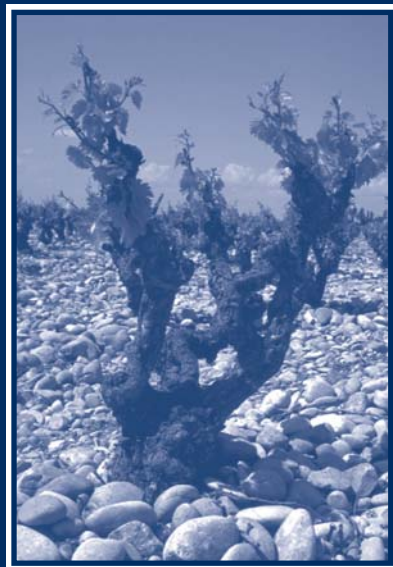
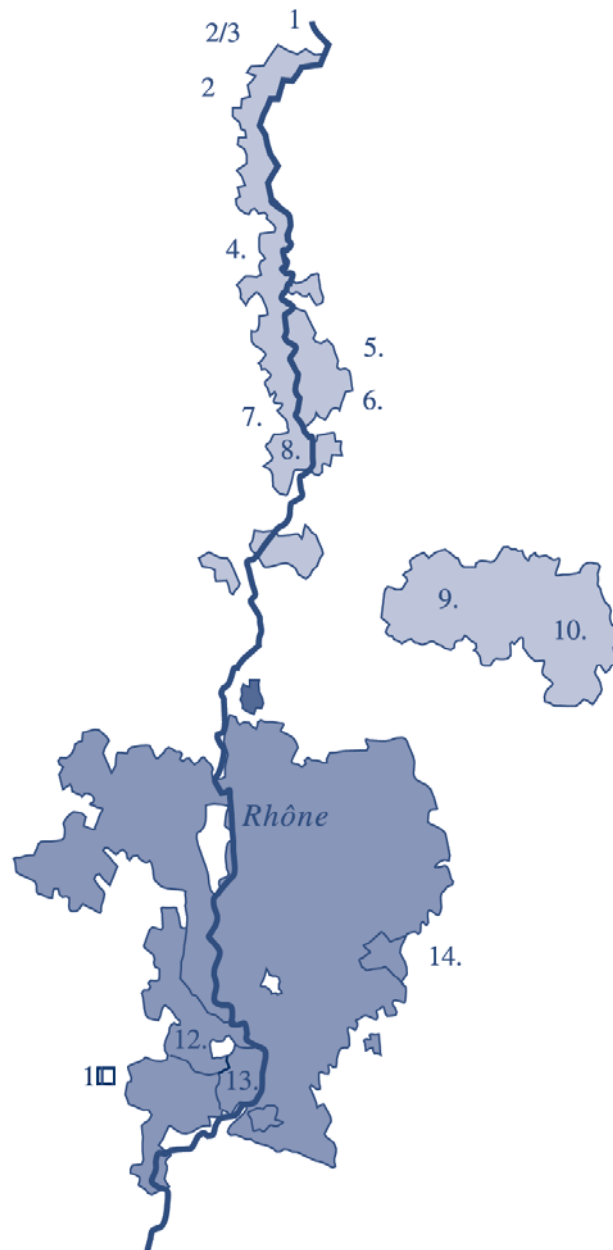
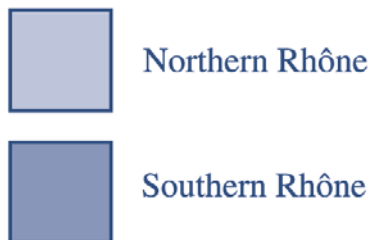
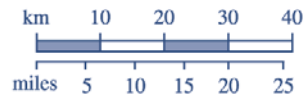


RHONE 2003 VINTAGE



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1. Côte Rôtie
2. Condrieu
3. Château - Grillet
4. St. Joseph
5. Hermitage
6. Crozes - Hermitage
7. Cornas
8. St. Péray
9. Clairette de Die
10. Châtillon-en-Diois
11. Lirac
12. Tavel
13. Châteauneuf-du-Pape
14. Gigondas

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RHONE 2003 VINTAGE

INTRODUCTION

The 2003 vintage was extremely hot everywhere in France. However the Rhone Valley, particularly the south, resisted the heat well and magnificent wines were made.

In the south, grapes like Grenache and Mourvedre, well used to hot summers, positively enjoyed the conditions.

In the north the key was to harvest as late as possible and those growers brave enough to wait were rewarded with wines of lovely balance.

We have now built up excellent relationships with many of the region's greatest growers. Not only with the well known stars like Rene Rostaing, Clusel Roch, Pierre Gaillard and the Gonnet brothers at Font de Michelle, but also with more recently established young growers like Stephane Ogier, Guy Bernard, Stephane Montez at Domaine de Monteillet, the Bonnefond brothers and the brilliant Jean Paul Versino in Chateauneuf du Pape.

The Rhone Valley is producing wines of enormous quality and character, wines that should enjoy space in any serious cellar. For everyday drinking what can beat a satisfying glass of Cotes du Rhone or a slightly more serious Vacqueyras or Gigondas? For richness turn to Chateauneuf du Pape and for sheer power to Cornas. For pure, generous syrah fruit, Crozes Hermitage is excellent and for more structure the wines of St Joseph are ideal.

Of course, arguably, the two most famous Rhone wines are Cote Rotie for its elegance and Hermitage for its complexity and structure. Both are outstanding in 2003 and this offer includes many wines from these regions' best growers.

2003 is a vintage that particularly suited Chateauneuf du Pape bringing comparisons with the great 1998s. Robert Parker wrote "Clearly the most successful appellation of the southern Rhone, Chateauneuf du Pape produced outstanding efforts."

THE VINTAGE

2003 will always be remembered as the year of the heat wave, 'la canicule'. However the first meteorological influence on the growing season were the spring frosts, which ensured a small potential crop.

The last rain to fall before early September, bar an occasional yield-reducing hailstorm, was on the 15th May. After the deluge of the 2002 growing season, there was, however, plenty of moisture in the ground and despite the obvious heat of the 2003 summer, most vines did not suffer too dramatically.

The harvest was early. Indeed most Cote Rotie was picked by the end of August. The grapes were tiny and contained very little juice, high sugar and tannin levels and relatively low acidity. Those growers who waited until the very end of August benefited from slightly cooler weather, which helped promote freshness in the wines.

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THE WINES

The best 2003s are concentrated and ripe with masses of dark fruit and powerful tannins. In short, they are deeply impressive.

However we were selective. Not all wines are great. Cote Rotie ranged from outstanding to overdone. St Joseph and Crozes Hermitage with their huge diversity of soil and exposure varies and some Cornas we found to be over-exaggerated. Hermitage excelled, as did most of the southern Rhone.

These are delicious wines whose opulent, flattering fruit makes them deceptively open hearted. However they will age beautifully and make old bones.

Quantities, particularly in the north are tiny, prices fair, so we would strongly recommend a purchase.

All prices are quoted per case in bond exVAT.



Chateauneuf du Pape

SOUTHERN RHONE

DOMAINE DU PERE PAPE

Such is the Mayard family's obsession with quality that they didn't bottle any Crau de ma Mere in 2002.

La Crau, on a plateau to the north east of the village, is one of the very best vineyards in Chateauneuf and in good vintages produces the very best fruit.

This is demonstrated in this magnificent 2003. Like the Gonnets at Font de Michelle, the Mayards waited until September to harvest the Grenache, finishing on the 15th. This, combined with the relative coolness of La Crau terroir, has made a wine of great beauty and elegance.

£/cs IB

Chateauneuf du Pape La Crau de ma Mere

159.00

Very intense and poised with masses of lovely dark polished fruit. Smoky. Serious but exquisitely balanced for the vintage.

DOMAINE VERSINO

The Versino estate has 27 different parcels of vines in Chateauneuf du Pape and most of the vines are over 50 years old. Yields were dramatically down in 2003 but those vineyards planted on clay produced lovely, healthy fruit.

We were a little too early to see the house martins that have always nested in the cellar but enjoyed a fantastic tasting with Jean Paul Versino.

The wines are made in stainless steel and cement vats and then the straight Chateauneuf spends up to 2 years in massive foudres. The cuvee Felix is aged in barrel, around a third of which are new. It is a selection of the best old vine cuvees, made in honour of Grandfather Felix, rather than a much missed family cat.

£/cs IB

Chateauneuf du Pape Bois Boursan

144.00

This is delicious. Lots of sweet, juicy fruit. Rich with rum and raisin flavours, a velvet texture and, despite quite high alcohol, beautiful balance.

Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Felix

275.00

Packed with bilberry fruit, powerful and dense this is hugely impressive Chateauneuf du Pape.

DOMAINE FONT DE MICHELLE

The Gonnet brothers were amongst those wise growers who instinctively waited until early September to harvest their Grenache. Thanks to the early September rain, the Grenache harvested then was fresher and better balanced.

Balance has always been the watchword at this domaine. These are wines of great drinkability and enormous quality.

£/cs IB

Chateauneuf du Pape

150.00

A very complex Chateauneuf du Pape with lots of rich, super-ripe fruit and leather and spice flavours. Beautifully balanced, it will make fairly early, very appealing drinking.

Chateauneuf du Pape Cuvee Etienne Gonnet

275.00

Dark and intense with an explosive nose and masses of blackcurrant fruit, this is extraordinarily well balanced and stylish.



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DOMAINE CAYRON

Famously this estate has never been one to waste much time on the appearance of its cellar. The enormous barrels, first used by M. Faraud's grandfather have always, frankly, looked suspicious. The wine, however, has always been exceptional. We were amazed therefore that this year the cellar has enjoyed a lick of paint, been swept and was very tidy. Perhaps the influence of the two Faraud daughters is beginning to show.

The average age of the Grenache vines is 45 years old, but there are many centenarian vines. These venerable vines help to make this one of the most profound and complex Gigondas produced. This is a real beauty.

£/cs IB

Gigondas

120.00

Warm-blooded but beautifully balanced with tons of sweet blackberry fruit and a dense texture, this is, without doubt, exceptional Gigondas. Tasted on several occasions, it is always stunning.

DOMAINE LE CLOS DE CAZAUX

There was no sign of life from the magnificent wisteria that adorns the house. However the Vache brothers were in cracking form for a dark, windy evening in early February.

This estate makes excellent wines. Both the St Roch and the Gigondas will make marvellous drinking pretty early whereas the Templiers will take a year or two to reveal its glories.

£/cs IB

Vacqueyras Cuvee St Roch

72.00

Explosive flavours of blackberry and spice, deceptively easy to drink and very stylish, this is Grenache at its most appealing.

Vacqueyras Cuvee Templiers

78.00

Vacqueyras Cuvee Templiers (Magnums)

84.00

With a majority of Syrah in the blend this has massive colour and great density of flavour. Very concentrated, dark and brooding this is magnificent.

Gigondas La Tour Sarrazine

90.00

Smoky and ethereal, but with tell tale 2003 weight of warm fruit, this is one of the most immediately attractive Gigondas that we have tasted at this estate.

DOMAINE CROS DE LA MURE

We always seem to arrive chez Michel towards the end of the morning. Eric's mother in law gets up every day at 5 to make lunch for the family and the smells from the open kitchen door are always enticing.

Quietly, the unassuming Eric Michel has gradually become an outstanding source of Cotes du Rhone and Gigondas. His wines are not flashy but have extraordinary purity and precision.

We cannot recommend these wines more highly.

£/cs IB

Cotes du Rhone

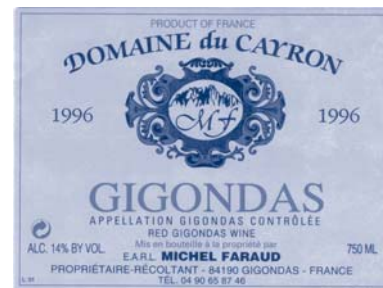
55.00

Eric Michel reckons that this may be the greatest Cotes du Rhone that he has yet made. It is intense and silky. With layers of dark polished fruit and great length of flavour, this is Cotes du Rhone of rare quality.

Gigondas

99.00

Incredibly seductive on the nose, with great complexity of leather, tar and hedgerow fruit. This is outrageously good. Fat and ripe, it is like eating handfuls of exquisite late summer fruit.



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NORTHERN RHONE

DOMAINE JEAN LIONNET

Our tastings with Jean Lionnet always used to begin with a glass of white St Peray. We were beginning to look forward to this rarity but sadly he has stopped making it, so we had to launch straight into the reds.

The cellar was full of apples this year since Jean had just swapped a case or two of Cornas for a kilo or two of Golden Delicious.

Yields in the village of Cornas really suffered in 2003 and were down 60%. However, as usual, Jean Lionnet managed to make a wine of real class and grace.

Cornas Rocheperthus

£/cs IB

144.00

Cornas Rocheperthus (Magnums)

150.00

Wild and mineral, true to its granite soil, this brilliant wine has a crystalline quality to it. The fruit is clearly defined, fresh, and although it has typical Cornas tannin, its balance is perfect.



DOMAINE COLOMBIER

Having had his back tweaked by the local, Chinese chiropractor, Florent Viale was leaping around like a frisky gazelle. Not easy when you are 7 feet tall.

His wines were equally full of joie de vivre. Florent has made excellent wines. Stunning vineyards, severe selection both in the vineyard and the cellar, and the brave decision not to harvest until early September; all combined to produce exceptional quality.

£/cs IB

Crozes Hermitage Cuvee Gaby

125.00

A super stylish wine, rich in minerals, very intense, this is a remarkably balanced and pure wine considering the heat of the vintage. Excellent.

Hermitage

345.00

Very expressive with masses of sweet dark fruit. Super-ripe, very polished, this is a wine with a great sense of luxury. Reminiscent of Richebourg in its complexity, latent power and sheer class.

DOMAINE BERNARD FAURIE

Every time that we visit this cellar we have the impression that the ceiling has sagged a little more, the supporting beams creak as one brushes past and imminent collapse seems inevitable. There are barrels crammed into every nook and cranny, bottles stacked haphazardly. However there is nothing haphazard about the vine growing or winemaking here. M. Faurie owns some of the best plots in Hermitage: Meal, Greffieux and Bessards, and is a winemaker of great sensitivity and skill.

£/cs IB

Hermitage

295.00

A very complete Hermitage. This has a lovely texture and great sense of terroir. Deep ruby red with tons of sweet dark cherry fruit and great richness, this is one of the best Hermitages that we have ever tasted here.



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DOMAINE BARRET

Etienne Pochon does not crack many jokes. Instead we cracked a handful of hazelnuts that he offered us. This is an estate that has risen from very humble origins over the past 15 years or so but is now firmly established as one of the great sources of lovely, fruit-rich Crozes Hermitage.

Crozes Hermitage

Powerful and concentrated with great reserves of dark, supple fruit, this is not only delicious but great value for money.

£/cs IB

65.00



DOMAINE MONTEILLET

Stephane's dog has not become friendlier, nor his mother less chatty, but the wines go from strength to strength. Last year Stephane had just made dozens of saucissons and we were rather hoping for a welcoming plate of charcuterie. No such luck.

Luck did play its hand this year, however. Thanks to Stephane's honeymoon in mid August, he was unable to harvest early and picked at the end of the month. The cooler nights helped to make wines of great balance.

Stephane has made a beautiful range of 2003s and we spent a very happy hour tasting with him as he leapt energetically from barrel to barrel. It is no surprise that Stephane is regarded as a superstar in the making.

£/cs IB

St Joseph Blanc

Sweet greengage fruit, lush and ripe this is hugely appealing.

98.00

Condrieu Les Grandes Chaillees

Rich in apricot fruit, sweet and ripe, this is for relatively early but hugely enjoyable drinking. Opulent, luxurious Condrieu.

175.00

St Joseph Cuvee Papy

A massive St Joseph with bilberry fruit and violet flavours. Lots of tannin but the sheer weight of fruit ensures excellent balance. One to hide in the cellar for a few years.

135.00

Cote Rotie Fortis

A wonderfully flamboyant Cote Rotie. With autumnal fruit, great minerals and sweet, ripe tannins, this is exceptional.

295.00

Cote Rotie Grandes Places

A bombshell of a wine. Hugely concentrated and powerful with thrilling potential, this will last forever. Tastes of chocolate, oak and spice abound, it is astonishingly complex.

198.00 per six

DOMAINE GUY BERNARD

Guy Bernard won our award for the coldest cellar this year, by a wide margin. We visited on Candlemas, a day celebrated in France by eating crepes, and, thanks to the fine efforts of Mme Bernard mere, the entire cellar was redolent of pancakes.

More importantly, Guy, the 4th generation Bernard to run the estate is one of the rising Cote Rotie stars. His vineyards are mainly on the southern Cote Blonde sector of the appellation and consequently generous and appealing on the surface with a serious structure underneath.

£/cs IB

Cote Rotie

Very concentrated with huge reserves of dark smoky fruit and an extra complexity thanks to the old vines. Broad shouldered but graceful this will make deeply satisfying drinking.

195.00



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DOMAINE RENE ROSTAING

Having given up his day job, now that his children are educated, Rene is fully employed on the estate. His passion for quality and attention to detail know no bounds and he sets the standard for the greatest Cote Rotie.

Apart from tasting his magnificent 2003, we went to admire the incredible work he is undertaking just south of Ampuis. He is restoring a hectare or so of terracing on precipitous slopes. This unscheduled hike did not enhance our immaculate loafers, and M. Avis nearly received a call asking him to retrieve his car from the bottom of a cliff. However, it was fascinating to understand exactly how back breaking and slow the whole process of growing vines in Cote Rotie is.

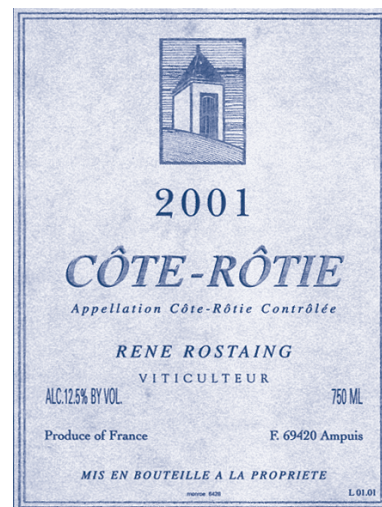
There are only tiny quantities of this stunning wine, so it is offered in six packs.

£/cs IB

Cote Rotie (limited)

149.00 per six

Despite the fact that in Rene's opinion this is an atypical Cote Rotie, this is delicious. With intense coalface flavours combined with huge depth of blackberry fruit and truffles, this is one of the most complex Cote Roties that we tasted.



DOMAINE PIERRE GAILLARD

Pierre Gaillard's latest project, in association with the Vienne museum, is to try and make wine following Roman winemaking recipes. We tasted several cuvees, one involving iris root (not bad), another using seawater (filthy) and another using cooked pine resin (unspeakably disgusting). No wonder the Romans died out!

Luckily Pierre's usual wines were made using more modern methods and he has produced magnificent 2003s. His wines are always generous and seductive and the style of the vintage seems to have exaggerated these qualities.

Pierre is one of the gentlest and unassuming of all our Rhone growers and we are huge fans of these wines.

£/cs IB

St Joseph Clos de Cuminaille

130.00

From a steep hillside above Chavanay this is very powerful St Joseph. Rich in dark fruit, peppery with flavours reminiscent of vintage port and with a very smooth texture, this was incredibly easy to drink already.

St Joseph Les Pierres

165.00

This a selection from Pierre's best new St Joseph barrels. It is wilder and more mineral than the Cuminaille with great intensity and purity. Its powerful structure means that it copes with the new oak easily and tastes wonderfully luxurious.

Cote Rotie

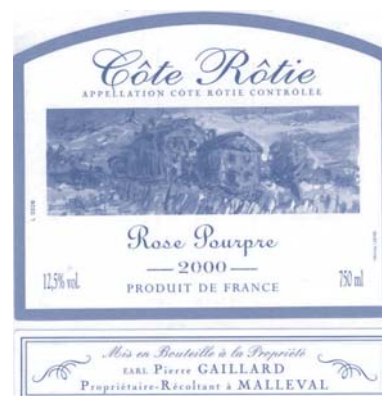
240.00

Tightly knit and closed when we tasted it although it showed flashes of great quality. It reminded us of super ripe Pinot Noir although its firm structure and smoky intensity mark it out as classic Syrah.

Cote Rotie Rose Pourpre

175.00 per six

This super-cuvee is mainly from old vines on La Landonne. Aged 100% in new oak it is a sensual bombshell. Very concentrated with plenty of dark fruit, this was one of the best balanced wines that we tasted.



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DOMAINE PATRICK AND CHRISTOPHE BONNEFOND

Another unbelievably cold cellar meant that the Bonnefond wines tasted somewhat backward although clearly of exceptional quality.

In 2003 the grapes were cooled to 12 – 14 degrees and fermentations were kept deliberately cool. Alcohol levels remain higher than usual but such is the sheer weight of fruit that these wines are beautifully balanced. Tiny quantities were made.

£/cs IB

Cote Rotie

195.00

Sweet and upbeat with tons of blueberry and currant fruit, this is a creamy, deceptively easy drinking Cote Rotie. Quite exotic and spicy this is a real treat.

Cote Rotie Les Rochains (limited)

295.00

A wine of enormous power and presence. The reserves of elderberry fruit more than balance the impressive structure, and the overall mouth feel is silky and fine.

DOMAINE MICHEL OGIER

When we first visited this Domaine the Ogier family were part fruit growers, part wine producers, but with Stephane's monumental efforts they are now purely involved in wine.

However one very useful hangover from the fruit farming days is a large chill room – ideal in 2003 to cool the grapes to a reasonable temperature before vinification.

These are magnificent wines. Some of the finest 2003s that we tasted. Wines of extraordinary purity and grace that justify Stephane's superstar status.

£/cs IB

Syrah, Vin de Pays des Collines Rhodaniennes

110.00

An utterly delicious wine, this is rich in cherry fruit, explosive and all too easy to drink. Typical of the vintage it is broad and rich but its perfect balance makes it very exciting.

Cote Rotie

295.00

This is one of the best Cote Roties that we tasted. Bright shiny red with deep reserves of ripe strawberry fruit, rich and heady, perfectly balanced, this is stunning.

DOMAINE CLUSEL ROCH

While Gilbert Clusel hammered away next door, looking like a man in the midst of a DIY disaster, we enjoyed a brilliant tasting with his wife Brigitte Roch.

Such is the attention to detail at this fabulous estate that the Clusel Rochs are now selecting their own trees, and drying their own staves before sending the wood to their barrel maker.

This estate has always made wines of great elegance and purity so at nearly 14 degrees alcohol, this 2003 is somewhat unusual. However such is the subtlety of the winemaking that this wine remains exquisitely balanced. Tiny quantities in 2003.

£/cs IB

Cote Rotie (limited)

120.00 per six

A beautiful wine with masses of creamy dark cherry fruit and a lovely velvet texture. The tannins at the finish are firm but ripe and will ensure considerable longevity.



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All wines are offered In Bond England (i.e. all shipping and bottling charges are included). We will arrange shipment in autumn 2005. On arrival your wines can either be delivered directly to you or stored Under Bond at our independent storage company, Private Reserves, at a cost of £7.50 ex Vat per case per annum. If you decide to take delivery, Duty and Vat will be payable. These charges are at present £15.09 and 17.5% respectively. Carriage will be charged at cost.

Unfortunately we are unable to split cases. Payment is due 30 days after date of invoice. We reserve the right to charge interest on overdue accounts.

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"This is a great place to go for Bordeaux from major properties, with a host of offerings from 1986 to the latest vintages. But there's plenty of competition in that arena and more compelling reasons to choose Goedhuis can be found in the ranges from Burgundy, the Rhone, the Loire and Italy. This merchant tries hard to track down excellent little-known producers, and the enthusiasm evident from the short profiles on the list is infectious. The minimum buy is an unmixed case, but while these are all serious, elegant wines they are not all seriously expensive. It is well worth getting on the mailing list for en primeur offers and regular bin-end sales."

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