

2003 Hugel Pinot Noir les Neveux

Rating: 92

Drink: -

The 2003 Pinot Noir Les Neveux smells of ripe black cherry and blackberry, sandalwood, and cinnamon. The combination of super-ripeness one expects of this vintage with engaging juiciness and absence of heat that are less common, makes for a gorgeous Pinot with both richness and elegance. (And, incidentally, this is actually a bit lower in alcohol than the only marginally less outstanding 2003 Jubilee bottling.) A striking sense of sheer viscosity, enormous yet not superficially sweet fruit covering its tannins, and a sappy, spicy, black-fruited and chalky cling, all help make this as memorable an Alsace Pinot Noir as I have tasted. Bravo!

The Hugels – like the Beyers and Trimbachs – are true to tradition in their emphasis on dry-tasting wines across the varietal spectrum and in the release of their best wines only after a year or (usually) more of bottle age. As with Muscat, there is no “regular” bottling of Pinot Gris at Hugel, but rather one begins with a wine of primarily estate origins. In 1999 and 2003, Hugel elected to separately bottle the fruit of their oldest Pinot Noir vines (planted in 1966 in a parcel in the Pflostig known as “Les Neveux”).

- David Schildknecht (February, 2008)

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2005 Hugel Gewurztraminer 'Hugel' Selection de Grains Nobles

Rating: 97

Drink: -

In its very early days, Hugel's 2005 Gewurztraminer Selection de Grains Nobles is already truly noble! Orange marmalade, caramelized peach, spiced pear and yellow plum preserves, cinnamon and mint candies, roses, and honey and white raisin fill the nose. Spectacularly luscious and expansive on the palate, honeyed, silken-textured, and loaded with primary, vividly juicy fruit such as one seldom encounters in this grape variety much less at stratospheric ripeness, this fills ones head with sweet perfume and dreams of future vinous glory – if only you can give it at least twenty years. And if one must drink it today, despite considerable sweetness, this amazing Gewurztraminer already displays not just prodigious length and profundity of flavor – saline chalky mineral suggestions and deep smoked meat pungency lending a darker side to its performance – but elegance, poise, refinement, and remarkable lift and refreshment.

The Hugels – like the Beyers and Trimbachs – are true to tradition in their emphasis on dry-tasting wines across the varietal spectrum and in the release of their best wines only after a year or (usually) more of bottle age. As with Muscat.

- David Schildknecht (February, 2008)

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1997 Hugel Gewurztraminer 'Hugel' Selection de Grains Nobles S

Rating: 94

Drink: 2005-2030

The 1997 Gewurztraminer "Hugel" Selection de Grains Nobles "S" was harvested on October 28th, two days prior to the previous wine, with a natural potential alcohol of 21.7, and retains 142 grams of residual sugar. It has an intensely jammy nose composed of a myriad of fruits. On the palate, this is a wine of huge depth and richness. Massive layers of yellow fruits can be found in its jammy, oily personality. This is an SGN with exemplary equilibrium that requires some cellaring to civilize it. Anticipated maturity: 2005-2030+.

Importer: Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York, NY; tel. (212) 355-0700...

- Pierre Rovani (December, 2001)

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2005 Hugel Riesling 'Hugel' Jubilee

Rating: 92

Drink: 2008-2020

The 2005 Riesling Jubilee – coming, as usual with this bottling, from the Schoenenbourg – offers sweet scents of honeysuckle, orange blossom, rowan, lemon and tangerine. Luscious honeydew melon fruit enlivened by juicy, invigorating citrus and tinged with lemon zest, ginger, and chalky mineral traces informs a silken-textured palate, leading to a strikingly honeyed and bright, bitterly zesty and overtly stony finish. This is an excellent candidate for at least 9-12 further years of aging. (The 2001 Jubilee, incidentally, is no finer in overall quality, and now overtly fusil, chalky, peachy, and truffle-scented, with an oily-rich palate and full-throttle finish.)

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1998 Hugel Riesling 'Hugel' Selection de Grains Noble

Rating: 96
Drink: 2005-2020

Hugely intense mineral and floral aromas burst from the 1998 Riesling "Hugel" Selection de Grains Nobles' glass. This magnificently complex wine coats the taster's palate with unending layers of sweetened Earl Grey tea (a bergamot-infused tea), white fruits, flowers, raspberries, and other assorted red berries. This magnificently concentrated and powerful SGN is well-balanced, elegant, and refined. Projected maturity: 2005-2020.

(Not yet released)

Importer: Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York, NY; tel. (212) 355-0700....

- Pierre Rovani (June, 2000)

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2001 Hugel Riesling 'Hugel' Vendange Tardive

Rating: 94
Drink: 2008-2020

The Hugels are conservative in their approach to vendange tardive, and after their 2001 Riesling Vendange Tardive there will not be another such Riesling release until the 2005. With a beautifully bitter-sweet aroma of buddleia, quince, and chalk dust that would do a Loire Chenin proud, the 2001 comes onto the palate opulent and creamy yet delicately poised (reflecting its under-12% alcohol) and with flavors of quince and peach preserves, fresh lime, and orange marmalade, then lingers long on honeyed richness, subtle minerality, and mysterious hints of truffle and musk. This classic will also linger in your cellar without diminishing in quality for at least the next dozen years. (The equally opulent and rich 1998 is drinking beautifully today, but lacks the delicacy or depth of this 2001.)

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2000 Hugel Riesling Selection de Grains Nobles S

Rating: 97
Drink: -

Hugel's 2000 Riesling Selection de Grains Nobles S ("S" being used here from time to time to designate special or multiple late-harvested bottlings) appears in retrospect to be the wine of its vintage – not just in Alsace, but the entire Rhine basin. (The same could be said of the corresponding 1985.) While all around grapes were giving way to every sort of ignoble rot after the pressure of almost relentless September rains, on the eighth of October these grapes, says Marc Hugel “were glowing. They were like glue to the tip of your finger.” An intense, pure concentration of yellow plum preserves, white raisin, brown spices, and an ethereally honeyed botrytis note in the nose leads to a palate of remarkably juicy succulence considering it exhibits the viscosity and pit fruit concentration of a Tokaji Eszencia. Dried apricot and botrytis-engendered smokiness further that resemblance. But the finish here displays striking clarity and almost incomprehensible lift, length, and elegance certainly possible with no other grape variety on earth. The same can be said of what turns out to be its unbelievable feat of levitation and refinement, laboring without a drop of sweat under a load of 310 grams of residual sugar.

- David Schildknecht (February, 2008)

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2005 Hugel Tokay Pinot Gris 'Hugel' Tradition

Rating: 90
Drink: 2008-2015

The 2005 Pinot Gris Tradition – just now being released – smells of ripe peach, grapefruit, and brown spices. An oily texture and imposing richness in the mouth are nicely balanced by hints of juicy citrus and the finish is refined and poised, with clarity and refreshment that this variety seldom displays, and combining spice, phenolic pungency, zesty citricity, pungent smokiness, and chalky minerality. Moreover – in what must nowadays also count as refreshing departure from the norm – this Pinot Gris is entirely free of finishing sweetness. There is no reason to defer the pleasure of this bottling, but also no need to worry about it for the next 5-7 years.

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