

# Fauquier Times-Democrat

Celebrating Now 250 Remarkable Years of Fauquier County History, 1759-2009

WINE

## Vintner Rutger de Vink, about to make a splash



# New depth in Virginia

BY DAVE MCINTYRE

“The wine on your left is Chateau Montrose 2006,” said Rutger de Vink. “The middle glass is RdV 2008, and the third is Dominus ’07.” I tasted the wines in order, beginning with the classic Bordeaux acidity and elegance of the Montrose, a highly regarded second-growth chateau, and ending with the Dominus, a Napa Valley blend brimming with power and finishing with a slight alcoholic burn. Then I focused again on the RdV as de Vink, its creator, looked on patiently. It bridged the gap between Old World finesse and New World power, with a surprisingly lush core of red fruit and a luxurious texture that caressed my tongue with velvet.

Could this really be from Virginia? I wondered. There was no hole in the middle where the flavor disappears before coming back for the finish, no green vegetal tastes from unripe fruit. A few Virginia winemakers have solved those problems. But that velvet — I had never experienced it in a Virginia wine before.



PHOTOS BY ASTRID RIECKEN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Top, after 10 years of preparation, Virginia vineyard owner Rutger de Vink is about to release his first wines. Above, oenologist Eric Boissenot of Bordeaux, France, blends wines for RdV Vineyards.

Then I did the math: The Montrose sells for \$90 to \$110 a bottle and received a 94-point rating from Robert Parker. Dominus sells for \$150, and Parker gave the 2007 a near-perfect 98 points. Is Virginia ready to play in this league?

Jim Law of Linden Vineyards, one of the Old Dominion's most respected winegrowers, had described his close friend de Vink to me as “the next generation of Virginia wine.” Tasting the 2008, I understood.

Putting my notebook down, I looked up at de Vink and said simply, “It’s really good.”

“I hate to use the word ‘cult’ wine, but we are trying to take the wine to the next level,” de Vink replied.

Next month’s launch of RdV Vineyards is Virginia’s most-anticipated winery opening in years, as word has spread of de Vink’s project near Delaplane, in Fauquier County. His ambition, expressed quietly but confidently, is to prove once and for all that Virginia can produce wine that ranks among the world’s best. Others have made that claim: Barboursville Vineyards is the most

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