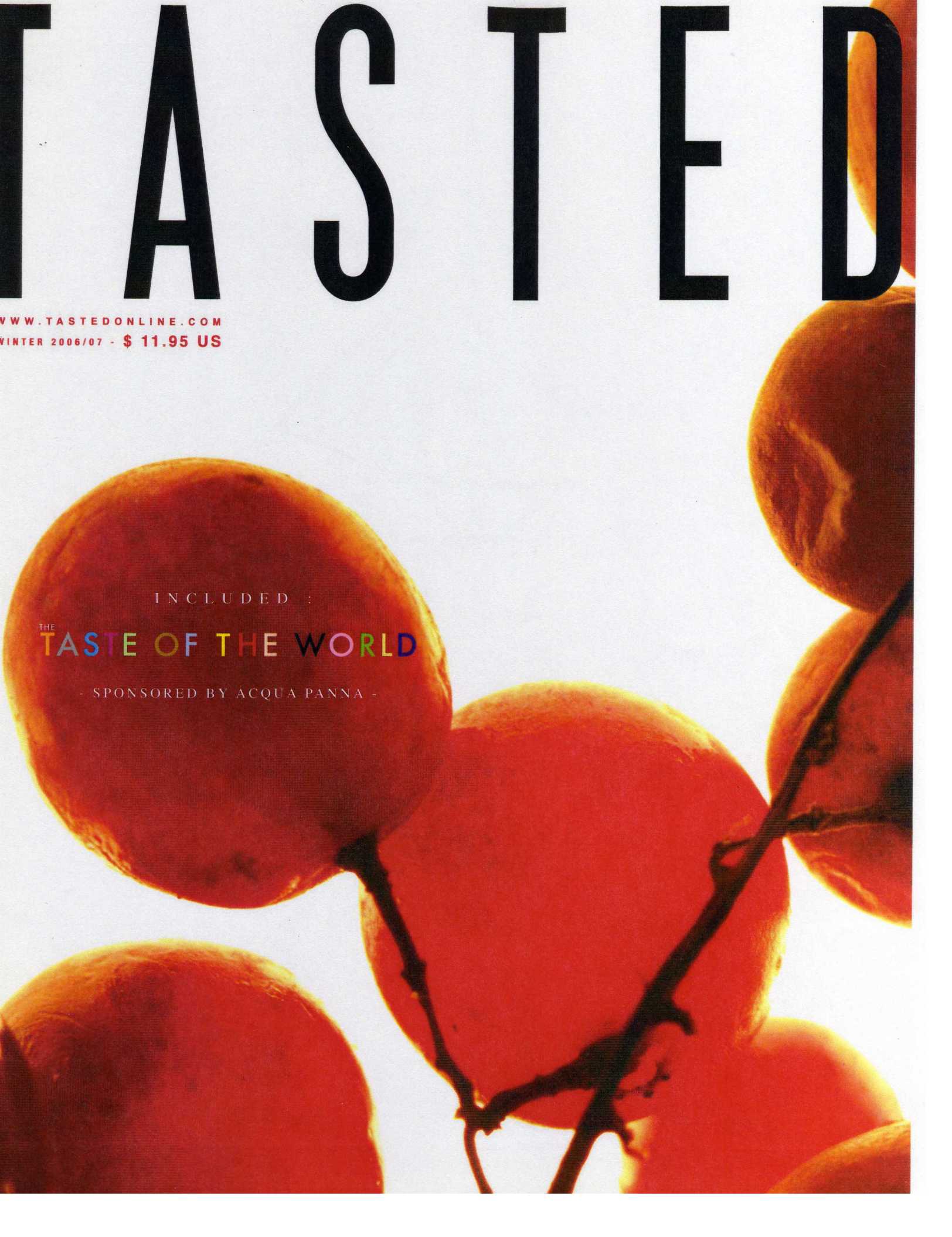


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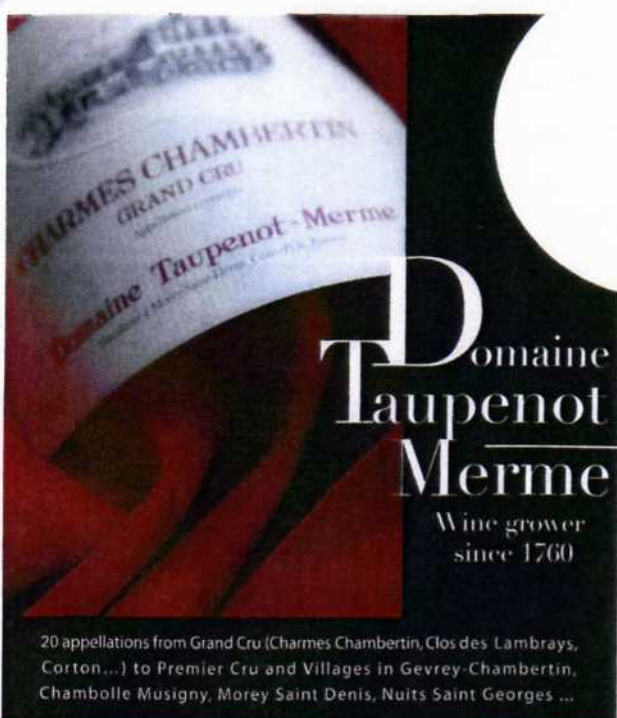
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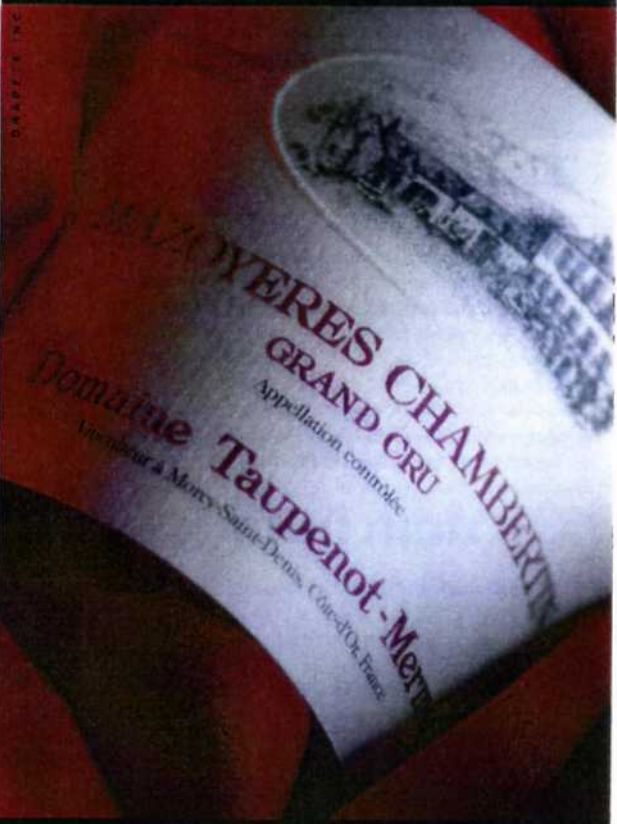
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Q: At what age did you form an interest in wine?

CHRISTY: At 20, studying in the South of France and backpacking around Europe. First sip of wine was a crude rosé from a local Provençal cooperative.

Q: Tell me of your working history in wine.

CHRISTY: I began working at Vintage New York on the weekends while still working at a private equity firm. I was looking to transition to the wine business and wanted some sort of experience - anything. Vintage NY was a great choice because I could work two days per week in the business at a time when wine stores could only be open six days a week in NYC. I worked seven days a week for five months and continued with Vintage while I was looking for my first full-time wine job. When I finished my finance work, I actively sought out jobs where I might be able to combine my business background with a pursuit of wine knowledge. One day I walked into Italian Wine Merchants and found the perfect opportunity. I became and created the position of their Director of Business Development for two-and-a-half years. Looking to broaden my understanding of the wine world, I left to pursue freelance writing (Wine Business Monthly, Vineyard & Winery Management), worked as the Eastern USA Public Relations Director for New Zealand Wine Growers, taught and researched important special projects for importers looking to bring new regions/wineries into their portfolios, as well as pursuing a few other opportunities. Having collected a broad array of experiences, I looked for yet another I hadn't tackled, and found it as National Wine Director of Smith & Wollensky Restaurant Group. What a dynamic, fun-loving bunch of people! I'm involved in absolutely everything wine-related, from education to buying to analyzing our margins. The responsibility is tremendous; the rewards are equal. I also continue to freelance and just contributed to the Italy entries for the Professional Wine Reference coming out this fall.

Q: Did you have a mentor above all others that guided you?

CHRISTY: No, I had to trust my own instinct. I did/do, however, have an amazing support group of friends in NYC as well as strong parents, whose faith helped keep me afloat.

Q: What are your favorite wines?

CHRISTY: Like music, clothes and art, a wine choice is an expression of that moment in time, so it really depends. Less philosophically, I am terribly, terribly fond of Grüner Veltliner (especially) and Riesling from Austria. I also love Northern Rhone Syrah, particularly Côte Rôtie and Hermitage, as well as old wine of any sort. I love to see their development unfold.

Q: Your favorite wine right now?

CHRISTY: A surprise wine last night: 1982 Bollinger Ré-cemment Dégorgé (Recently disgorged). Generally, for the summer, roses from Grenache and Pinot Noir. Mosel Kabinett Rieslings, and my newest affection, the limey Australian (Clare and Eden Valleys) Rieslings.

Q: Your all-time favorite?

CHRISTY: Impossible to say. The best wines are those shared with special people at just the right moment. I'm lucky to have shared a few such bottles.

Q: How do you keep your palate sharp? Many tastings?

CHRISTY: I am in the Master of Wine program and sat the exam for the first time this year (results due in September). I

prefer to blind taste when possible and always taste in multiples. Tasting a wine in exclusion is nowhere as enlightening as tasting it against its peers or against other regions or varieties.

Q: Where do you see your future in the wine trade?

CHRISTY: The great thing about the wine world is that it reinvents itself with every vintage and that any versatile person can undertake many different positions. Stay tuned - who knows!

*** TOM GANNON ***

Rothmann's Steak House
3 E. 54th Street in Manhattan.

This crowded midtown steakhouse with a very lively bar scene that often extends out into the street is part of a group of 17 restaurants in the NY Metro area.

Long-haired, lanky, and easy smiling Tom is a true pleasure to be around. This sommelier is also friends with several actors that I know, for Tom is a skilled playwright. He also reminds me of the famed gentleman gambler of the Wild West days, Maverick.

Question: Where are you originally from?

TOM: Cincinnati and Detroit. Born in, moved to, moved back to.

Q: At what age did you form an interest in wine?

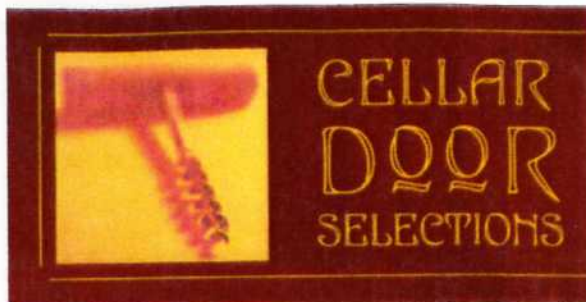
TOM: At 23, when I was the head bartender at Fleur de Sel in very early 2001 - it had opened in the fall of 2000. We were a very young, inexperienced staff and Andrew Bell (President of the American Sommelier Association) helped train us in wine and service. My interest in drinking was well established; my palate was not.

Q: Tell me of your restaurant experience:

TOM: Cyril Renaud, at Fleur de Sel, is easily one of the top three chefs in New York. I learned a lot there (and ate some of the best food I will ever have) with Andrew's staff trainings. He basically shamed or forced me to take his viticulture class with the agreement that I would only pay him for the wine of the classes I showed up to. Later, when I left Fleur de Sel, he got me the interview at Rothmann's. I met my two would-be bosses, Gil Travalin and Pat Felitti, and it was sink or swim. In a 225-liter cask. I was the sommelier for three-and-a-half only slightly bleary years and was lured for almost a year to the dark side of on-premise sales. Learned a lot, loved the portfolio, missed the restaurant and friends I worked with. When my successor and predecessor (my friend Romain Porzio) went to Le Bernardin and Gil called with an offer to come back, I knew he wouldn't have to push too hard. I came home.

Q: Did you have a mentor above all others that guided you?

Tom: Andrew Bell and Gil Travalin. Andrew is a great teacher and got me the interview with Gil. Gil took me in two days after I turned 25 and what little I knew and what little I tasted expanded in days. I've been very lucky with the people I've met and the wines I've tasted through Gil and some of his close and very personable friends, notably Ron "The King" Metzger. Gil's got a great palate and knowledge and an ease with wine and a passion which influences the entire wine program that our group has. It is very, very rare that someone who has left



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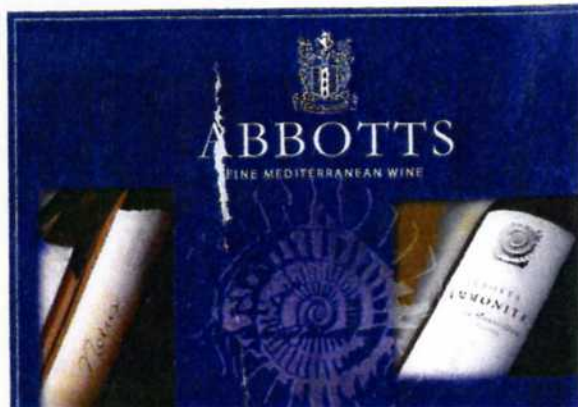
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THE YOUNG GUNS OF WINE ***

the restaurant side for the distribution side crosses back. I came back because I missed Rothman's food (best steaks in New York), missed being able to taste everything, missed interacting with the guests, and sharing wine. And working for Gil, I get paid to learn from a friend.

Q: What are your favorite wines?

Tom: My favorites are all over the world. Washington wines are recent favorites: Spring Valley Vineyards, Delille Cellars, Synergy (aligns with my roommate's show on Broadway). I am a steakhouse guy so I love Bordeaux and Rhone wines but I also love Alsace and Chablis, probably because I don't get to drink them as much as I'd like. Chilean syrah and pinot noir have been interesting to me lately.

Q: Your favorite wine right now?

Tom: Now it is '81 La Louvière Blanc. I had this wine three years ago as the first wine in a lunch at Rothmann's where there were 19 bottles consumed between Ron, Christophe Roumier, Danny Oliveres, Jeff Sokolin, their lawyer and Danny's wife. She stopped in the middle just after I had opened the '64 Chateau Magdelene. The La Louvière was striking in a field of wine that at one point included the '64 and '48 Cheval Blanc side by side. I mentioned to Ron later that I liked it better than the '83 white Bordeaux we drank that day (including the Haut-Brion) and he agreed and lamented the fact that it had been his last bottle. I was lucky to have found a case and have been slowly working my way through it. I still have a few bottles.

Q: Your all-time favorite wines?

Tom: That might be the '88 d'Yquem, one of the vintages of the Cheval Blanc above, or also the '85 Cheval, but I have a soft spot for Certan de May which is one of the wines that first woke me up to the possibilities of wine.

Q: How do you keep your palate sharp?

Tom: Taste often, taste always.

Q: Where do you see your future in the wine trade?

Tom: Somewhere I enjoy myself that gives me enough time to pursue other interests as well.

*** PHILIP PEPPERDINE ***

Barbounia Restaurant, 20th St. & Park Avenue

This chic "in" restaurant serves exquisite Mediterranean fare accompanied by a lively bar scene.

The "aging" but still quick draw wine-slinger of my Young Guns group at 31 is fun-loving Phil. Just like the famed Wyatt Earp, who drove the bandits out of Dodge City, Pepperdine is a seasoned veteran with a feared reputation... His guns are still smoking. To top it off, some ladies that I bring over to the hip Barbounia think Pepperdine looks like actor Orlando Bloom.

Question: Where are you from?

Pepperdine: I'm homegrown Kansas but a large part of my youth was spent in London, England, where my mother was born and raised.

Q: At what age did you form an interest in wine?

Pepperdine: Quite young; at what age exactly I don't know. My grandfather and great grandfather were in the wine and restaurant business in London. I remember, around six years old, fetching liters of wine for granddad Carlo and Oldpa. We would get Oldpa's cigars and we would carry the wine and stogies up

in 2002 and applied for a job. I started as a cashier.

Q: Did you have a mentor above all others that guided you along the wine trail?

Jessica: Yes. Andrew McMurray, VP of Sales at Zachy's. Andrew's taught me so much and he's always believed in me, even when I had trouble believing in myself. Another great influence has been Ben Nelson, who knows more about wine than anyone I know. And he's kept the passion!

Q: What was your big break in the wine world?

Jessica: When Andrew asked me to be the Beaujolais buyer for the store. It was like five items, but I was really excited about it. Champagne followed shortly thereafter, and so on.

Q: How do you keep your palate sharp?

Jessica: Champagne, and lots of it! No, seriously, I just keep tasting everything I can, good and bad. I also try not to be too harsh on myself if I'm having a dull-palate day. It just happens, sometimes for no reason. So I just keep tasting and hope tomorrow is better.

Q: Your favorite wines?

Jessica: My favorite wine right now... I have little wine obsessions that last for short periods of time when I get fixated on a particular style or winemaker. I think it's all part of the learning process. At the moment, I'm captivated by a champagne, Henri Giraud "En Fut de Chêne" 1995.

Q: Your favorite wine ever?

Jessica: Monprivato. Any vintage, any time, anywhere! For some reason, Mauro Mascarello's prized plot has stuck with me. It's

always been the model of specificity to me; there's no mistaking this wine from any other in the world. There's something profoundly unnamable about it. I keep wondering if the honeymoon will end once I can name that essence!

Q: Where do you see your future in the wine trade?

Jessica: Lots of people in the industry fantasize about being a winemaker, but I really enjoy this aspect of it. I enjoy the connection I have with winemakers, and the opportunity to taste wines.

Attention readers: if you are wondering if your taste buds have grown "too old" to appreciate wine, scientists in Sweden have uncovered new information about the way the body breaks down and renews itself. In the June/July issue of New Scientist Magazine, substantiated surveys used carbon-14 dating, a radioactive isotope, to precisely gauge the age of body cells. For example, does all of your body eventually get renewed? Some parts do, some don't. The good news for us wine lovers is that the taste buds regenerate on average every ten days. Therefore, if your palate feels old or flat these days, help is on the way!

BY

DAVID ORANGE



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