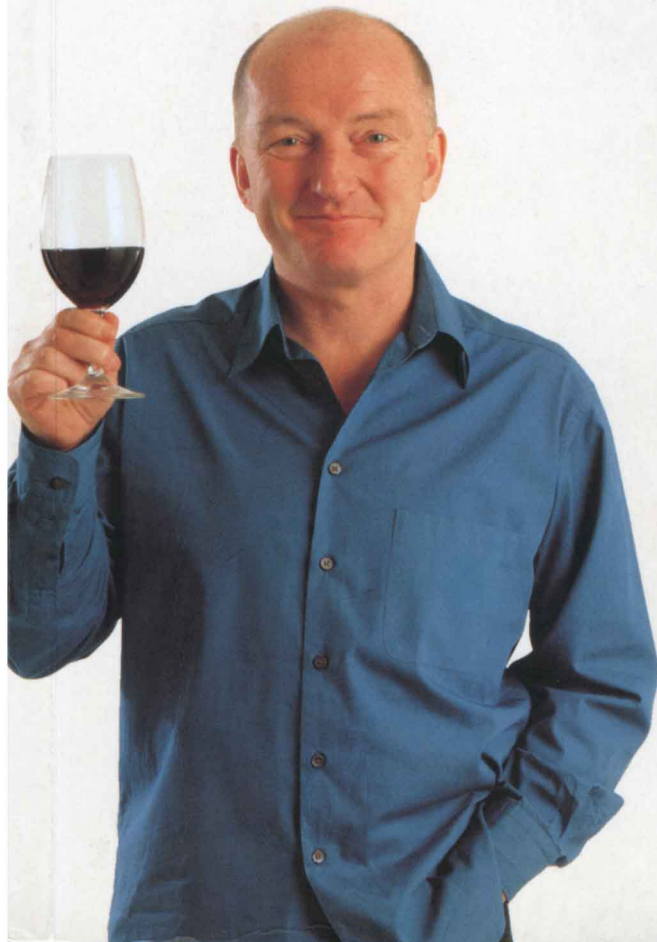


# OZ CLARKE



## 250 BEST WINES WINE BUYING GUIDE 2008



- 4 2000 Amarone della Valpolicella, Ca' La Bionda, Veneto, Italy, 15.5% ABV**  
◆ Bat & Bottle, £25.00

It's not really fair to throw an Amarone into the middle of a tasting. Amarone is such a bizarre, severe, maverick style of wine it can pervert the pure conventional flavours that may surround it. But I say, bad luck on them, because I wouldn't want to miss this for anything. When you see Amarone on the label, don't expect the expected. And don't expect this marvellous maverick of a wine to show its glittering character when young. Amarone needs five years, would prefer ten and is delighted with 15. So 2000 – seven years old – is a fair compromise, showing us its character, but I promise, hold on to this wine and it'll be transformed, richer, sweeter yet more sour, in five to ten years' time. For now? A fabulous cacophony of ripe apple peel and lightly baked apple pie with sweet cherry flesh and sour cherry skin. There's a dryness of stones – cold, grey – and it's necessary, because the fruit reasserts itself with a flurry of baked figs and cherries, syrup and the scented smoke of fruit toasted on a grill that moments ago had served up beef.

- 5 2005 Minervois, L'inattendu, Clos du Gravillas, Languedoc-Roussillon, France, 14% ABV**  
◆ les Caves de Pyrene, £13.62