway to Southern Italy. It is bordered on the north by Lazio and Molise, to the east by Puglia, to the south by Basilicata, and to the west by the Tyrrhenian Sea. The ancient Romans called the lands around Naples *Campania felix*, Campania the blessed, because of their climate, their beauty, the profusion and savoriness of their fruits and vegetables, their seafood, and above all their wines. Vines have been cultivated throughout Campania from before Rome ever grew into a city, much less an empire. Campania is home to some of the most intriguing white wines to be found anywhere in the world. Falanghina, Falerno, Fiano di Avellino, Greco di Tufo, Lacryma Christi, the wines of the Amalfi coast and the wines of the Cilento highlands are unique and distinctly delicious. They are vinified in a wide range of styles, from clean, crisp, summer-quaffing wines to substantial dinner wines with aging potential. Each grape — Biancolella, Coda di Volpe, Falanghina, Fiano, Greco, Pallagrello, and more — has its own distinctive flavor profile. Many of the names of Campanian white grapes indicate their antiquity: for example, the obvious case of Greco, the Greek grape. Less obvious is Fiano, which derives from the Latin *apianus*, the grape loved by bees. The name Falanghina derives from *falanga*, the word for the vine stake. Campania now probably has fewer acres devoted to foreign varieties than any other area of Italy. Campania has 18 D.O.C.'s (Denominazione di Origine Controllata). In 1995, a D.O.C. appellation was created for the Amalfi coast. It consists of 13 municipalities incorporating three subzones: Furore, including the municipalities Furore, Praiano, Conca dei Marini and Amalfi; Ravello, including the municipalities Ravello, Scala, Minori and Atrani; and Tramonti including the municipalities Tramonti and Maiori. Cantine Gran Furor Divina Costiera di Marisa Cuomo is located in Furore. The estate is owned by Andrea Ferraioli, (who inherited the property from his grandfather Raffaele Ferraioli), and his wife and winemaker Marisa Cuomo. Their coastal vineyards are perfectly arranged on the stone-walled terraces along the cliffs at altitudes between 980 to 1300 feet above sea level. The grapes benefit from sunny southern exposure and a unique microclimate that occurs from a combination of ocean currents, mountains and high-pressure systems. The volcanic and alluvial soils of the vineyards produce relatively low yields, and the grapes produce flavorful, complex and well-balanced wines. Recently Marisa and Andrea have replanted their vines and reorganized the winery to realize the high quality potential of their vineyards.



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Their 2005 Ravello Bianco is a blend of 60% Falanghina and 40% Biancolella. The grapes were hand-harvested, followed by a gentle pressing and cold maceration. Temperature-controlled fermentation took place in stainless-steel tanks for 20-30 days and the wine was left in tank for an additional 4 months before bottling. The 2005 Ravello Bianco has complex floral, citrus, pear and apple flavors and a refreshingly elegant feel. It has wonderful concentration and a lingering finish with hints of spice, almonds and fruit. The people of Campania are renowned for their fish and seafood specialties. All along the Amalfi and Cilento coasts, cooks tenderize octopus by stewing it in a sealed clay pot with olive oil, garlic, capers, olives, and parsley or with chili and tomatoes. Squid and cuttlefish are boiled and served in salads, stuffed and baked, or fried into crunchy rings. Mussels and clams are cooked with a touch of wine and tossed with handmade pasta or added to seafood salads. What could be better with these dishes than a glass of Marisa Cuomo's Ravello Bianco?

The 2005 Cantine Marisa Cuomo Ravello Bianco is \$19.99/bottle, \$215.90/case.



Spain's winemaking tradition dates back to the times of the Romans. Vineyards occupy third place in cultivated surface area, after cereals and olive groves. Vineyards cover an estimated 3 million acres of land. This is the largest vineyard area in any country worldwide. The Spanish government guarantees the authenticity of its wines by designating each with a region of origin or Denominacion de Origen (D.O.) The set of laws that go along with this label strictly define geographical location, grape varieties used, maximum yields allowed, aging requirements in wood as well as in bottle and alcohol content. Today, there are over 50 areas of Spain within the 17 major regions that currently have D.O. designation. Spain has remained true to its native grape varieties, (of which there are literally hundreds,) nurturing its important varietals and reviving others that had almost disappeared. For simplicity, Spain's regions are: North, Central, Mediterranean, South, and the islands. Located in the Mediterranean region and with nearly 250,000 acres of vineyards, the former Moorish kingdom of Murcia is one of Spain's largest wine-growing regions. Yecla is a tiny D.O. within Murcia, and unique in Spain in that its land area encompasses a town of the same name. The Yecla D.O. is surrounded by the Jumilla, Almansa and Alicante D.O.s, respectively, and is located approximately 150 miles southeast of Madrid. Our red wine this month comes from Bodegas Señorío de Barahonda, owned by the Candela Family, and the oldest winery in the region. The winery was founded in 1925, and their 840 acres of vineyards have some of the oldest Monastrell vines in the region. Monastrell (Mourvèdre in France, Mataró in Italy and the New World) is the most widely planted grape in this zone and Spain's second most important red grape after Garnacha (Grenache). Yecla lies at a higher latitude and altitude than Jumilla, making their wines fresher and more aromatic due to cooler temperatures. Bodegas Señorío de Barahonda vineyards are composed of limestone and chalk topsoil with clay and gravel subsoil. They are deep and well-drained and the beneficial water-retaining clay subsoil is essential for the health of vines in such an arid climate. Both limestone and chalk have a high pH content, which decrease acidity mitigated by these older vine root systems that penetrate deeply into the lower pH subsoil. Due to poor fertility, yields are naturally low, producing smaller berries with higher skin to juice ratio. The 2005 Heredad de Candela Monastrell from Bodegas Señorío de Barahonda is 100% Monastrell. The wine is fermented in stainless-steel tanks and then aged for 9 months in 500-liter French oak casks. This is the first vintage of Heredad de Candela Monastrell and 1500 cases were produced. This Monastrell explodes with aromas of fresh, ripe red and black fruits, with a warm Mediterranean spicy/earthy twist. On the palate, it is soft and fruity, and the finish is clean and balanced. The 2005 Heredad de Candela Monastrell pairs beautifully with Murcian cuisine, which includes stews, salads, roasted meat (lamb is very popular in Spain), and their renowned goat cheeses.

The 2005 Heredad de Candela Monastrell is \$18.99/bottle, \$205.10/case