

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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INTRODUCING LUDOVIC ENGELVIN
LIGURIA: TENUTA ANFOSSO & PUNTA CRENA
STEPPING OUT OF THE CHÂTEAUX' SHADOW

LIGURIA TENUTA ANFOSSO & PUNTA CRENA

by Anthony Lynch

IF YOU THOUGHT Liguria could be summed up by pesto and beaches, you are only partially correct. Wine likewise represents an integral part of the landscape—this narrow sliver, sandwiched between Piemonte and the Mediterranean, has seen its steep slopes cultivated for two and a half millennia, with Etruscans, Greek settlers, and the ineludible Romans making their mark on local viticulture. Driving along the coast today, you can still make out the remnants of ancient terraces covering the abrupt inclines facing the sea, telling of a people habituated to working the little land they have, no matter how steep or rocky.

Nowhere is this more striking than around Dolceacqua, a charming village famously immortalized by Monet's brush, where coastal hills morph into pre-Alpine ridges just a stone's throw from the French border. These mountains once harbored terraced rows of Rossese as far as the eye can see. Two world wars and one bout of industrialization later, a scant eighty hectares remain, proudly cultivated by the last souls willing to brave these dramatic and incredibly labor-intensive vineyards.

Named not for its color, but for its tendency to thrive in soils of pure rock, Rossese—called *roxese* or *roccense* in regional dialects—yields a wine that was prized throughout history, enjoying centuries of prestige until the terraces were largely abandoned, and much of what remained became subject to commercial market demands and excessive enological manipulation. Alessandro Anfosso is among the few remaining growers here who honor traditional ways of working, farming his ancient vines by hand, without herbicides, and bottling his wines unfiltered only when they are ready.



POGGIO PINI is Anfosso's *grand cru*. Replanted just after the phylloxera epidemic, the vines on this sheer mountain face date back to 1888. These gnarled tree trunks produce a Rossese of great depth and class, with an epic mélange of fruit, floral, and savory nuances underpinned by a stony finale.

The site is also home to some of the last Rossese Bianco vines in Liguria. Unrelated to red Rossese, this endemic white fell out of favor due to its low-yielding nature and the arrival of more marketable Vermentino. Anfosso's Rossese Bianco somehow survived phylloxera; Alessandro estimates the vines to be around 170 years old. He crafts it the way his grandfather did: fermented spontaneously on its skins and aged in acacia casks. The textured, golden, honeyed Antea is truly a relic from an era past.



2016 ROSSESE DI DOLCEACQUA SUPERIORE
“POGGIO PINI” • TENUTA ANFOSSO

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE \$486.00 PER CASE

2017 VINO BIANCO “ANTEA” • TENUTA ANFOSSO

\$58.00 PER BOTTLE \$626.40 PER CASE

SOME FORTY OR SO MILES up the Riviera, a different tradition endures through the hands of the Ruffino family of Punta Crena. For more than five hundred years, the Ruffinos have farmed the dry-stone terraces overlooking the adorable seaside village of Varigotti. Unlike in Dolceacqua, Vermentino has long been a staple here, along with a host of other native varieties primarily responsible for helping locals wash down the day's catch.

Less commanding than wines from Dolceacqua, those from Varigotti have a lighthearted nature that seamlessly matches the ambiance of Liguria's seaside towns. Punta Crena's Vermentino, for example, is crisp, lemony, and slightly salty, echoing the abundant citrus trees that bask in sunshine and breathe in balmy breezes coming off the Mediterranean. Their Rossese is not concentrated and sappy, like Anfosso's, but juicy and brimming with fresh fruit and herbs, plus a dusting of peppery spice. In other words, these are the wines to pair with a plate of pesto-coated pasta, or to sip on a lazy day spent on the beach—after all, this is Liguria.

2018 VERMENTINO “VIGNETO ISASCO” • PUNTA CRENA

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE \$324.00 PER CASE

2017 ROSSESE “VIGNETO ISASCO” • PUNTA CRENA

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE \$324.00 PER CASE

LOIRE VALLEY

by Jane Berg

2018 QUINCY • DOMAINE TROTTEREAU

Only about thirty-five growers produce wine in the tiny 200-hectare appellation of Quincy, which means you don't see much of it in the U.S. market. It's a shame, as cheerful, unoaked wine like this one happens to be the antidote to your post-holiday blues. Grown on pink limestone and sandy soil flecked with sparkly silex, the Sauvignon Blanc of Quincy is a little more plump than its neighbors in Reuilly and Sancerre. One glass has enough sunbeams to brighten and lengthen even the shortest winter days.

\$23.00 PER BOTTLE **\$248.40** PER CASE

2018 BOURGUEIL "CUVÉE ALOUETTES" DOMAINE DE LA CHANTELEUSERIE

One taste of Thierry and Christine Boucard's Cuvée Alouettes ignites a craving in me for a juicy bistro burger finished with a smear of spicy *moutarde forte*. Since it's similar in style and price to an easy-drinking Beaujolais Villages, you'll want to drink it chilled and, likely, in one sitting. Unlike with other quaffers, though, you can expect a little extra brawn and woodsy fruits like cassis and plum. It's pure, peppery, and perfect Cabernet Franc.

\$18.00 PER BOTTLE **\$194.40** PER CASE

2015 CHINON "CLOS DE LA DIOTERIE" DOMAINE CHARLES JOGUET

On the gravelly left bank of the Vienne River in Sazilly lies Charles Joguet's oldest parcel, Clos de la Dioterie. The ninety-year-old Cabernet Franc vines here are harvested with a little extra love and respect, as their juice transforms into the most age-worthy wine from the estate, thanks in part to northeast exposure and limited yields. The soulful 2015 vintage, albeit high-toned, shows a meatier side of La Dioterie. A seductive, sophisticated hint of smoky cigar box and leather reminds me of a *grand vin de Bordeaux*.

\$64.00 PER BOTTLE **\$691.20** PER CASE



For the Pantry

OLIVES & OLIVE OIL

Taggiasca Pitted Olives in Oil ♦ Punta Crena \$17.00 per jar

Packed in their own oil and versatile with salads, baked fish, or all on their own.

2018 Extra Virgin Olive Oil

♦ **Punta Crena** \$26.00 per 500-ml bottle

Light, aromatic, and flavorful—perfect for fish and salads.

2018 Virgin Olive Oil “Les Baux”

♦ **Maussane** \$49.00 per liter bottle

Made with mature black olives, the most buttery and decadent oil we import.

LES PRODUITS PIC MUSTARD

Pic’s mustards will change your life. A dab on your next batch of grilled franks or a ham sandwich will make it impossible to ever go back to the yellow goop you were used to.

Moutarde “Forte” \$8.00 per jar

Our gold standard for mustard, and it holds up to its name—it’s strong!

Moutarde “À l’Ancienne” \$8.00 per jar

As the name suggests, this mustard is old-fashioned—that means whole-grain, with each bite full of texture and flavor. Watch out, it has a kick!

Moutarde “Au Moût de Raisin” . . . \$10.50 per jar

This whole-grain *moutarde* is enhanced with the addition of grape must, which gives the *must-ard* a purple color and a unique sweet, savory, spicy flavor.



— NEW PRODUCER —

INTRODUCING LUDOVIC ENGELVIN

by Anthony Lynch

RAISED IN THE LANGUEDOC CITY of Nîmes with no family background in wine, Ludovic Engelvin did not have a straightforward path to becoming a vigneron. On the contrary, the road was long, winding, and at times uncertain. But after a formative stint in the late Didier Dagueneau's cellar and another working as sommelier in an haute cuisine establishment, a dream took hold. He finally rented some vines in the countryside to tend on the weekends while running a wine store in Nîmes. Two years later, he sold the shop to become a full-time vigneron. The 2013 vintage, vinified in his tiny cellar in the sleepy village of Vic-le-Fesq, marked his first commercial releases.

Ludovic's wines, however, are anything but commercial. Inspired by the legendary bottles tasted while working in fine dining, he quickly learned that a conventional approach to viticulture and winemaking would never produce wines of distinctive character. The mentorship of Dagueneau and later Didier Barral, whom he remains close to, cemented his belief in low-impact farming and natural winemaking.

Essential oils and herbal tisanes replace synthetic treatments in the vines. Ludovic opts not to till his parcels, instead allowing spontaneous vegetation to naturally aerate the soils while his small flock of sheep contributes fertilizer during the winter. In the cellar, he favors infusion rather than extraction, seeking delicacy over power and forgoing additives save for minute doses of sulfur.

Now the proprietor of nine hectares situated roughly halfway between Pic Saint-Loup and Tavel, Ludovic crafts elegant, perfumed wines of great purity. Amid a rugged landscape dominated by stones and scrubby aromatic *garrigue*, he focuses on the region's traditional *cépages* in his secluded *terroirs* of limestone and sandstone. His wines reveal exceptional balance and finesse, notwithstanding the natural concentration gleaned from low-yielding old vines in a hot, arid climate.



Ludovic's cuvées are unlike anything we have ever tasted from the Languedoc. Extensive experience in the industry and a passion for wines displaying a nuanced expression of place have allowed this young talent to stir things up and breathe fresh life into some of the region's great unheralded *terroirs*. We are truly thrilled to bring these uniquely expressive and deeply soulful wines to your table.

PER BOTTLE

2018 GARD ROUGE “CRU-ELLES” \$28.00

*Cinsault with a touch of Grenache, blended from various
terroirs to create a traditional assemblage Languedocien.
Fresh, forward, aromatic—cruelly delicious!*

2018 GARD ROUGE “CÉLAS” 34.00

*A pure Grenache from a north-facing parcel on sandstone soil.
Delicate, floral, utterly seductive aromatics; silky texture.*

2016 GARD ROUGE “CLOS SERRE-CABANIS” 42.00

*Mourvèdre and Grenache from a historic vineyard site
give this elegant and profound red, replete with wild herbs,
spice, and a chewy, stony tannin.*



Ludovic Engelvin

© François Brushet

2017 LES PALLIÈRES

by Clark Z. Terry

IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE to have Daniel Brunier, vigneron at Vieux Télégraphe and Les Pallières, in town to visit customers. He knows how to put on a show, and anyone who attended our Autumn Tasting in Oakland in November saw his talent to connect with the public.

Daniel's arrival was well timed with the arrival of the two 2017 bottlings from Les Pallières. When speaking about his work, Daniel likes to build connections between the wines he makes across the Rhône Valley. He's a man of Gigondas and Ventoux, not simply of Châteauneuf, where Vieux Télégraphe is based, and the through line of his production is the Grenache grape. What's striking in his wines is how each bottling expresses the greatness of an appellation and Grenache, yet is distinct and full of character. The 2017 vintage of Racines and Terrasse du Diable epitomizes this. I highly recommend picking up six bottles of each to discover what makes 2017 Les Pallières outstanding now and in the future.



2017 GIGONDAS “RACINES”

The domaine's oldest vines and 80% Grenache in the blend are the fundamentals of Racines. Of the two Les Pallières bottlings, this is the one that typically is open younger in its life. The tannins are soft, and the fruit is pure and elegant. Underlying that, though, is something dark and profound—a savory character reminiscent of tapenade. Don't count it out as a candidate for your cellar.

\$40.00 PER BOTTLE

\$432.00 PER CASE

2017 GIGONDAS “TERRASSE DU DIABLE”

The Grenache is turned up to 90% for this high-altitude cuvée. The vines (averaging *only* fifty years) are planted on terraces that nestle against the imposing limestone cliffs of Les Dentelles de Montmirail. For those of you who just can't wait, open the Terrasse du Diable a good two or three hours before serving. Notes of black olive and licorice, mint, eucalyptus, and rosemary will soon fill the room. For those who can, in five to ten years, the brooding youthfulness will start to mature and you'll be rewarded with . . . well, we don't yet know. But if past vintages are any indication, you'll be very happy with your foresight to put a few bottles away.

\$40.00 PER BOTTLE

\$432.00 PER CASE

STEPPING OUT OF THE CHÂTEAUX' SHADOW

BORDEAUX REDS SAMPLER

by Tom Wolf

IF YOU TRAVEL to any of the right-bank properties featured in this sampler, hoping to see grand estates or castles, you will be disappointed. “Château” features in the names of most Bordelais domaines, but, except for a few properties, it is meaningless, the vestige of a historical naming system. The more agrarian, less aristocratic “domaine” would be more helpful in understanding the work and lifestyles of the vigneron at Gombaude-GuilLOT, Bellevue, and Moulin Pey-Labrie, who for years have been on the vanguard of progressive, organic agriculture, which is still uncommon in this renowned region. Their buildings are modest, and the families who work in and outside of them are focused, above all else, on agriculture and making Merlot-based reds that speak to their specific *terroirs*.

This sampler features one older and one newer vintage from each of the three families behind these domaines, and the three different appellations they represent. Although all lie within a mere twenty-mile radius, each bottling diverges from the next. They range from Gombaude-GuilLOT’s classic, mineral, and generous Pomerol, with notes of black currant, truffle, and cocoa, to Château de Bellevue’s chiseled, restrained, age-worthy Lussac Saint-Emilion, which evokes bright, red berries and might be the value of the decade. Even the two Canon Fronsacs from markedly different plots owned by the Hubau family are entirely distinct from each other—the 2015 giving a lithe, juicy *rouge* and the 2010 a dense, savory wine, a meal unto itself! With this sampler, you will realize that vibrant, *terroir*-driven wines from small family domaines are just as essential—if not more—to Bordeaux’s identity as those imposing, picture-book *châteaux*.

PER BOTTLE

2012 LUSSAC SAINT-EMILION • CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE	\$26.00
2015 LUSSAC SAINT-EMILION • CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE	30.00
2010 CANON FRONSAC • CHÂTEAU MOULIN PEY-LABRIE	46.00
2015 CANON FRONSAC • CHÂTEAU MOULIN	29.00
2011 POMEROL • CHÂTEAU GOMBAUDE-GUILLOT	85.00
2016 POMEROL “POM ‘N’ ROLL”	
CHÂTEAU GOMBAUDE-GUILLOT	54.00

Normally \$270.00

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$216**
(a 20% discount)

THE QUENARD FAMILY

by Chris Santini

WHEN I MOVED to Burgundy fifteen years ago, I befriended a young *Savoyard* who had recently inherited some family vineyards, and he invited me for a tour of his vines in the village of Chignin. Having never set foot in Chignin, nor ever tasted a wine from Savoie, I gladly accepted his invitation. As he picked me up at the local train station, he told me that the first thing he wanted to do was to take me to the domaine of Michel Quenard. He explained that Michel was his model, paving the way not only by making unique and delicious wines marked by their uncommon Alpine *terroir*, but also by championing the notion that these wines were more than mere local curiosities to drink at ski resorts over a pot of fondue.

While Michel had long given counsel to young growers, he also had recently become president of the Savoie wine syndicate (a position he still holds today) and was pushing to lift the region by focusing on quality and the potential locked in the *terroir*. Under his tenure, the appellation of Chignin has cut by half the amount of acreage allowed to grow grapes (effectively eliminating any questionable *terroirs*), has limited yields, and has imposed sustainable farming practices. Thus, for my friend who wanted to introduce me to the region and its wines, it was a no-brainer to take me to Michel's door.

We were warmly greeted, and upon hearing my American accent, the first thing Michel did (after pouring a glass for each of us) was to bring out an old, worn scrapbook. Inside were page after page of clippings of write-ups from this very newsletter, in which Kermit would muse a few lines about a new release



from the estate, as well as handwritten faxes from Kermit congratulating Michel for a cuvée that was providing particular enjoyment, and even forms detailing the various orders the domaine had received and shipped around the United States. Michel absolutely beamed with pride, without the least hint of arrogance, as he showed me the scrapbook. Each page validated what he, his father André, and the generations before had always believed: that Chignin

was a grand *terroir* capable of making grand wines, and Bergeron was its grandest grape. At the time, I knew of Kermit but had no idea I'd be working in his office in Beaune a few years later. The moment was eye-opening for me, on many levels, to say the least.

Since that day, I have become quite fond of Savoie wines—the Quenards' in particular—and regularly have cases sent down the mountain for my personal cellar. The Quenards are on a mission to spread the word, and they price their wines accordingly, even though demand is high. They could easily sell their production three times over to the famous ski resorts down the road, and yet

they prefer to let the wines travel and be discovered and enjoyed in various corners of the world. In the years following my first visit to the estate, Michel has been joined by his son Guillaume, who talks the talk and walks the walk.

Of all Michel’s wines, his 2018 Chignin-Bergeron Les Terrasses is his crown jewel, the vision he has for Savoie taking its seat at the table of the world’s finest white wines. The parcel—the highest of the estate, too steep for any human to walk on—had to be hand worked into small terraces, where the ancient crumbled limestone of the Alps litters the ground, drains the soil, and radiates heat back to the vines on cold nights. A serious wine with spice and warm gingerbread notes, Les Terrasses is meant for something serious at the table, like pan-seared foie gras or *langoustine*. For a more casual tipple, try the Quenards’ 2018 Chignin Gamay, exactly what you’d hope for with Gamay grown in the mountains: fresh, crisp, peppery, and smoky. You can only find this one in the United States now; at the domaine, the cuvée sold out nearly instantly, given its local popularity as an everyday wine. Finally, for those who want to try a truly unique *rouge*, the 2018 Chignin Mondeuse Vieilles Vignes pours out with a shimmering neon-black color, smells of great northern Rhône Syrah, and is delicate and juicy to its core. A pure joy to swirl around and drink, it is the perfect embodiment of the Quenard family’s message of trusting their *terroir*.

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2018 CHIGNIN-BERGERON “LES TERRASSES”	\$35.00	\$378.00
2018 CHIGNIN GAMAY	19.00	205.20
2018 CHIGNIN MONDEUSE “VIEILLES VIGNES”	30.00	324.00

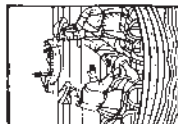


Touring the Quenards’ vines © Daniel Madero

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“INSTEAD of pointing down into a glass of the local wine, tourists in the Loire usually have their noses aimed skyward as they gaze at one of the region’s countless grand châteaux. . . . However, all the treasures of the Loire are not aboveground, and a side trip to visit the wine cellars can be just as striking an experience for the wine-impassioned as a tour of Chenonceaux would be for the history or architecture enthusiast.”

—KERMIT LYNCH,
ADVENTURES ON THE WINE ROUTE

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