

# The Year there was no Pingus

## *The Amazing 2002 Flor de Pingus*

Since its birth in 1995, Pingus has been fabled as one of the world's great wines—masterfully made by a gifted winemaker, a profound expression of its Ribera del Duero *terroirs*. Yet, due to painful scarcity, few have actually experienced Pingus' magic firsthand.

Even in a "good" year, only 300 to 400 cases of Pingus are made—from four ancient Tempranillo vineyards whose yields average an incredible 14 hectoliters per hectare. But occasionally even less Pingus finds its way into the market. In 1995, for example, one-third of the production was lost in a shipwreck, leaving a mere 250 cases for the world to fight over. And in 2002, *no* Pingus was made.

### A Painful Choice

The decision of winemaker Peter Sisseck to make no Pingus in 2002 was both difficult and courageous. The summer had been warm and sunny, but the spring had been cool and there was intermittent rain during the harvest. Once the wine was in tank he could tell that the quality was good, but was it good enough to be Pingus?

Earlier in Peter's career, there might not have been any question. After all—thanks to his brilliant work in the vineyard—2002's fruit was arguably superior to what he had to work with in both 1997 and 1998—years in which he made Pingus.

But in 2002, Peter had just come off three near-perfect harvests in 1999, 2000 and 2001. These three



*One of the old Tempranillo vineyards that produces Pingus.*

vintages had raised the bar for Peter, setting a higher standard than even the great 1995 and 1996 had done.

And, so in early November, he decided to "declassify" every drop of 2002 Pingus and to use it as the backbone of a monumental 2002 Flor de Pingus.

As regular readers know, Flor de Pingus is Peter's "second" wine, produced from fruit that he buys from a number of old Ribera del Duero vineyards. With an average vine age of nearly 40 years, Flor de Pingus is always compelling, but the 2002 Flor is an order of magnitude greater. Thanks to having the declassified Pingus as the wine's core, it comes closer in style to Pingus itself than any previous vintage has ... yet it still sells at Flor's bargain price.

Quantities are extremely limited, so hurry.

### 2002 Flor de Pingus 92-93 Tanzer



Tanzer: "Black raspberry, tar, violet and roasted oak on the nose. Thick, velvety and wonderfully sweet, with compelling inner-mouth perfume and sap. Large-scaled, broad wine with superb palate coverage. Finishes with big, chocolatey tannins and excellent length. Peter Sisseck will not offer his *grand vin* Pingus in 2002; that juice forms the backbone of Flor de Pingus, making this a wine to buy."