

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

MAY 2023



Niedermorschwihr, Alsace

© Luke Kammann

BIRDS OF A FEATHER: ALSACE & ALTO ADIGE
INTRODUCING LES EMINADES • NEW RELEASES FROM V.T.
TO THE BRIM-KERMIT'S NEW CD!

TO THE BRIM

by Kermit Lynch

OUTSIDE THE SOUTHERN United States, singer-pianist Jerry Lee Lewis is largely known for rock 'n' roll classics like “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Going On” and “Great Balls of Fire,” but most of his portfolio is devoted to some of the finest country music ever recorded. For one of my recording sessions, I hired pedal steel guitar legend Lloyd Green, who played on some of Jerry Lee’s recordings. I asked Lloyd what that was like. “Well,” he said, “Jerry Lee walked straight over to his piano, placed a bottle of whiskey on one side of it, then pulled out a pistol and placed it down flat on the other side. After that, we all tuned up and got to work.”

Folks, my latest CD has nothing to do with Jerry Lee Lewis except the title, *To The Brim*, which might need explaining. I had fourteen songs, an hour of music, and I worried, was that too many, too much? Still, I could not bring myself to do any pruning. You’ll find an unusual variety of musical genres, from Tin Pan Alley to Broadway, Lou Reed to Hank Williams, and that works to keep the CD from growing monotonous. So I decided, okay then, why not fill the disc up to the brim? Which, I realized, is a line from one of Jerry Lee’s many drinking songs:

There stands the glass,
Fill ’er up to the brim.

By the way, another Jerry Lee classic recording is titled “Wine Me Up.” Amen! And don’t miss “The Alcohol of Fame,” which gets my vote for all-time-best Honky-Tonk Drinking-Song-Title award. Your JLL starter LP? *She Even Woke Me Up to Say Goodbye*. Hmm, sweet of her. The album is on Spotify, and JLL’s piano is killer throughout.

Anyway, back to my new CD, fourteen songs chosen for a variety of reasons; however, there’s not enough room to explain each one. Our primary purpose here is not to be music to your ears, but to inspire thirst, so please, pour yourself a glass of some tasty something or other to help your sensors prepare, then listen to cut two, my take on Bob Dylan’s “Just Like a Woman.” Ask yourself, what’s interesting about a woman who makes love like a woman? What could that possibly imply? What’s Bob up to? In my vocal, I try to answer those questions.

And in cut fourteen, I wanted to send you back out into the real world in the right mood. My band includes Grammy and Country Music Hall of Fame musicians, and they slide cozily into “Blues Stay Away from Me” like it’s a pair of fur-lined slippers. I make room for a bunch of instrumental solo verses. Thus, the CD fades out with what I’d call a long, sweet aftertaste.

Visit our website or call our retail shop to purchase a CD.

\$9.95 (SHIPPING INCLUDED)

Also available on Spotify, Apple Music, and all streaming platforms

LA CRAU FROM VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

IN THE HUNDRED-PLUS years since founder Hippolyte Brunier began making wine history in the southern Rhône village of Bédarrides, six generations at Vieux Télégraphe have helped carry the torch, lighting the way and setting the bar higher for the entire appellation. Vintage after vintage, the La Crau plateau produces some of the most anticipated bottlings of Grenache—with a handful of other native grapes—in the world and, with the guidance of the Bruniers, gives us the most typical expression and accurate snapshot of the vintage as Mother Nature intended. While the wines may be Rhône by definition, I'm often struck by their camaraderie with more Mediterranean appellations.

The wines of VT are Provençal at heart, in style and character, yet maintain a level of finesse that's wholly their own. It might be the mythical polished stones that litter the vineyards, or simply the savoir faire of the artisans who make them. Either way, it's eternally rewarding to sample their new releases year after year.



2021 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE *BLANC* “LA CRAU”

Only about five percent of the wine produced in Châteauneuf-du-Pape is white, making this bottling a rare and beloved treat for its unique point of view in a sea of reds. The Clairette-based 2021 vintage is among the freshest in memory and one of the most complex whites on our shelves. Gone are the days when I crave only austere white wines! The silkiness and richness of a bit of flesh, the honeyed notes—it's a dream for the senses.

\$94.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,015.20 PER CASE

2020 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE “LA CRAU”

One of the many benefits of working with such old vines on the La Crau plateau, Daniel Brunier says, is that because the plants are low-yielding, they are less likely to suffer from hydric stress, even during a dry vintage like 2020. The fruit remains buoyant, balanced, and, in this case, ripe with olive, sage, and velvety black cherry. Tannins are softer this year than they were in 2019, but this vintage is nonetheless bold and ready to age for as long as you're patient enough to cellar it.

\$114.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,231.20 PER CASE

CAMPANIA TRICOLORE

TERRE DEL VESCOVO

by Anthony Lynch

IRPINIA, THE COLLOQUIAL NAME for Campania's province of Avellino, is located just an hour's drive from the glitz of the Amalfi Coast and the frantic bustle of Napoli, but it may as well be a different planet. It is here, nestled in the Apennines, that Giuseppa Molettieri dutifully honors Campania's *contadino* tradition. Her characterful wines are a fitting tribute to her late father, founder of the family farm, and a most authentic testament to the promise of a part of Italy less traveled.

2020 CAMPANIA CODA DI VOLPE "KISTEIS"

Coda di Volpe, a variety named for the foxtail-like shape of its clusters, is the Campanians' daily drinking white. If the local reds are dense and contemplative, Coda is quite the opposite—in Giuseppa's words, "this is the wine for drinking in summer on the Amalfi Coast." At home, savor its breezy aromatics—lemon, flowers, and fresh-picked herbs—alongside a bowl of green olives or another regional specialty, *mozzarella di bufala*.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE **\$216.00** PER CASE

2019 IRPINIA ROSATO "A PESCHERA"

This deeply hued *rosato* is far from a trivial quaffing rosé. Instead, it displays the commanding structure of old-vine Aglianico from a terroir of serious caliber, along with notes of chalk and leather often found in the region's reds. Its savoriness lends it to pairings with thick slices of your favorite aged ham, but you might also try it with a nettle or broccoli rabe pizza.

\$21.00 PER BOTTLE **\$226.80** PER CASE

2017 TAURASI "LARGO MADAMA"

After more than five years resting in cask, this stately beast of a wine has finally been deemed ready to be released into the world. The Aglianico vineyard, planted in 1952, has access to water reserves deep in the ground, allowing it to maintain outstanding freshness even in the hottest years. An enlivening vein of acidity belies its tremendous tannic might, giving it an intensity and balance that will likely allow it to outlive you and me. For drinking now, this black-as-night southern stalwart will complement your heartiest slow-cooked stews and pasta sauces.

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

CHABLIS ET ENVIRONS

by Chris Santini, KLWM BEAUNE

2021 PETIT CHABLIS • ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

The last few years, the Lavantureux brothers have been indulging us with some of the most majestic and decadent Chablis I've ever come across. Here, however, is a casual, playful side of Lavantureux (I picture it being akin to a Michelin-starred pastry chef making simple yet perfect chocolate chip cookies on their day off). This light, bright, citrus-infused, tank-raised Petit Chablis is an ideal sipper for spring and sun.

\$37.00 PER BOTTLE \$399.60 PER CASE

2021 CHABLIS 1^{ER} CRU “VAILLONS” HENRI COSTAL

Henri Costal, a vigneron from Chablis, gifted the Collets—another family of vignerons in Chablis—their first-ever parcel of Vaillons when Henri's daughter married a Collet son in 1952. Several decades later, Henri's great-grandson from that same union, Romain Collet, resurrected Henri's long-defunct label, as seen on this bottle, in homage. It's a timeless label for an old soul of a wine. This creamy, smooth, utterly drinkable, delicious Chablis is for all generations to enjoy.

\$50.00 PER BOTTLE \$540.00 PER CASE

2020 IRANCY “CUVÉE EMELINE” BENOÎT CANTIN

Historically, when the exclusively white-wine-producing vignerons of Chablis needed some *rouge* for their glass, they would conveniently turn to Irancy, the exclusively red-wine-producing region just a few kilometers south. Irancy did its job well; it is known for Pinot Noir with floral, fruity aromatics and slight tannic grip, as some of you may have noticed in our previous releases from Benoît Cantin. This micro-cuvée takes it a step beyond. Emeline is sourced from the domaine's favorite bits of their favorite parcels, co-fermented with a touch of the César grape, and then long-aged in barrel for a deeper, darker Irancy. Until now, Cantin has sold this wine exclusively to their local clients who purchase at the cellar door. We've managed to get a whopping eight cases for the entire USA! Get it if you can.

\$43.00 PER BOTTLE \$464.40 PER CASE

NEW FROM THE LANGUEDOC

INTRODUCING LES EMINADES

by *Anthony Lynch*

FOR PATRICIA AND LUC BETTONI, the journey to becoming proprietors of a domaine in the rural hills of the Saint-Chinian appellation took many years, much resourcefulness, and a bit of serendipity. “We started with nothing—just a lot of courage,” says Luc, who counts no vigneron in his immediate family despite growing up around the vineyards of Madiran, deep in France’s southwest. For Patricia, the path to becoming a vigneronne was just as unlikely. It began when she met Luc at a wine-tasting-themed party put on by enology students while she studied pharmacology in Toulouse. Luc had taken a keen interest in enology after earning a degree in microbiology and interning in an enological laboratory in Madiran. The couple’s chance encounter led Patricia to develop a whole new passion.

Later on, while employed as the enologist for a Languedoc domaine, Luc expressed to Patricia his desire to make his own wine. “It didn’t take much to convince me to embark on this adventure with him,” she recalls warmly. The search for a great terroir where they could put down roots—despite having no savings—ultimately led them to Saint-Chinian, where they were struck by the wild beauty of the landscape and its rich diversity of soils.



© Les Eminades

In 2002, they purchased twelve hectares of vines, primarily in limestone-rich sites where the grapes would retain good acidity levels despite the baking Mediterranean climate. The land was mostly overgrown, and they worked hard to clear it and bring the vineyards up to shape. The young vignerons replanted five hectares at higher density to better shade the fruit and prevent soil evaporation. They gradually added plots over the years, including some very old plantings, seeking out vineyards at higher

elevation where grapes ripen later, to preserve freshness and balance. Patricia and Luc now farm thirty small parcels across three communes. Their soils include quartz- and iron-rich sandstones, rocky alluvial deposits, and various limestones, while exposures range from south-facing—with the sea visible in the distance—to cooler north-facing sites.

The Bettonis' vineyards have never come into contact with herbicides, and Luc abandoned chemical treatments early on because the products made him ill. They obtained organic certification in 2008 and then, realizing their farming nearly qualified as biodynamic, completed that conversion ten years later.

Winemaking at Les Eminades is gentle and straightforward, with the goal of expressing the nuances found within Saint-Chinian's fascinating diversity of terroirs through the lens of traditional Languedocien *cépages* such as Cinsault, Grenache, and Mourvèdre. Fermentations in their small cellar occur spontaneously, and sulfur doses are kept very low to achieve a seductive aromatic and textural quality in the wines. Their distinct cuvées yield a range of expressions of this tremendously undervalued appellation, yet they share a striking purity of fruit, intoxicating aromatics, and suave tannins rarely seen this far south.

The thoughtful vigneron couple that makes up Les Eminades simply has great touch—just what we look for in every one of our selections. The very first shipment of their wines has just arrived, and we are thrilled for you to make their acquaintance.



© Les Eminades

Les Eminades

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2021 SAINT-CHINIAN “LA PIERRE PLANTÉE”.	\$25.00	\$270.00
<i>Equal parts Cinsault, Grenache, and Syrah, aged entirely in concrete. A model of lightness and drinkability for southern reds!</i>		
2021 SAINT-CHINIAN “CEBENNA”.	29.00	313.20
<i>Made from a majority of Grenache and vinified with a good portion of whole clusters. Generous and floral, with fragrant hints of lavender, purple fruit, and brambly garrigue. Exquisitely supple tannins.</i>		
2020 SAINT-CHINIAN “SORTILÈGE”.	36.00	388.80
<i>Mainly Mourvèdre from the domaine’s highest-elevation sites, on a soil of pure limestone. Full of freshness and detailed elegance, with not a hint of rusticity.</i>		



Manni Nössing's vines

© Gail Skoff

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

ALSACE & ALTO ADIGE

by Tom Wolf

LESS THAN AN HOUR from the Italy-Austria border, amid a terrain you might mistake for the setting of *The Sound of Music*, Manni Nössing cultivates a few hectares of white grapes that have historical importance in both countries. Dating back to the nineteenth century in the Valle Isarco, Sylvaner is the valley's leading grape today, having adapted extremely well to the high elevation, cool temperatures, and prime sunlight the steep and terraced vines receive during the long summer days. These conditions also lend themselves well to Riesling, giving the variety a more chiseled and stony expression than you might find from vines planted closer to sea level or in warmer climates. Both Manni's Sylvaner and Riesling bottlings are exquisite, crisp, and zingy expressions of one of Italy's most beautiful mountainous terroirs.

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2021 SÜDTIROL EISACKTALER SYLVANER		
MANNI NÖSSING	\$34.00	\$367.20
2021 SÜDTIROL EISACKTALER RIESLING		
MANNI NÖSSING	34.00	367.20

JUST TWENTY MILES west of the Rhine River, which divides France and Germany, Félix Meyer and Jean Boxler have, for decades, helped put Alsace on the map as its own serious source of world-class Riesling and Sylvaner, as well as half a dozen other grape varieties. Félix's Oolithe cuvée comes from a special oolitic limestone composed of tiny, spherical sediments, which yield an ample and expressive Sylvaner with notes of pear, stones, and jasmine.



Jean's Riesling Réserve, meanwhile, comes solely from the famed Dudenstein section of *grand cru* Sommerberg in the 2020 vintage, which explains how this *blanc* is simultaneously so electric, precise, and majestic, despite Jean foregoing the *grand cru* classification on the label. A mesmerizing spectrum of flavors—honey, Meyer lemon, and peach, to name a few—comes in a gorgeously sculpted frame. This cuvée shows why Jean is among the best Riesling vigneronns not just in France, but anywhere.

	PER BOTTLE	PER CASE
2020 SYLVANER "OOLITHE" • MEYER-FONNÉ.	\$49.00	\$529.20
2020 RIESLING "RÉSERVE" • ALBERT BOXLER	68.00	734.40

LOIRE CABERNET FRANC

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

IF YOU LIKE YOUR RED WINES nervy and spirited, the triangle of villages at the heart of the Loire Valley—Saumur, Bourgueil, and Chinon—may be your wine mecca. We’ve been hooked on this corner of the world for decades, and in large part for the distinctly tangy, exuberant Cabernet Francs from Saumur and Touraine. Neither the climate nor the landscape here is extreme; in fact, both are quite *doux*, as the French would say—“rather gentle.” The maritime air that drifts off the Atlantic deep into the region is balmy, and the hillsides atop which the vineyards grow are marginally steep, if at all. Looking to feel inspired in the kitchen? The local cuisine is light (by French standards!) and therefore perfect for springtime. Think freshwater fish in *beurre blanc* and seasonal vegetables like artichoke, asparagus, and spring peas with mint. It may seem predictable, but the greatest, simplest pairing for any of these chilled reds is a crispy roast chicken with a heaping side of lamb’s lettuce in vinaigrette. The selections below are as food-friendly as French wines come.

2019 BOURGUEIL “VIEILLES VIGNES” DOMAINE DE LACHANTELEUSERIE



This Bourgueil marries the qualities of a juicy Beaujolais with the form and strength of a young Bordeaux. It’s a classical style, but the fun factor is there. Loaded with cassis and cracked white pepper, it will pair with a vibrant and spicy arugula salad, or pork tenderloin with rosemary and prune.

\$26.00 PER BOTTLE

\$280.80 PER CASE

2021 SAUMUR CHAMPIGNY “CUVÉE DOMAINE” THIERRY GERMAIN

One thing that sets apart the more sultry, velvety Saumur Champignys from their counterparts in Bourgueil and Chinon is that the soils contain a bit more of that soft and porous *tuffeau* so typical of the region. I swear you can sense this difference in Thierry Germain’s flawless wines—in particular, his easy-drinking Cuvée Domaine, which is fruit-driven and elegant, silky and irresistible—as if one sip could last forever.



\$34.00 PER BOTTLE

\$367.20 PER CASE

2019 CHINON “CLOS DU CHÊNE VERT” CHARLES JOGUET

Chinons from Joguet are known for their firm minerality, but this one is quite charming as well, with plummy black fruit, myrtle, and notes of warm licorice. A *monopole* parcel with a long potential for aging, the Chêne Vert is a knockout in its youth, brimming with pleasure and immediate reward, but I can only imagine what the future holds in store.

\$75.00 PER BOTTLE

\$810.00 PER CASE

— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

2018 BARBERA DEL MONFERRATO “ROSSO PIETRO” • CANTINE VALPANE

by Tom Wolf

DUE EAST of Turin lies Cantine Valpane, a small family winery focused on traditional Piemontese grapes that too often fly under the radar among wine drinkers this side of the Atlantic—varieties like Freisa, Grignolino, and even a Piemontese favorite, Barbera. One of the stars of the Monferrato, Cantine Valpane’s Pietro Arditì knows that the *terroir* here, which features a relatively warm climate and long hours of sunlight, allows the grapes to ripen completely and unleashes the full personality of the variety. In other words, the Monferrato is ideally suited to Barbera, and the top *vignaioli* of the region dedicate their best bottlings to the grape.



You can taste this in Cantine Valpane’s Rosso Pietro, with its soaring aromatics and flavors of black cherries, herbs, blackcurrant, and earth. This *rosso* is made for pure pleasure—and for pizza/pasta night—and you’ll be amazed by how much refinement and complexity are also on display.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE

\$172.80 PER CASE

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So many wines, too little time. Some of our ultra-classic selections recently arrived. Will they appear in our newsletter eventually? Maybe, maybe not. Here's your heads-up. Now available online and in our retail shop:

PER BOTTLE

NV BRUT 1ER CRU "CACHET OR" • J. LASSALLE	\$44.00
2022 CHEVERNY • DOMAINE DU SALVARD	22.00
2020 EDELZWICKER "RÉSERVE" • ALBERT BOXLER	32.00
2021 MONFERRATO ROSSO • TENUTA LA PERGOLA	17.00
2021 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE "LA SAGESSE" • DOMAINE GRAMENON	48.00

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