



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

CLOS NICROSI

Country: France

Region: Corsica

Appellation(s): Cap Corse

Producer: Jean-Nôel Luigi

Founded: 1859

Annual Production:

Farming: Lutte Raisonnée

Website: N/A



Clos Nicrosi is one of the greatest domaines in southern France. It is situated on Cap Corse, a finger-like peninsula on the northern coast of Corsica. Jutting northward into the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Cap is a magnificent display of seascapes and vineyards. On the coast near the village of Rogliano, Clos Nicrosi has been cared for by the same family since 1859. Although this domaine is Corsican to the core, its roots were, curiously enough, first planted in the United States. Chris Santini, our resident Corsican at KLWM, writes us from France:

In the 1830's a young peasant by the name of Dominique Nicrosi set sail from the Cap Corse in search of a better life in America. Left penniless, he ended up in Montgomery, Alabama. By the 1850's, he had amassed a fortune. When he smelled our civil war coming, he left Alabama and sailed back to Cap Corse—his pockets stuffed with cash. Upon his return in 1859, he bought a mansion in Rogliano that came with a large clos of vines, which he renamed Clos Nicrosi. It was Dominique's grandson, Toussaint Luigi, who took over the estate in 1959, and the rest is history.

That Kermit Lynch champions Corsican wines today is largely due to his discovery of Clos Nicrosi in 1981. During the formation of the I.N.A.O. in the 1930s, two legendary figures in the French wine world joined forces to preserve and legitimize the traditional appellations of the South of France and Corsica: Baron Leroy of Château Fortia in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Lucien Peyraud of Domaine Tempier in Bandol. When Lucien's son, Jean-Marie Peyraud, accompanied Kermit on a scouting trip to Corsica in 1981, Lucien's list of recommendations came in handy. Despite the incredible potential of the *terroirs*, Kermit regarded the bulk of the wine he had tasted from this forbidding, mountainous island as “tannic, brawny plonk.” Kermit recounts:

The road around the Cap Corse was still dirt at the time. It was scary as hell—above the ocean on the side of the mountain. One lane only. It was the last visit of the last day of our trip. Jean-Marie and I were tired and really disappointed. Most of the wines we had tried seemed to be cooked in the bottle. No temperature control. It was eight or eight-thirty at night. We hadn't even gotten a hotel yet. Then we arrived at Clos Nicrosi. [Toussaint] Luigi poured a dry white and then a Muscatellu. Suddenly, our eyes sprung open and we said, 'Wow! Here's the jewel we've been looking for!' Luigi's

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wines, I learned later, were in great demand on the island. Everyone knew his were the best. He had spent some years living in the U.S., so he decided he would give us a large allocation of one hundred cases a year—absolutely unheard of! That gave me credibility with the other Corsican producers who had never wanted to do business with Americans.

Today, KLWM's adventure with Clos Nicrosi continues into the next generations. Jean-Noël Luigi, along with his daughter, Marine, and son, Sébastien, farm twenty hectares of vines, half of which are situated on the Cap itself. The Luigis have spent great time and effort to restore the domaine to its former greatness. To showcase this effort, they have launched the “Cuvée Toussaint Luigi” to pay homage to the domaine's great patriarch and the role he played in bringing prestige to Corsican wines. Kermit calls this wine, “Clean, dry, and minerally—the Chablis of Corsica. It is exactly like that jewel I tasted in 1981, and a delicious tribute to the Toussaint style.”

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CLOS NICROSI (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend¹</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Cap Corse “Cuvée Toussaint Luigi”	Vermentinu	25 years	Schist, Limestone	13 ha

¹ Corsican spellings of grape varieties

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

Cap Corse “Cuvée Toussaint Luigi” :

- Low yields that average between 30-40 hl/ha
- Grapes are all hand-harvested, with the healthiest, cleanest cluster picked from each vine for this cuvée
- Grapes are transported from the vineyard to the winery in small 20-kg cases to protect them from being crushed
- Bunches are collected and stacked in the press and only the free-run juice is collected
- Vinification takes place in thermo-regulated, stainless steel *cuvées*
- Wine ages for 6-8 months in *cuvées* before bottling

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