

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

MARCH 2018



*André Ostertag's sheep*

© Gail Skoff

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INTRODUCING TENUTA ANFOSSO  
NEW ARRIVALS FROM OSTERTAG  
RAISE YOUR GLASS TO MR. BRUCE NEYERS



## Raise Your Glass to Mr. Bruce Neyers

Twenty-five years ago, I was dining at Masa's restaurant in San Francisco with Alice Waters. During our conversation, she asked if I'd heard the news: Bruce Neyers was leaving Joseph Phelps's employ at his winery near St. Helena. It was before cell phones, so I stood and hurried to Masa's phone. Bruce's wife, Barbara, answered. No, Bruce wasn't there. "Give him a message ASAP, please! Tell him Kermit Lynch said, 'Do nothing 'til you hear from me.'" Bruce called the next day, we met and negotiated, and I succeeded in hiring one of America's greatest wine men. What a coup! It wasn't the feather in my cap; it was a closet full of caps all well feathered. What did he bring to KLWM? Everything positive you can possibly imagine.

I am horribly disappointed to announce Bruce's retirement. He cannot be duplicated or imitated. He will, however, remain active in the wine business, up in his lovely Napa Valley winery.

Bruce, I'm raising my glass to you. Your work here with me was truly epic. *Santé, et merci mille fois.*

—KERMIT LYNCH



Barbara and Bruce Neyers

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# LEADING THE NATURAL WINE MOVEMENT

## CHÂTEAU MOULIN PEY-LABRIE

*by Bruce Neyers*

**W**E'VE WORKED with Grégoire and Bénédicte Hubau for several years now, and I find my head turning just a bit every time they open, decant, and serve one of their wines. It usually spins me back about forty years or so, back to the days when I was regularly tasting red Bordeaux wines from Joe Phelps's cellar that came from vintages like 1945, 1952, 1961, or even older. Joe had an amazing cellar of old Bordeaux, and he was generous beyond belief with them. For the better part of a ten-year period, he joined Barbara and me for dinner almost weekly, and he always brought along a beautiful old Claret from his collection. I think the similarity between then and now has a lot to do with the "natural wine" theories of Grégoire. His wines have a core structure of fruit and flavor that I simply don't find often these days. Moreover, his winemaking is traditional, with extended maceration and less racking. He rarely fines and never filters; he simply makes wine just like they did in 1945. The results speak volumes. Far too many people are missing out because they don't see the names Pauillac or St. Julien or Margaux on Grégoire's labels. Try a bottle of his 2007 Moulin Pey-Labrie with a Léoville Las Cases like I did recently. Your questions will quickly be answered.

### 2007 CANON FRONSAC

**\$42.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$453.60** PER CASE



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# NEW ARRIVALS FROM OSTERTAG

*by Dixon Brooke*

## 2016 PINOT BLANC “LES JARDINS”

André Ostertag’s newly christened “Les Jardins” cuvée of Pinot Blanc is the driest we’ve seen from him in a while, with a salty tanginess that quenches thirst and invites a hankering (in me, anyway) for raw hamachi. As I told André when I saw him in December in Epfig, I learn something important every time I taste with him. This time it was that the Pinot Auxerrois for this cuvée is sourced from both the Fronholz (quartz) and the Clos Mathis (granite) vineyards, which goes a long way in explaining its raciness and finesse.

**\$27.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$291.60** PER CASE

## 2016 RIESLING “LES JARDINS”

This Riesling from André’s estate vineyards around Epfig has a very transparent, crystalline nose and the type of purity and focus that is virtually impossible to achieve with any other white grape. There is a reason—there are many reasons, really—why Riesling is so prized across northern Europe; when it is “on” (as in this cuvée), it is a real thoroughbred that is tough to catch. A touch of creaminess rounds out the edges and makes this deliciously drinkable right now.

**\$30.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$324.00** PER CASE





## 2016 RIESLING “CLOS MATHIS”

Clos Mathis shares a hillside in Ribeauvillé with the famed *grand cru* of Geisberg. André’s vines are planted on steep, granite terraces. This bottling is always the nerviest in André’s superb lineup of Rieslings and ages exceptionally well.

**\$45.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$486.00** PER CASE

## 2016 PINOT GRIS “ZELLBERG”

Zellberg is a steep limestone hillside beautifully rendered on the label by André’s wife, Christine. The site has enabled André to master his style of dry Pinot Gris, vinified in the Burgundian fashion. As it ages—slowly and gracefully, in my experience—it is a worthy rival to white Burgundy in all ways except price. Hot stone and white pepper liven up the backbone of this extraordinarily complex, unique white.

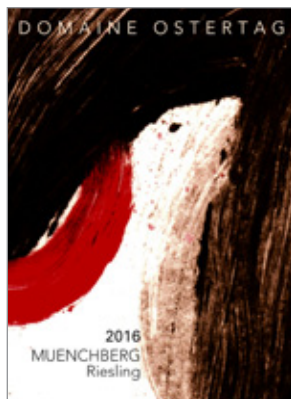
**\$56.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$604.80** PER CASE



## 2016 RIESLING GRAND CRU “MUENCHBERG”

The monastery seated at the foot of this *grand cru* of “monk’s mountain” still exists. The *lieu* immediately invokes contemplation due to its isolation and total silence. André has learned how to capture this magic in bottle, rendering a wine that delivers both power and nuance, intensity and weightless energy. With an amazing grainy texture and a soft but distinct stoniness of volcanic origin, this Riesling is a tour de force from Ostertag.



**\$69.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$745.20** PER CASE



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# MANY WATERS SAMPLER

by *Dustin Soiseth*

**W**ATER IS A POWERFUL FORCE in our world, and its importance to wine goes far beyond nourishing vines. The Loire River, for example, moderates temperatures along its course, making viticulture possible in a region that would otherwise be too cold. Down the coast, the Gironde Estuary has been Bordeaux's gateway to Europe's markets and capitals for centuries, while to the east, the mighty Rhône River has served as a major trade route since Roman times. From its source in the Swiss Alps, it flows over five hundred miles before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea, where, from their home on its eastern shores, the Phoenicians disseminated their knowledge of viticulture and winemaking throughout the Mediterranean basin more than three thousand years ago. Here's to the Phoenicians, the Bordelais, the Rhône, and the Loire—take a moment to savor their role in filling your cup. The wine in it is about 85% water, after all.

PER BOTTLE

## GIRONDE ESTUARY

2016 GRAVES <i>BLANC</i> • CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE . . . . .	\$19.00
2014 HAUT-MÉDOC • CHÂTEAU ANEY . . . . .	24.00
2011 LUSSAC SAINT-ÉMILION • CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE . . . . .	26.00

## LOIRE RIVER VALLEY

2016 MUSCADET CÔTES DE GRAND LIEU SUR LIE "LA NOË"	
ÉRIC CHEVALIER . . . . .	\$19.95
2016 VOUVRAY • CHAMPALOU . . . . .	20.00
2014 CHINON "LES PETITES ROCHES" • CHARLES JOGUET . . . . .	23.00

## RHÔNE RIVER VALLEY

2016 TAVEL ROSÉ • CHÂTEAU DE TRINQUEVEDEL . . . . .	\$18.95
2015 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE • SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH. . . . .	12.95

## MEDITERRANEAN SEA

2016 MATAËSSU "VIGNETO REINÉ" • PUNTA CRENA . . . . .	\$28.00
2015 ALGERO CAGNULARI <i>ROSSO</i> "ARSENALÉ" • VIGNE RADA . . . . .	32.00
2016 ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ <i>ROUGE</i> • DOMAINE DE MARQUILIANI . . . . .	26.00
2013 MOSCATO DI NOTO "NOTISSIMO" • RIOFAVARA . . . . .	14.00

Normally \$263.85

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$198**

(a 25% discount)

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# RED BURGUNDIES

by Anthony Lynch

## 2015 ALOXE-CORTON 1<sup>ER</sup> CRU

### “LES VERCOTS” • DOMAINE FOLLIN-ARBELET

Wine publications typically refer to Pinot Noir as a grape producing light-bodied wines, a gross generalization that trivializes vintage variation and altogether ignores the nuances conferred by *terroir*. Precisely, here is a big, deep, and structured Pinot Noir from Aloxé-Corton that is completely saturated with flavor and structure. The generous, robust 2015 vintage certainly bears some responsibility, but even in lighter years, the *premier cru* Les Vercots—a plot with a rugged soil of thick clay and rocks—gives brawny wines of serious density. Tightly knit with healthy acidity and chewy tannins, this full-bodied Pinot Noir demands a bit of cellaring to unravel, and it will greatly reward those who wait.



**\$89.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$961.20** PER CASE

## 2014 NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES

### 1<sup>ER</sup> CRU “LES BOUSSELOTS”

### DOMAINE ROBERT CHEVILLON

Veritable Nuits-Saint-Georges specialists, the Chevallion brothers farm no less than eight distinct *premiers crus* evenly distributed throughout all four corners of this prestigious appellation. Les Bousselots lies in the commune’s northern sector, in the direction of Vosne-Romanée; the resulting wine therefore hints at the aromatic delicacy typical of Vosne—almost exotic in its spiced bouquet, overlaid with opulent fruit of velvety refinement. One of the first Chevallion reds to reveal its secrets, this perfumed gem is already open and giving, showing the suave, fragrant qualities that drive Burgundy lovers mad.

**\$121.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$1,306.80** PER CASE



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# INTRODUCING TENUTA ANFOSSO

*by Anthony Lynch*

**W**INE IMPORTING comes with its fair share of occupational hazards—air and car travel, food poisoning, overconsumption, exhaustion—but only recently, on a visit to the vineyards of Tenuta Anfosso, did I truly fear the clenched fist of death might strike me down with its morbid wrath. Here in the heart of the Rossese di Dolceacqua appellation, minutes from the Mediterranean coast just east of the French-Italian border, vineyards reach a dizzying grade of 60%, and climbing the near-vertical winding roads to walk the rows felt like quite possibly the last vineyard visit I would live to experience. Côte-Rôtie has got nothing on this, I observed through gritted teeth.



*Rossese vineyards at Tenuta Anfosso*

© Anthony Lynch

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Fortunately, Alessandro Anfosso maneuvered these perilously steep, sharp turns with almost-too-casual dexterity, and soon enough we found ourselves amid the terraced Poggio Pini vineyard, examining gnarled Rossese vines planted in 1888 by Alessandro's great-grandfather. After phylloxera ravaged the area's vineyards, the Anfossoes replanted and continued to make wine from their tiny holdings, but the region never got close to equaling the roughly three thousand hectares under vine it enjoyed in the mid-nineteenth century, which at the time gave Dolceacqua more vineyard area than the Langhe.

Alessandro's ancestors persisted, periodically repairing the dry-stone walls by hand and carrying on the ancient tradition of viticulture contained within this small, mountainous enclave of western Liguria. When his father retired after a staggering seventy-seventh harvest, Alessandro took over with the goal of valorizing this extreme *terroir* and recapturing the appellation's historic prestige by embracing traditional methods of farming and winemaking that had been slowly phased out over decades of mechanization, modern enology, and the emergence of commercial market trends.

Dolceacqua's Rossese is well worth the backbreaking labor required to farm it. While it is grown throughout Liguria, typically producing light, fruity reds for immediate consumption, Rossese takes on a different persona in this dramatic, unforgiving terrain. Still light on their feet, the wines are deeper, finer, and longer-lived than other expressions of the grape, featuring a fascinating array of floral, peppery, smoky, and savory suggestions highlighted by a crunchy mineral finish.

Our first shipment from Tenuta Anfosso has just arrived, and we invite you to explore these Ligurian wonders with the two bottlings below. The *Superiore*, a blend of Alessandro's three *cru* sites, is a delicious introduction to what is possible in this lost bastion of Mediterranean viticulture, exhibiting bright red fruit, subtle spice, and a clean, stony finish. *Luvaira*, in contrast, showcases the concentration achieved from vines planted in 1905, with an ample mouthfeel and wilder, almost meaty aromatics rounded out by the sweet, earthy fragrance of faded rose petals.

While I consider myself fortunate to have survived my vineyard visit with Alessandro, I hope you'll agree: Anfosso's Rosseses really are to die for.

## **2015 ROSSESE DI DOLCEACQUA SUPERIORE**

**\$32.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$345.60** PER CASE

## **2014 ROSSESE DI DOLCEACQUA SUPERIORE "LUVAIRA"**

**\$42.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$453.60** PER CASE

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# BEAUJOLAIS

by Jennifer Oakes



## 2016 JULIÉNAS LA SŒUR CADETTE

What happens when the land your family has been making wine from for decades falls victim to devastating frost, damaging nearly 80% of your crop, and almost bankrupts you? If you have the fortitude and resourcefulness of Vézelay's Valentin Montanet of La Sœur Cadette, you call on your friends in other regions, like nearby Beaujolais, to help you source organically farmed grapes and make this

scrumptious Juliénas. It is supple and juicy, like a sun-warmed basket of raspberries, and its cacao-nib aroma and mineral tang are the perfect accompaniment to smoked duck breast or simple barbecued meats. A friend mentioned it "holds up well with the power of bacon."

**\$30.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$324.00** PER CASE

## 2016 CÔTE DE BROUILLY • GUY BRETON

Champagne may be considered the traditional wine for most celebrations, but what could be more spontaneously festive and happiness-inducing than juicy, bright Gamay? This joyous Côte de Brouilly is like the arrival of spring in a bottle, warming and invigorating after the gray days of winter. Brambly, full of energy and verve, with a pleasant Aperol-esque bitterness and loads of floral accents and sappy stems, it has a bouncy lightness that is the perfect pick-me-up and salute to all things merry. Who needs bubbles when you can avail yourself of this high-spirited beauty and toast to the change in the season, a ball game, or even a Friday! Here's to, well, whatever!



**\$35.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$378.00** PER CASE

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# THE SAUMUR OF THIERRY GERMAIN

by Dixon Brooke

**S**AUMUR is a beautiful, fortified medieval city on the Loire River's southern bank, halfway between Tours and Angers, with a distinguished collection of castles built from the locally quarried white limestone tuffeau. The ancient city disguises the plateau of tuffeau behind it that is scattered with its true treasure: Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc vines.



## 2015 SAUMUR MOUSSEUX “BULLES DE ROCHE”

From the Chenin of Saumur, Thierry crafts this gorgeous sparkling wine with a distinctly rich and golden style, all natural, as it contains no added dosage. Contrary to the rash of bone-dry, high-acid *brut zeros* out there (which I also enjoy), this wine has decadently rich, honeyed fruit and a nice dollop of buttery brioche. It is good to have both options.

**\$34.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$367.20** PER CASE

## 2016 SAUMUR BLANC “L’INSOLITE”

From ancient vines planted in yellow *silex*, Insolite is a sleek, spirited Chenin, bursting with energy and without an ounce of extra fat. If it were Burgundy, you might call it Puligny-esque. Thierry's whites are the best I have ever had from the Saumur appellation, one with a noble history of producing age-worthy white wine of pedigree. On my first-ever trip to the region, a local grower opened a 1945 for me and Kermit, to celebrate the liberation of France by the US army. I'm sure I won't hold this one quite that long, but it was an impressive introduction to what these wines are capable of.

**\$42.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$453.60** PER CASE

## 2016 SAUMUR CHAMPIGNY “LES ROCHES”

Thierry's style of Cabernet Franc emphasizes soaring red fruit aromatics, plush and silky textures, and racy acidity. Sounds pretty good, right? It isn't your grandmother's rustic, furry, tannic, bretty Cab Franc, that's for sure. Biodynamic agriculture, no trimming of the vine shoots, early picking, and aging in large barrels are a few of his keys to success. Les Roches is Thierry's entry-level Cab Franc for barbecues and general everyday gladness.

**\$28.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$302.40** PER CASE

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# NEW SARDINIANS

by Anthony Lynch

## 2016 ISOLA DEI NURAGHI BIANCO “PRAMA DORADA” • DEPERU HOLLER

This Vermentino-based blend hails from the noble *terroir* of Gallura, a complex mosaic of chalky, fossil-rich limestone and decomposed granite in the stark, windswept mountains of northern Sardinia. A field blend featuring other indigenous varieties such as Nasco, Malvasia, Moscato, and Arvesiniadu, Prama Dorada digs back deep into the island's past, giving us an idea of what Sardinian whites might have resembled before modern enology introduced techniques like commercial yeast inoculation and sterile filtration. Full-bodied, fleshy, slightly cloudy, and packed with alluring scents of wild herbs and flowers, this saline beauty has a place alongside the great wines of Arena and Abbatucci among the most compelling whites of the Mediterranean.

**\$40.00 PER BOTTLE      \$432.00 PER CASE**

## 2016 CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA “RIVIERA” • VIGNE RADA

Vigne Rada is a young estate founded by Gino Bardino, a former banker who quit his office job to follow his dream of making wine. Gino and his family built a modest winery and began to plant vineyards on the slopes outside their home of Alghero, a colorful city on Sardinia's northwest coast still distinguished by the cultural influence of fourteenth-century Catalan colonists. The folks at Vigne Rada grow only varieties traditional to the area, including Cannonau (known elsewhere as Grenache), likely an import from that period of Catalan occupation. This elegant island red—gorgeously perfumed of sweet fruit with a mineral note akin to rain on hot asphalt—suggests the grape is perfectly adapted to the local *terroir*.

**\$24.00 PER BOTTLE      \$259.20 PER CASE**

## 2016 CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA “BARROSU” • GIOVANNI MONTISCI

The village of Mamoiada lies in the heart of the Gennargentu, a mountain range far removed from the postcard-worthy rocky coves and turquoise waters that make up Sardinia's spectacular coastline. This high above sea level, nighttime temperatures reach icy lows, creating a long and steady growing season for the small plots of stubby, twisted old Cannonau vines that dot the rustic landscape.

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Giovanni Montisci cultivates two hectares of vineyards in the granite soils here, which he farms organically (tilled by bull!) and tends like little gardens. Naturally fermented and bottled unfiltered, his 2016 “Barrosu”—a local word for someone who is brazen or bold—shows just what Mamoiadan Cannonau is capable of achieving. Imposing as its name suggests, this imperial red recalls wild strawberry, juniper, and Mediterranean scrubland. Lovers of Barolo and Châteauneuf—or the venerable wines of Quintarelli—will not want to miss it.

**\$55.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$594.00** PER CASE



*A deluge approaches off the Sardinian coast*

© Gail Skoff

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# ITALIAN WHITES

by Dixon Brooke

## 2016 VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JESI CLASSICO SUPERIORE “CAPOVOLTO” LA MARCA DI SAN MICHELE

This lovely Verdicchio has quickly become one of our favorite whites in the entire portfolio for its instant charm factor, lovely balance and versatility, and refreshing vigor. Discovering it has been kind of like discovering the reserve bottlings from Michel Brégeon in Muscadet . . . realizing how much more a grape can do than you ever thought it could. The flesh and brine of this maritime Italian white make me crave simple grilled fish with fresh herbs and a squeeze of lemon.

**\$24.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$259.20** PER CASE

## 2016 GAMBELLARA CLASSICO “EL GIAN” • VIGNATO

Another Italian discovery has been a *simpatico* whistle-wetter for us these past two years: Davide Vignato's brilliant Garganegas from the Gambellara DOC, neighboring Soave. Davide is one of a group of young men and women intent on transforming this small, sleepy, growing area of pergola-trained vines in basalt into a hotbed of organic agriculture and experimentation. Vignato has shown us how much potential this region holds, and his El Gian bottling is the perfect introduction to Davide's style—crisp, crunchy minerality is the dominant theme.

**\$14.95** PER BOTTLE

**\$161.46** PER CASE

## 2014 MALVASIA ISTRIANA • KANTE

This strain of Malvasia grows most successfully and abundantly in the northern Adriatic basin, between Venice and the Istrian peninsula of northern Croatia, from which the grape takes its name. It loves to be planted within view of the sea so that it can drink in its salty breezes. The limestone plateau of the Carso district, above Trieste in eastern Friuli, is the home of the Kante winery where this Malvasia is grown. Aromatically reminiscent of Friulano, with whispers of peach and apricot, it is soft and delicate and has a dry and cleansing finish. Planted here centuries ago, this grape remains today to slake the thirst of locals and visitors as it is served alongside fresh sea critters.

**\$35.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$378.00** PER CASE

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# GRIS DE GRIS IS HERE!

by Anthony Lynch

## 2017 CORBIÈRES ROSÉ “GRIS DE GRIS” DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

Rosé season is back! Wait a minute—rosé season never left. *Rosé season* is just a social construct designed to deprive us of one of the most delicious, refreshing, versatile beverages in the world for several months out of the year. Is it a marketing scam? A ploy from the devil? A social media campaign carried out by jealous producers of full-bodied reds?

Forgive me for getting off topic. The Corbières Gris de Gris is back in stock—that’s why we’re here. The 2017 has a delicate, pale salmon color, tantalizing as ever, and it is succulently fruity on the nose and palate. “Succulent” in the sense of biting into a ripe fruit—or, rather, a cornucopia of ripe fruits—and feeling them burst under your teeth, spattering your taste buds with delectable flavors of fresh citrus and berries. And then, the finish: crisp, dry, lip-smacking as ever. Rosé season lasts 365 days, my friends, and the calendar has just renewed!

**\$16.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$172.80** PER CASE



© Dixon Brooke

*Sea critters from the Adriatic, the perfect Malvasia pairing*

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*I believe that in wine there is only one truth,  
that of the empty bottle!*

—ANDRÉ OSTERTAG, 1998

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