

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

JANUARY 2024



*Mathieu Lapierre*

© Jimmy Hayes

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THE QUINTESSENTIAL KLWM SAMPLER  
ALPINE WINES • RED BURGUNDY NEW ARRIVALS  
2022 LAPIERRE MORGON

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# THE NEW (OLD) LAPIERRE MORGON

by Anthony Lynch

## 2022 MORGON • M. & C. LAPIERRE

By now, with this thirty-fourth consecutive vintage of the domaine's Morgon we've shipped to American shores, many are familiar with the significance of the name Lapierre on a wine label. Kermit summed it up concisely in 1992 when he wrote, "Lapierre is the Beaujolais renegade who does not chaptalize, does not add yeasts, and does not filter." Marcel's rejection of industrialized, production-oriented agriculture in favor of the labor-intensive traditional farming his father and grandfather practiced marked a turning point in the Beaujolais and beyond, as countless vigneronns would later follow in his footsteps and embrace more natural ways of viticulture and winemaking.

One part of the story often left out is that a young Marcel Lapierre, back at the domaine following military service in the early '70s, initially convinced his father to *abandon* the old-fashioned ways of working for the modern techniques he had just learned in winemaking school. Not only were the Lapierrés assured a consistent crop from year to year, but they could wave good-bye to the laborious days spent tilling the vineyard soils when a quick pass spraying synthetic herbicides would easily do the job.

One little caveat, however: Marcel realized he couldn't stand to drink his own wines, which he deemed insipid. He always found himself reaching for the bottles his late father had produced via those "archaic" methods. And so began, with the mentorship of an eccentric old biochemist named Jules Chauvet, a return to tradition: no more herbicides or chemical fertilizers, but also no more laboratory yeasts, massive doses of sulfur, acidification, chaptalization, or sterile filtration in the cellar. The 1978 vintage would be Marcel's very first "natural wine."

Forty-four harvests later, Marcel's son, Mathieu, and daughter, Camille, manage the domaine with the same sense of humility that their father learned in his early days. They have taken his life's work and elevated it in the face of new challenges, namely a capricious and changing climate. The wines remain as good as ever: this is Gamay in its purest form, from some of the very best terroirs in the Beaujolais region. The newly arrived 2022 is a pleasure bomb, chock-full of silky ripe fruit, earthy tones, and a stimulating juicy energy. Kermit wrote of Marcel's 1990 Morgon, "It is one of the most delicious young reds we have ever sold." From a comparable vintage, this latest release makes me feel the same.

**\$45.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$486.00 PER CASE**



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# QUINTESSENTIAL KLWM

## 12-BOTTLE SAMPLER

by Tom Wolf

**W**Henever a friend or relative asks me to assemble a case of quintessential Kermit Lynch selections for around \$25 a bottle, I turn not to *premier cru* Burgundy or skin-macerated white wines from one of the Italian islands—as much as I love these—but to the great village and regional bottlings we’ve been importing for decades. I include wines like the Lavantureux brothers’ Petit Chablis, a beautiful, pure, and distinctive expression of Chardonnay from one of Kermit and his staff’s favorite appellations. Le Sang des Cailoux’s Vacqueyras pretty much always makes the cut, as it exemplifies a soulful red that clearly evokes northern Provence, and it’s made by an incredibly talented and equally humble father-and-son duo who sacrifice everything to make honest wine. And, of course, I throw in a bottle of Bandol rosé—a wine that has helped define our spirit since the beginning.

The truth is, I could have put together dozens of variations for such a 12-pack of “quintessential Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant” wines. And, going forward, we will! Depending on what we have available in Berkeley, a mixed case of these core wines will be available on our website and in our shop for the rest of the year to help you or anyone you know discover and enjoy a dozen KLWM classics.

PER BOTTLE

VOUVRAY BRUT • CHAMPALOU . . . . .	\$31.00
2022 SAINT-CHINIAN ROSÉ • MAS CHAMPART . . . . .	21.00
2021 BANDOL ROSÉ • DOMAINE DU GROS ’NORÉ. . . . .	42.00
2022 SAVOIE CHIGNIN BLANC • A. & M. QUENARD . . . . .	22.00
2022 GRAVES BLANC • CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE . . . . .	23.00
2021 CUSTOZA “MAEL” • CORTE GARDONI. . . . .	23.00
2022 PETIT CHABLIS • ROLAND LAVANTUREUX . . . . .	38.00
2022 SYRAH “LES HAUTES RIBAUTES” • LIONEL FAURY. . . . .	28.00
2022 LANGHE NEBBIOLO “CAMILU” • GUIDO PORRO . . . . .	34.00
2019 CHIANTI CLASSICO • VILLA DI GEGGIANO . . . . .	35.00
2022 MORGON “LA ROCHE PILÉE”	
JEAN-PAUL & CHARLY THÉVENET . . . . .	37.00
2021 VACQUEYRAS ROUGE “AZALAÏS” • SANG DES CAILLOUX . . .	42.00

Normally \$376.00

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$282**

(a 25% discount)

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# LOIRE WHITES ARE HAVING A MOMENT

by *Dustin Soiseth*

**W**ITH A RECENT STRING of strong vintages unprecedented in living memory, the Loire Valley is delivering value and quality like never before. Here are three prime examples of stunning Loire wines. Check back next month for my piece on our distinctive selection of Loire reds.

## **2022 MENETOU-SALON BLANC “LE PRIEURÉ” PRIEURÉ DE SAINT-CÉOLS**

I did a double take after my first sip of Joseph de Maistre’s scintillating Sauvignon Blanc from Menetou-Salon. This is from the Loire? My tasting notes included words like “silky” and “voluptuous.” While the hallmarks of Loire Sauvignon Blanc, like structure and minerality, are present, the level of ripeness and sheer deliciousness really stood out. An exciting debut from our newest Loire producer.

**\$28.00 PER BOTTLE      \$302.40 PER CASE**

## **2022 CHINON BLANC • BERNARD BAUDRY**

The 2022 growing season was characterized by a warm, dry summer, with a little bit of rain at just the right time to keep the vines happy. Grapes were harvested both fully ripe *and* with all the acidity and minerality that make Loire whites sing. Baudry’s Chinon *blanc* is a perfect example: pale yellow, with citrus and quince notes, but also a nuttiness and a stony earthiness, like the smell of hot stones just after a summer rain, to balance the fruit.

**\$36.00 PER BOTTLE      \$388.80 PER CASE**

## **2020 MUSCADET SÈVRE ET MAINE CLISSON “LA MOLETTE” • DOMAINE BRÉGEON**

Fred Lailler’s Clisson is front-loaded with flavor. The 2020 vintage was pretty toasty by Loire standards, with grapes easily reaching full ripeness. Additionally, this vineyard, situated on a sandy granite terroir instead of the region’s usual gabbro and gneiss, gives a rounder expression of the Melon grape. While there is a lot of fruit here, it’s a cool sort of fruit, more apples and pears than the tropical flavors we associate with ripeness in white wines. And it is refreshing, as you’d expect a Muscadet to be. The crisp finish always has you reaching for the next glass.

**\$46.00 PER BOTTLE      \$496.80 PER CASE**

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# GREAT ITALIAN VALUES

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

## CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE PROSECCO SUPERIORE BRUT • SOMMARIVA

It takes practice to master pronouncing the name of this superior part of the Prosecco region, “val-dobe-YAH-den-ay.” While the appellation’s moniker won’t roll off your tongue, this delicious bottling—with its fine bead, pear-scented fruit, and playful acidity—most certainly will! More than just a crowd pleaser, Sommariva’s traditional and truly exceptional Prosecco is a classic choice to place in the hand of a just-arrived guest, to accompany a piece of pie, to top off a cocktail, or to use whenever sparkling wine is called for. Albeit versatile, it shines for what it is: a perfect glass of bubbly dry Prosecco.

**\$18.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$194.40** PER CASE

## 2022 CUSTOZA “GREOTO” • CORTE GARDONI

On a freezing-cold afternoon in New York, I opened Corte Gardoni’s Custoza and had a thought about wintertime whites. Greoto, a blend of several local Venetian varieties, is not a bracing wine. Instead, it has a grapey quality, with summer fruits such as white strawberry and peach. Like a glimmer of sunshine on a gray day, it relieved the chill in my bones and left me charmed. A more high-toned or racy white would not have compared for such icy weather. As the days went on, every glass I enjoyed got better and better—a touch of honey here, a glimpse of bitter almond there. I’ll be keeping this *bianco* in rotation all season.

**\$16.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$172.80** PER CASE

## 2022 VINO ROSSO “IL GOCCETTO” TENUTA LA PERGOLA

La Pergola’s Gocchetto is an unpretentious, hydrating little red with a fragrant, rosy perfume of bone-dry Brachetto and Barbera. A hint of bitterness adds dimension and bite to what is otherwise a delicate, light-bodied wine. I love it for pasta night. Pair it with anything from spicy sausage and broccoli rabe orecchiette to the most pared-back tomato sauce—try Marcella Hazan’s—which epitomizes a simple meal and begs to be enjoyed with a thirst-quenching *rosso* like this one. Without much tannin, this “little nip” is silky, finessed, and loaded with freshness.

**\$15.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$162.00** PER CASE



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# SOUTHERN FRENCH REDS

by Chris Santini, KLWM BEAUNE

## 2020 FAUGÈRES “JADIS” DOMAINE LEON BARRAL

A wonderful thing about Didier Barral is that he is too cut off from the rest of the world to know what the latest wine trends are, and too busy in his vines to care. On the surface he’s a winemaker, but it may be more correct to say he is a skilled farmer who obsesses over the small details and health of his soils, his various crops, his pigs and cows, his vines, and guides thriving grapes into vibrant wine. What you get is not what is hip or hot, but what the farm gives that vintage. The long macerations, slow presses, and years of aging in old barrels, during which he intervenes rarely and gently (nothing is ever added—not even a dollop), allow the juice to soak in the ambience and scents of the rural surroundings. The result is something completely unclassifiable, delightfully rustic, and totally wild: a mix of brambly aromatics, fresh-cut hay, meaty, gamy tannins, and chewy black fruit. Those initiated to Jadis will know what I mean, and those uninitiated really need to try it to believe it. Take your time with it, though. Let it breathe, and give it your full attention. It is a living piece of a distant farm delivered to your glass from one of the remotest corners of France.

**\$68.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$734.40** PER CASE

## 2021 CORBIÈRES • DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE



I have a short list of “Old Reliable” wines, the wines you can open for anyone, anywhere, on any occasion, and you know everyone will love them. They tend to be open, pure, fun, fruity, and delicious—attributes no one can argue with. The list comes in handy when planning wines for gatherings, anything from weddings to a small party, Thanksgiving to end-of-year holidays, when

you need bottles that wine lovers and the uninitiated can sip together with pleasure. Smack in the middle of that list lies this Corbières *rouge* from Font-sainte, arriving each year (since 1978!) fresh off the boat in top form, bursting with southern French sun, fruit, and herbs, with just the right amount of *je ne sais quoi* for everyone to enjoy.

**\$18.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$194.40** PER CASE

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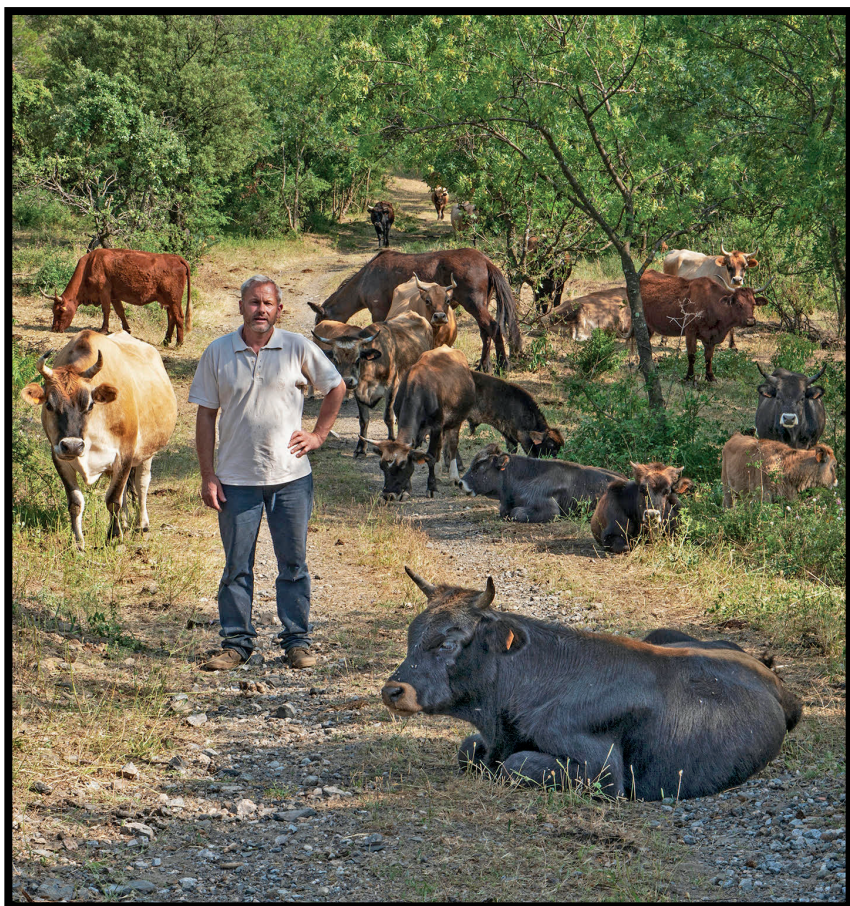
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## 2021 PATRIMONIO “CARCO” ANTOINE-MARIE ARENA

This deep, tannic, long Corsican *rouge* is a good reminder that a big red can still be a fun red. After a bit of aeration, you’ll find this Niellucciu to be loaded with flavor, with a stony finish that leaves you always wanting more. The Carco vineyard is now legendary in Patrimonio, the Arena family having consistently provided some of the top wines the appellation has to offer from these vines since they revived and replanted the fallow ground in 1987.

**\$54.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$583.20** PER CASE



Didier Barral

© Gail Skoff

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# WHITE BEFORE RED: LIGURIA

by Madison H. Brown

## 2022 RIVIERA LIGURE DI PONENTE VERMENTINO “VIGNETO ISASCO” PUNTA CRENA

Arriving in Liguria with my colleagues last June felt like stepping into technicolor after nearly two weeks of pounding the pavement along France’s fabled wine route. In place of the hallowed *grands crus* and formidable terroirs, we found ourselves meandering through quaint fishing villages, feasting our eyes on a vivid palette of pastel-painted dwellings and olive groves set against a glimmering cerulean sea. In one such village, perched on a hillside above the shore, sits the charming Punta Crena *cantina*. It is the epitome of a family-run operation, equal parts chaos and contentment. The joy is palpable—three generations, all thriving and brimming with zeal, rooted around their humble cellar in Varigotti.

Less than a mile away, the Vermentino grapes for Vigneto Isasco grow on a gravelly, red clay slope where they soak up the site’s abundant minerals, salty breezes, and Mediterranean sun. The resulting *bianco* evokes a pristine sense of place with delightful, almost briny salinity and crisp, citrus-scented freshness. Locals enjoy it with *lumache*, a Ligurian specialty of steamed snails doused in herbs and butter. For a more garden-variety pairing, marine mollusks (prepared in a similar fashion) will make for a delicious match.

**\$34.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$367.20** PER CASE

## 2019 ROSSESE DI DOLCEACQUA SUPERIORE “FULAVIN” • TENUTA ANFOSSO

In Liguria’s mountainous province of Imperia, a minuscule appellation of incredible terroir surrounds the commune of Dolceacqua. It is in this northwestern corner of Italy that Rossese, Liguria’s prized red grape, reaches its greatest potential. The vines are grown on stone terraces built into steep cliffs—the term Rossese comes from *rocciese*, meaning “rocky”—and require daunting, everything-by-hand labor. Alessandro Anfosso’s family has tirelessly toiled here since the late 1800s, and the craftsmanship of their wines reflects venerable, generations-old mastery.

The Fulavin is consistently the most velvety and plush in Anfosso’s lineup, and the 2019 is no exception—it seems to perfectly toe the line between easy-drinking and complex. Expect bright berry fruit with floral notes, a touch of smoke and leather, silky spice, and an earthy, mineral finish.

**\$48.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$518.40** PER CASE

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# THE ALPS

*by Tom Wolf*

## 2021 SÜDTIROL EISACKTALER GRÜNER VELTLINER • MANNI NÖSSING

Manni Nössing's sliver of Alto Adige is an Alpine paradise nestled in a high-elevation valley in the Dolomites and near the Austrian border. This part of the region, cut off from Mediterranean currents that cross much of Alto Adige, is ideally suited to white wines that are at once chiseled, bracing, and profound. In this bottling, charming flavors of ripe white peaches and apricot give way to a stony, precise, and intensely refreshing finish that would beautifully suit sushi or grilled shrimp tacos.

**\$34.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$367.20** PER CASE

## 2021 SAVOIE ARBIN MONDEUSE "TERRES BRUNES" • A. & M. QUENARD

Mostly known and beloved for its white wines, Savoie is also home to a noteworthy red grape called Mondeuse, which thrives along the impossibly steep and scree-laden slopes of the pre-Alps, just down the road from France's renowned ski mountains. For half a century, the Quenards' vines for this cuvée have clung to this stony rubble, yielding reds unlike those from any other region in France. Lithe, brambly, and floral, it's as well suited to fondue and *tartiflette* as it is to slow-braised oxtail or your favorite stew.

**\$35.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$378.00** PER CASE

## 2022 VALLE D'AOSTA ROSSO TORRETTE CHÂTEAU FEUILLET

As with Manni Nössing, who lives mere miles from the Austrian border and whose first language is German, Château Feuillel inhabits a corner of Italy bordering France and Switzerland where many of the town, family, and grape names—as well as one of the two official languages—are French. The starring varieties in this Torrette, however (mostly Petit Rouge with a splash of Mayolet), have no counterparts in France. This uniquely Valdostano red is characterized by a charming freshness and a spicy, red-berry core. Pour it alongside a mushroom risotto with Fontina, the creamy Valle d'Aosta cheese, for a sublime regional pairing.

**\$31.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$334.80** PER CASE

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# RED BURGUNDY

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

## 2020 IRANCY • BENOÎT CANTIN

You might be caught off guard by how delicious this unassuming bottle of Irancy from the Auxerrois region of Burgundy is. The Cantin family is making some of the most surprising and gorgeous wines we've started to import recently, and I am completely hooked. This cuvée blends Pinot Noir from *lieux-dits* in and around the Irancy appellation, an amphitheater of vineyards growing on Kimmeridgian limestone soil—like its neighbor in Chablis. A vibrant *rouge*, it has notes of violet, fennel seed, and black pepper coiled together around a chalky core.

**\$34.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$367.20** PER CASE

## 2020 MARSANNAY ROUGE “LES LONGEROIES” RÉGIS BOUVIER

Marsannay, just south of Dijon, makes red Burgundy with a true Côte de Nuits profile: dark, spicy, and irresistibly tart. Les Longeroies is one of the most esteemed *lieux-dits* in the appellation, producing hearty yet refined wines from a vineyard that also happens to be eligible for promotion to *premier cru* designation. Since French bureaucrats aren't known for their quick turnaround time, don't expect a label update soon, but do keep your eye on this village, notably this cuvée, whose star has been on the rise for quite some time.

**\$47.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$507.60** PER CASE

## 2020 ALOXE-CORTON *PREMIER CRU* “CLOS DU CHAPITRE” • FOLLIN-ARBELET

Few wineries are as idyllic—romantic, even—as Follin's in Aloxé-Corton, a village in the valley below the majestic hill of Corton. Maybe it's the eighteenth-century *cuvée*, the rose bushes that scale its stone walls in summertime, or the prized, photogenic Clos du Chapitre vineyard that grows around Aloxé's Saint-Médard church. The parcel there, a walled-in semi-monopole (shared with just one other grower), has soil so abundantly stony your boots crunch against hunks of limestone with every step. Pinot vines soak up these minerals, giving us a wine that's profound, expressive, and as captivating as only high-quality red Burgundy can be.

**\$110.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$1,188.00** PER CASE





*The author in the Clos du Chapitre vineyard*

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**A**FTER ALMOST FOUR DECADES of purposeful wine drinking, my knowledge remains minimal. I've never had the money to buy bottles to lay down. One good decision I made, when young, was to pick an affordable French region whose wines I like—the Rhônes—and stick to them. In particular I buy any Rhône wines imported by Kermit Lynch, because (a) Kermit has a jolly and literate soul and (b) they are reliable and tend to be of good value."

—DWIGHT GARNER, from *The Upstairs Delicatessen*

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