

**KERMIT LYNCH
WINE MERCHANT**

1605 SAN PABLO AVE.

BERKELEY, CA 94702-1317

510 • 524-1524

FAX 510 • 528-7026

WWW.KERMITLYNCH.COM

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- **P-A: TEMPIER, DE CHERISEY**

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BACK TO FRANCE

AT THE END OF MAY, I returned to the French wine route to meet the new vintage. So far it looks good just about everywhere. In fact, if ever there was a vintage to turn resistors on to Muscadet's qualities, it is 2009. I selected three or four cuvées from Michel Brégeon and Éric Chevalier that will be arriving soon. In the world of fine dry whites, they represent terrific values.

During my ten-day trip, I was lucky enough to run across some impressive older bottles. The first was near Saumur in the Loire Valley down in one of those troglodyte caverns perfect for wine storage. At the Château de Villeneuve the proprietor ended our tasting with a 1945 Saumur *blanc*, explaining that his grandfather had set aside a good pile of bottles to celebrate the end of World War II. When I saw the wine, it was so deeply golden that I feared it might be oxidized, but no, there wasn't a false note to it. What a great experience. Wine can be miraculous.

And I was lucky again when I checked into the hotel Château Rochecotte near Bourgueil for the night. The grounds and château have been nicely restored, and my room was spacious and elegantly furnished.

However, the restaurant meals I'd been subjected to were making me cranky. When I began going to France in the early seventies, it was hard to find a good restaurant in the U.S. and hard to find a bad one in France. How the tables have turned, so to speak. My wife and I don't have a restaurant near us we can stand during our stays in Provence, even when we simply don't feel like cooking.

While enjoying a home-cooked meal with Pierre and Catherine Breton in Bourgueil, I started venting and was told that, in fact, the majority of French restos today don't cook. Don't cook, folks. They buy frozen meals *sous vide* and heat your orders in hot water or a microwave. That would explain why the meals I'd had reminded me of airline fare.

Then along with Dixon I headed into Burgundy a few days later and had a decent meal at the Pot d'Étain near Avallon. Out in the boonies. Their unbelievable wine list yielded up a couple of treasures. They have a lot of our white Burgundies in several vintages—Roulot, Ente, Coche, and Raveneau, for example. But my eyes landed on a lesser-known white, one I used to import from Jean-Marie Ponsot. We ordered a 1995 Morey Saint-Denis "Monts Luisants" and plunged into the deepest corners of the Burgundian soul. At an extremely reasonable price! It reminded me of the good old days when restaurants in France aged wines. Our red, a 1999 Lavaux Saint-Jacques from Charles Rousseau, was perfection, too.

Then, of all things, the very next evening, dining in Chablis, we found an attractively priced 1964 Chambolle Musigny from Louis Remy. Oh my, forty-five years old and still kicking with, once again, a whole lotta soul.

From there we went to Champagne, where we finally had a lovely series of dishes for lunch. Imagine, three Lassalle women representing three generations

took us to *centre ville* Reims to feed us. And with them, of course, one drinks Champagne Lassalle throughout the meal.

Dixon is friendly with the two brothers who have Champagne Veuve Fourny, and at dinner they pulled out a bottle from his birth year, 1976. It was not sparkling Champagne. It was a still red, Pinot Noir from their village, Vertus, improbably well preserved and delicious. I'd guess the alcohol to be about 10.5%. It was a treat—light, so fine, with a lingering finish that still showed lovely fruit. Anyway, here's my advice so far:

1. Take a picnic or make sure you have a good recommendation before dining out in France.
2. Cellar wine for your own good—nothing liquid can taste so magical as a well-aged red or white, and you don't need to spend much if you'll trust our advice.
3. In the near future, drink all the 2009 Beaujolais you can. It is the most remarkable vintage I can remember tasting—loaded with deliciousness now, and so good you will want to keep enjoying them over several years.



Back in Provence

© Gail Skoff

LOIRE

2009 CHINON ROSÉ • BERNARD BAUDRY

About forty minutes after that glass or two of 1945 Saumur *blanc*, I hit Bernard Baudry's humble hole-in-the-hillside cellar at about eleven a.m. The first wine did not exactly address the question, How do you follow a monumental sixty-five-year-old white wine?

I remember liking the label, then a rosé pouring into my glass, a rosé that looked good swirling around in my glass. A Chinon rosé with delicate red fruits in the perfume—but more than that, it has a dive-down-into-me bouquet. It is so perfectly vinified, so clean, nothing comes between your nose and all that good stuff deep down inside the wine.

And, for my winemaking friends, here is a rosé that completed its malolactic, and I believe that has a lot to do with its depth and generosity.

\$17.50 PER BOTTLE **\$189.00** PER CASE

2009 CHARDONNAY • ÉRIC CHEVALIER

Éric is the fellow who makes our great Fié Gris, by the way.

Here is a Chard that has seen zero oak. All of us know nothing but oaked Chardonnays, so you might be surprised by the flavor of pure Chardonnay. Only on the palate would I have guessed it might be Chardonnay.

I liked it enough to import and recommend it. It has an easy simplicity, a directness. Dry, crisp, fresh as can be—for some reason someone, Éric or I, imagined a slice of country terrine with it, and that seemed to strike a chord.

\$12.95 PER BOTTLE **\$139.86** PER CASE

2009 JASNIÈRES • PASCAL JANVIER

Montlouis, Vouvray, Savennières, Quarts de Chaume, Bonnezeaux, etc., are all made with Pineau de la Loire grapes, which is called Chenin Blanc in the States. That 1945 Saumur was also Chenin Blanc. Perhaps the least-known version, even in France, is from Jasnières. I mean, it is so off the beaten path, up north of the others, on the Loir (not Loire) River.

Surprisingly to me, we enjoy quite a success with Pascal Janvier's lovely Jasnières. It must be the fragrant peach and pear perfume, and the agreeable balance and texture—maybe the low alcohol plays a role? Or are there more and more jaded palates out there, looking for new thrills?

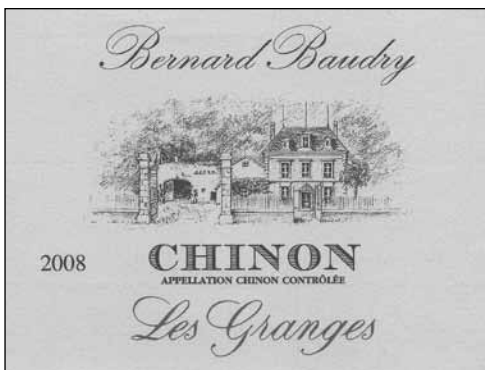
Jasnières makes sweet wines, too, but this one is for meals or apéritifs.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE **\$215.46** PER CASE

2008 CHINON “LES GRANGES”
BERNARD BAUDRY

You'd do well to find yourself a decent chicken to roast and serve with this delicious red. Baudry strikes again! And with a simple white meat preparation like the roasted bird, you will see this wine's qualities most clearly.

The bouquet is wide open and ready to go. And look at this: 11.9% alcohol. Take that, you hundred-point cough syrups! Classic Chinon, classy Cab Franc. The price?



\$18.95 PER BOTTLE

\$204.66 PER CASE

2009 REUILLY BLANC “LES PIERRES PLATES”
DENIS JAMAIN

So I was road and restaurant weary as I neared Sancerre, but Denis Jamain—just a lovely fellow—found a way to make me forget my frustrations. On a perfectly bright, sunny spring day, Denis had lunch set up under the canopy of a large linden tree between his house and his vineyard. Many of you met him at last year's Oyster Bliss, where he served his 2008 Reuilly and dazzled everyone with his wine's affinity for raw oysters, but we didn't start with oysters—no, it was the season for the local specialty, white asparagus. Then a river fish, then a local goat cheese, and of course his local Sauvignon Blanc from a very special site full of decomposed oyster shells like you find at Chablis.

The revelation was the marriage of the little rounds of ash-dusted chèvres with his 2009 Pierres Plates. The marriage can be re-created in the U.S. if you have a good cheese provider. Try to get a chèvre from the Loire. Highly recommended. I had some sent down to my house near Bandol, where I am enjoying them with Jamain's Reuilly and the 2009 Cheverny from Domaine du Salvard. Loire chèvre and Loire Sauvignon Blanc—a neat combo.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE



VALUES OF THE MONTH

THESE ARE GREAT VALUES, each on its own, but a pairing of the two—white before red—adds another dimension.

2009 CHIGNIN • A. & M. QUENARD

Quenard's winery is under his house up in the pre-Alps near Chambéry. Corsica is part of the same mountain chain, but it sticks out of the blue Mediterranean. That is what connects these two wines—the granitic Alps.

The Chignin is minerally, as in gunflint. It also shows a floral quality, like white acacia blossoms, which smell nothing like yellow acacia. White acacia gives a ravishing, enveloping perfume, and there is a suggestion of it here.

The vintage produced a fleshier, flashier Chignin than usual, so you have a combination of bracing and mineral, floral and fleshy.

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE **\$204.66** PER CASE

2007 CALVI ROUGE "E PROVE" DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

Nice deep garnet, and what an aroma. Hard to beat for the buck—a big, beautiful, complex red that reeks of the south and the Île de Beauté, as Corsica is called in France. There is anise, thyme, rosemary, the wildflowers of the *maquis*, animal notes, a discreet touch of oak. It's a blend of barrel, *demi-muid*, and *foudre*, unfiltered. The palate is full, deep, and tannic—a great food wine. The nose of it is really special.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE **\$215.46** PER CASE



© Gail Skoff

Michel Raoust, Domaine Maestracci, with Kermit

SUMMER SAMPLER

by Mark Congero

*Summer afternoon, summer afternoon; to me those have always been
the two most beautiful words in the English language.*—HENRY JAMES

IT DOESN'T MATTER what the activity, I am much happier when the sun is shining and that little red needle is topping 75 degrees. That goes double for cooking, eating, and drinking. Sure, a hearty stew in winter or some fresh asparagus in spring are both lovely, but nothing beats a bottle of rosé, a backyard BBQ, and a few friends on a warm summer evening.

The quality and quantity of the summer harvest is overwhelming, but the food I anticipate most every year is a perfectly sun-ripened tomato. I think I could survive most of the summer with vine-ripe tomatoes, baguettes, good olive oil, sea salt, and LOTS of rosé!

Summer isn't just about food, it's also about having fun. The longer, sun-filled days give us more time to hang out with friends and family. We get to throw fabulous Sunday BBQs that start with cold rosé or dry white and go late into the night with red wine by the coals. Summer—when lazy is not a four-letter word!

With summer at hand, I have put together what I hope you'll agree is a great mix of KLWM wines. In the carton, I'll add some recipes to play with, and a list of some seasonal foods to look for at the market during the summer months.

Bon appétit!

PER BOTTLE

2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROSÉ • DOMAINE DU POUJOL . . .	\$14.95
2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROSÉ "TRADITION" SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE	12.95
2009 BARDOLINO "CHIARETTO" ROSÉ • CORTE GARDONI	12.95
2008 PINOT BIANCO • LA VIARTE	16.00
2008 BOURGOGNE BLANC "CHARDONNAY" • LA CADETTE	17.95
2009 SAUVIGNON BLANC "UNIQUE" • DOMAINE DU SALVARD	14.95
2009 MOSCATO D'ASTI • ELVIO TINTERO	9.95
2008 CÔTE-DE-BROUILLY • NICOLE CHANRION	19.95
2007 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC "MOURVÈDRE" • CH. LA ROQUE	18.00
2008 VIN DE PAYS ROUGE • YVES LECCIA	26.00
2008 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROUGE • CH. DE LASCAUX	16.00
2008 DOLCETTO D'ALBA "VIGNA L'PARI" • GUIDO PORRO	17.50

Normally \$197.15

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$148**

(a 25% discount)

— PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER —

2008 DOMAINE TEMPIER

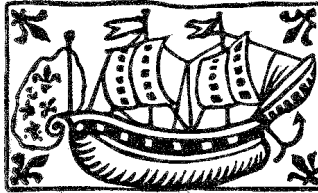
What we call the *cuvée classique* from Tempier is the one labeled Bandol, the least expensive bottling. The 2008 is classic, complete, and ready to serve cooled down a touch.

La Migoua is round and deep with sweet fruit in abundance. La Tourtine is firmer, more structured. It doesn't hurt to uncork them already because they taste great. Cabassau? I'd save it for several years before serving it.

PER CASE

2008 BANDOL "CLASSIQUE" FIFTHS	\$396.00
2008 BANDOL "LA MIGOUA" FIFTHS	597.00
2008 BANDOL "LA TOURTINE" FIFTHS	597.00
2008 BANDOL "CABASSAU"	867.00

Inquire about availability in tenths, magnums, and jeroboams.



2008 DOMAINE DE CHERISEY

As you know, these white Burgundies excite me as much as anything we are importing these days. I have to fight with myself to keep my corkscrew away from them, because I want some aged bottles as I age.

The 2008s remind me of the 2007s. The color might be a bit more golden and there might be a bit more flesh in 2008. Highest recommendation.

PER CASE

2008 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET "HAMEAU DE BLAGNY" IER CRU	\$780.00
2008 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET "LA GARENNE" IER CRU	780.00
2008 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET "LES CHALUMEAUX" IER CRU	780.00
2008 MEURSAULT-BLAGNY "LA GENELOTTE" IER CRU	780.00

*Pre-arrival terms: Half-payment due with order;
balance due upon arrival.*

MORE NEW ARRIVALS

2008 MONTELECCIO • CANTINA SESTI

Sangiovese-colored—in other words, not black. This is Sangiovese in a feminine form. Opera lovers, you may now drink Zerlina. Rounded and with a silky texture, playfulness and seriousness co-exist. And Zerlina is strewing Tuscan herbs in her wake. I can't wait to drink her again.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE **\$237.60** PER CASE

2008 RIESLING • KUENTZ-BAS

Dry, minerally, fine. Those of you who complain about sugary Rieslings, this one's for you.

\$16.00 PER BOTTLE **\$172.80** PER CASE

2008 CÔTE-RÔTIE • DOMAINE FAURY

Get a whiff of this exquisite Côte-Rôtie perfume. It smells delicious! The Syrah of Côte-Rôtie—rarely will you encounter such a lovely version.

\$55.00 PER BOTTLE **\$594.00** PER CASE

2009 CALVI BLANC "E PROVE" DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

I like to open this dry white Vermentino for winemakers who visit me when I'm in France, like to see the shock of recognition when the beauty of the aroma hits their nostrils—first the raise of the eyebrows, then the nod of approval, then the question "What's this?"

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

2008 BEAUMES-DE-VENISE ROUGE DOMAINE DE DURBAN

A big wine that seems light as a feather? A luscious mouthful, at least, and after the feathery part, a tannin kicks in. Yeah, *kicks* in. This red Rhône has wild strawberry in its pretty fruit bouquet and dried thyme as the aftertaste subsides.

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE **\$204.66** PER CASE

2008 RIESLING “KAEFFERKOPF”
MEYER-FONNÉ

Another seeming contradiction—so subtle, yet it stains the palate. This is all *terroir*. The grape variety is beside the point. *WOW*, is the proper tasting note.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE **\$486.00** PER CASE

2008 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC BLANC
“CUVÉE SAINTE AGNÈS”
ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

There is a certain resemblance to the whites of Hermitage, and the vinification was inspired by those great, now expensive rarities. Raised in oak but not oaky, the nose with its ripe white peach perfume is open for business. The palate has freshness and lusciousness and just enough acidity to make it lipsmackingly good.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE **\$237.60** PER CASE

2008 CUVÉE RÉSERVÉE
SAINT MARTIN DE LA GARRIGUE

Deep color and lots of depth to the aroma, too. Imagine red Bordeaux grapes grown in the midst of the Mediterranean *garrigue* and the juice vinified by one of Languedoc’s best winemakers at a vineyard site that goes back centuries. You’ll frustrate yourself if you try to find a Bordeaux this good and characterful at anywhere near the price.

\$14.00 PER BOTTLE **\$151.20** PER CASE



HOW LOW CAN I BE?

IN MID-APRIL I was interviewed by Gary Vaynerchuk on his video blog, Wine Library TV (watch the interview at blog.kermitlynch.com), and I mentioned how important value is when I am selecting wines to import. And that I am value-conscious myself—I’m not the type to spend hundreds of dollars on a young oaky Cabernet or Claret—because with each swallow I would be distracted by the sound of a cash register. I also claimed that French and Italian wines are great values in today’s market and asked viewers to respond to the question “Why do French wines have a reputation for being expensive?”

Viewer JonE posted a reply:

Because.....THEY ARE EXPENSIVE!!!!!! You couldn't buy a bottle of Coche Dury anything for under \$50 bucks! Cherisey \$50+ all day long (even at WL, which has the best prices going). Kermit (living legend and all) is playing the biz game by proposing the idea that french wines in general aren't expensive- lets be real, lets be honest, maybe 1 out of 25 wines in his portfolio is under \$25. The man deals in ultra premium on the whole. I can't fault his wines they're fantastic, from low end Cheverney to his meursaults. But in all truth most of his wines ARE expensive. He can expound on their quality, but to be an ambassador of well made, small production, beautiful he must admit that this quality comes at a price.

> BTW - great shows, thank you.

I replied then to JonE, because he proves a point I like to make—people mistakenly think that French wines are expensive.

Hello JonE, thanks for your comments, but you are so wrong. I am going to count the number of under \$20 and under \$50 wines in my portfolio and write an answer to you in an upcoming brochure (newsletter). You'll be amazed, I hope. Best, Kermit

Now I have had my staff run the figures on wines currently on our sales floor and, since not all my imports are always available, on wines we imported during the past year. The percentages were almost identical. JonE supposed that maybe 4% of my portfolio retails for less than \$25. However, it turns out that about 7% of my selections are under \$15! And 25% are under \$20!! I bust my butt to offer good value, and I think those figures show it.

Here is a list of some current selections.

UNDER \$15

NV VINO BIANCO SECCO "GRANGIA" • ELVIO TINTERO	\$8.00
2009 VAUCLUSE ROUGE • SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH	9.95
2009 MOSCATO D'ASTI • ELVIO TINTERO	9.95
2008 CUVÉE "TRADITION" • SAINT MARTIN	12.00
2008 CORBIÈRES ROUGE • DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE	12.50
2009 VAUCLUSE BLANC • SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH	12.50
2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROSÉ • SAINT MARTIN	12.95
2008 CÔTES DU RHÔNE • SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH	12.95
2009 BARDOLINO "LE FONTANE" • CORTE GARDONI	12.95
2009 BIANCO DI CUSTOZA • CORTE GARDONI	12.95
2009 BARDOLINO "CHIARETTO" ROSÉ • CORTE GARDONI	12.95
2008 VIN DE PAYS • CHÂTEAU FONTANÈS	12.95
2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROSÉ • MAS CHAMPART	13.95

2009 CORBIÈRES GRIS DE GRIS ROSÉ • DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE	\$13.95
NV PROSECCO • SOMMARIVA	13.95
2008 ALSACE BLANC • KUENTZ-BAS	13.95
2008 CAHORS • CLOS LA COUTALE	14.95
2008 BORDEAUX BLANC • CHÂTEAU DUCASSE	14.95
2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROSÉ • DOMAINE DU POUJOL	14.95
2009 PINOT NOIR “UNIQUE” • DOMAINE DU SALVARD	14.95
2009 SAUVIGNON BLANC “UNIQUE” • DOMAINE DU SALVARD	14.95
2008 MUSCADET • ANDRÉ BRÉGEON	14.95
2009 RAISINS GAULOIS • MARCEL LAPIERRE	14.95
2009 BEAUJOLAIS • DOMAINE DUPEUBLE	14.95

\$15–\$20

2008 VIN DE PAYS D’OC ROUGE • MAS CHAMPART	16.00
2008 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC ROUGE • CHÂTEAU DE LASCAUX	16.00
2008 PIC SAINT LOUP ROUGE • ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP	16.00
2009 PICPOUL DE PINET BLANC • SAINT MARTIN	16.00
2008 LE PIGEOULET ROUGE • VIGNOBLES BRUNIER	16.00
2008 BOURGUEIL “CUVÉE ALOUETTES” • CHANTELEUSERIE	16.00
2009 CHEVERNY • DOMAINE DU SALVARD	16.00
2008 PINOT GRIGIO • LA VIARTE	16.00
2008 PINOT BIANCO • LA VIARTE	16.00
2009 VIN DE SAVOIE “LES ABYMES” • A. ET M. QUENARD	16.00
2009 COTEAUX DU LOIR BLANC • PASCAL JANVIER	16.00
2008 PIC SAINT LOUP ROUGE • CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE	16.95
2008 PINOT BLANC • KUENTZ-BAS	16.95
2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC BLANC • CHÂTEAU DE LASCAUX	17.50
2008 BRONZINELLE • SAINT MARTIN	17.50
2009 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC BLANC • CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE	17.50
2009 TAVEL • CHÂTEAU DE TRINQUEVEDEL	17.50
2008 DOLCETTO D’ALBA “VIGNA L’PARI” • GUIDO PORRO	17.50
2008 BOURGOGNE BLANC “CHARDONNAY” • LA CADETTE	17.95

*There are more wines to list, but not enough space.
Go to kermitylynch.com to view more wines at \$20 and under.*

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT—TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All wines purchased from Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant are deemed sold in California and title passes to the buyer in California. We make no representation relative to the customer’s right to import wine into his/her state. In placing an order, the customer represents to Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant that he/she is at least 21 years of age and the person to whom delivery will be made is at least 21 years old.