

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

OCTOBER 2023



Cédric Chignard of Fleurie, Beaujolais

© Gail Skoff

A TRAVEL GUIDE TO LE MARCHE

PIEMONTE FORAGER'S SAMPLER • VALUES OF THE MONTH
CRU BEAUJOLAIS • CLOS CANARELLI SPOTLIGHT

PIEMONTE FORAGER'S SAMPLER

by Madison Brown

I'VE LOVED FORAGING since I was a kid. I have fond memories of snacking on freshly dug yampa roots in the high desert mountains and of crisp mornings picking wild plums, frosty leaves crunching underfoot. Just this week, walks with my dog have yielded handfuls of blackberries, and soon patches of golden chanterelles will awaken here in my neck of the redwoods.

The rich, rolling hills of Piemonte are a forager's paradise. In my daydreams of an idyllic life abroad, I spend mornings combing through damp leaves of centuries-old chestnut forests seeking giant porcini or the elusive *tartufo bianco* (white truffle). My table brims with baskets of wild greens and herbs to accompany an indulgent diet of pastas, cheese, and cured meats. *Ahh, la bella vita!*

There's something exuberantly abundant about Piemonte, an enchanting quality mirrored in the wines. Giulia Negri's Barolo "La Tartufaia," an earthy, sensorial opus, is named after a truffle forest beside the vineyard. Bèrto's vermouth is an infusion of herbs and spices, crafted according to a secret family recipe. A juicy blend of indigenous varieties, Tenuta La Pergola's Monferrato Rosso tastes like brambly berries with notes of rosemary and wild mint. This sampler is a gateway to the delights of Piemontese bounty: a dozen daydream-rousing bottles to pair with seasonally inspired dishes like mushroom ragu or herb-crusted roasts.

PER BOTTLE

2022 MOSCATO D'ASTI "SORÌ GRAMELLA" • ELVIO TINTERO	\$14.00
2022 ROERO ARNEIS • TENUTA LA PERGOLA	18.00
"ROSS DA TRAVAJ" VERMOUTH • BÈRTO	21.00
2021 LANGHE NEBBIOLO • ELVIO TINTERO	16.00
2021 MONFERRATO ROSSO • TENUTA LA PERGOLA	17.00
2021 DOLCETTO D'ALBA "LA COSTA" • PIERO BENEVELLI	21.00
2021 DOLCETTO DI DIANO D'ALBA "SÖRÌ SANTA LUCIA"	
IL PALAZZOTTO	23.00
2015 BARBERA DEL MONFERRATO SUPERIORE "PERLYDIA"	
CANTINE VALPANE	25.00
2020 BARBERA D'ALBA SUPERIORE • A.&G. FANTINO	26.00
2021 LANGHE NEBBIOLO "CAMILU" • GUIDO PORRO	34.00
2019 BARBARESCO "VICENZIANA" • SILVIO GIAMELLO	45.00
2018 BAROLO "LA TARTUFAIA" • GIULIA NEGRI	73.00

Normally \$333

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$266**

(a 20% discount)



Truffle hunting in Piemonte

© Gail Skoff

AGE-WORTHY FRENCH WHITES

by Dixon Brooke

2020 SAUMUR BLANC “L’ÉCHELIER” THIERRY GERMAIN

This walled-in “clos” in the village of Dampierre-sur-Loire on the southern bank of the Loire River may have been Thierry Germain’s most exciting acquisition, strong praise for a domaine whose parcels read like a who’s who of the appellations of Saumur and Saumur-Champigny. They produce a red and a white from this vineyard that both exhibit exquisite balance and tastefulness. This dry Chenin Blanc is etched from the white limestone beneath—crystalline, pure, and chiseled.

\$97.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,047.60 PER CASE

2020 RULLY 1^{ER} CRU BLANC “RABOURCÉ” DOMAINE DE VILLAINÉ

The expansion of the De Villaine family deep into Rully territory, with two acquisitions in 2015 and 2017 of exclusively *premier cru* vineyards of both colors, has been one of the most important developments in the domaine’s history. We watched and waited with great anticipation as the domaine did all the important work necessary to get to the point where they could proudly release wines such as this one: old-vine Chardonnay from one of the top terroirs of the Côte Chalonnaise, worked organically by their talented vineyard crew, patiently aged to perfection in cask, and bottled with the utmost care. The domaine has overachieved with village-level Burgundy for decades. Now we get to see them do it with *premier cru* vineyards!

\$132.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,425.60 PER CASE

2020 PINOT GRIS GRAND CRU “BRAND” ALBERT BOXLER

Boxler proves convincingly that Pinot Gris deserves a place in your cellar alongside your outstanding bottles of Burgundian Chardonnay. None more so than his bottling from the famed Turckheim *grand cru* of Brand, where steep southern exposure on granite allows the vines to deliver grapes with the perfect balance of rich, smoky depth and hot stone minerality, built to age, with sublime aromas, textures, and flavors. On a recent trip to London with Kermit, our wine list find of the weekend was a bottle from vintage 2014 with exquisite Indian cuisine.

\$92.00 PER BOTTLE

\$993.60 PER CASE

CRU BEAUJOLAIS

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

2021 FLEURIE “LES MORIERS” CÉDRIC CHIGNARD

“Les Moriers” is an exceptional vineyard in the *cru* of Fleurie; not only is it steep and stony, with a granite core, but a portion of it reaches into Moulin-à-Vent, a *cru* known for its structural depth and Rhône-like aromatics. Fleurie, by contrast, is thought to be more delicate, pretty and floral, as its name suggests. In Chignard’s “Les Moriers” we have elements of both *crus* coming together as one, resulting in a harmonious balance of heft and gravitas, laced with violet and a fresh-cut, blossoming bouquet. If there were only one Beaujolais to call “versatile,” this would be it.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE

\$313.20 PER CASE

2021 BROUILLY “REVERDON” CHÂTEAU THIVIN

During vinification, instead of punchdowns and pumpovers, the Geoffray family favors a unique low-intervention method called *grillage*: a *grille*, or wooden grate, is used to keep the grape skins, seeds, and stems submerged during fermentation. Grapes remain whole for longer, allowing the pure, fruit-forward qualities of their organically grown Gamay to prevail. The 2021 vintage proved an elegant one for Thivin’s Brouilly, with all the suppleness and tonicity you’d expect from this storied estate. The purity of fruit and mineral precision, even in a challenging vintage like 2021, is an unmatched testament to their mastery.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE

2021 CHIROUBLES “CUVÉE LÉA” • GUY BRETON

In 2017, with Guy Breton’s first bottling of Chiroubles, he introduced us to a new *cru* from the region among his already diverse and illustrious repertoire. With each passing year, his Chiroubles continues to stand out. The 2021 vintage is the most transparent I’ve seen, rosy and sheer, both peppery and bright on the palate. Named “Cuvée Léa” after his granddaughter, it hails from a higher-altitude parcel with seventy-year-old vines that are naturally low-yielding. Breton prefers long, cold macerations for his organic grapes, and the results are both stylish and genre-defining. In the natural wine world of “ethereal” Gamays, this one is flawless and buoyant, yet intensely perfumed.

\$46.00 PER BOTTLE

\$496.80 PER CASE

A TRAVEL GUIDE TO LE MARCHE

by Anthony Lynch

FOR YOUR NEXT Italian vacation, forget the usual suspects. Leave the strikingly rugged coastline of Amalfi, the azure beaches of Sicily and Sardinia, and the storied ruins of Rome for another time. Instead, I recommend a place you may not even know exists.

When I rave about Le Marche (*lay mar-kay*), I'm more often than not met with a blank stare. But if gorgeous, unspoiled landscapes descending from the mountains to the sea, charming villages with more locals than tourists, a delectable local cuisine, and a burgeoning wine scene sound like something you might enjoy, then read on.

Getting to Le Marche is not easy, and that's probably why you'll find respite from the swarms of tourists who flock to more popular destinations. Situated about halfway down the boot, Le Marche is Tuscany's Adriatic counterpart, featuring 110 miles of sprawling coastline that rises inland toward Italy's mountainous backbone: the Apennines. Your best bet is to fly into Bologna. Lay over for an evening to enjoy thinly sliced mortadella and cool, frothy Lambrusco, and then you are just a two-hour drive to the coastal town of Senigallia—our home base in Le Marche.

Once in Senigallia, your first order of business is to stock up on wine. Galli is the best *enoteca* in town—and perhaps in Italy—and you'll find plenty of familiar labels, including Quintarelli, Giulia Negri, and even French treasures like Robert-Dezogent and mature Lapierre Morgon. The affable owner, Guido Galli, will be more than happy to show off local specialties, and when you're in Le Marche, that means Verdicchio.

Among Italy's great white grapes, Verdicchio can make everything from seaside quaffers to textured, age-worthy collectibles. Picture the herbal and floral aromatics of Vermentino with a Riesling-like acidity, and you have an idea. Sprinkle in some Muscadet and white Burgundy: now you can imagine the complete range of what this grape can do.

At this point, it's time for an *aperitivo*, and La Marca di San Michele's NumerOcinque, a sophisticated bottle-refermented Verdicchio still resting on its lees, is just the ticket. With sloping limestone vineyards amid Le Marche's lush rolling hills, this young estate is spearheading a dynamic movement that is now in full swing, creating single-vineyard wines via responsible farming, spontaneous fermentations, and long lees aging. Next, uncork La Marca's flagship whites: the bracingly crisp, stony Capovolto and the luscious and creamy, cask-aged Passolento, which has the depth and class of many a much more prestigious (and expensive) wine. Don't forget the red: Bastian Contrario is their charmingly rustic Montepulciano, perfect for serving chilled with grilled *salsiccia*, locally made prosciutto, or rabbit porchetta.

If Verdicchio is now enjoying a revival, it can thank eclectic visionary Stefano Antonucci for setting the wheels in motion thirty years ago. A banker by trade, Antonucci left his desk job to reinvest in the vineyards surrounding his hometown of Barbara, a half-hour's drive inland of Senigallia. His success in crafting delicious wines at unthinkable low prices paved the way for ambitious newcomers like La Marca, and we are proud to offer some of his wines in these pages. His Colleleva Verdicchio is an Adriatic dream: lean and brisk on the palate, with trademark aromas of pine nut and lime zest, plus a sizzling saline finish. His reds are just as convivial and thirst-quenching—don't miss the rare, lavender-scented Lacrima di Morro d'Alba, or the bold and juicy Rosso Piceno.

Senigallia is awash with great restaurants, and Pagaia should be your first stop for lunch. A bustling locale specializing in fresh seafood, it offers up pristine *crudo* platters, perfectly *al dente* pastas with the *frutti di mare* of your choice, and the day's catch cooked up any which way. The wine list features countless local selections, including Verdicchios from La Marca and Colleleva.

After a restorative nap and espresso, a leisurely stroll through Senigallia's cobblestone avenues, expansive piazzas, and narrow alleyways will get you to Sepia, where you've booked dinner. Niko, the chef, is a Sicilian transplant who has found a new place to share his art. His medium is fish, and on my visit he served a veritable masterpiece of handmade *busiate* with a tuna, caper, and wild fennel ragù. Despite a fine selection of Verdicchios, Niko will likely opt to pour you something from Sicily, and he won't steer you wrong.

Finally, you must pay a visit to Paolo Brunelli, Senigallia's resident gelato maestro. Like me, you will fall in love with Le Marche when you taste the world-class seafood and wine. But when you indulge in Brunelli's award-winning artisanal gelato, you can truly say your love has been consummated.

LA MARCA DI SAN MICHELE

PER BOTTLE

2020 SPUMANTE DOSAGGIO ZERO COL FONDO "NUMERO CINQUE"	\$45.00
2021 VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JESI "CAPOVOLTO"	38.00
2019 VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JESI RISERVA "PASSOLENTO"	36.00
2019 MARCHE ROSSO "BASTIAN CONTRARIO"	29.00

COLLELEVA

2021 VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JESI	16.00
2021 LACRIMA DI MORRO D'ALBA	25.00
2022 ROSSO PICENO	17.00

Now through October 29, take 20% off selections from Le Marche.
Visit our Berkeley shop or shop.kermitlynch.com/marche
and use coupon code **MARCHE20** at checkout.

MEDITERRANEAN GRENACHE

by Dixon Brooke

2019 TERRE SICILIANE GRENACHE “VIGNA DEGLI ARCHITETTI” • GROTTAFUMATA

Whoever planted these old Grenache vines on one of Mount Etna’s lava fields made a masterful decision, matching grape, altitude, and soil. Mauro Cutuli of Grottafumata had the good judgment to recognize this when he went looking for vineyards to add to his small collection of top Etna terroirs. The resulting wine delivers the haunting perfume and silky fruit of the best Grenache along with luscious tannins and the unmistakable stamp of the Etna volcano—a brilliant take on this incredible grape!

\$62.00 PER BOTTLE

\$669.60 PER CASE

2019 CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA “RISERVA FRANZISCA” • GIOVANNI MONTISCI

This is another high-altitude master class from one of the other famous islands of the Med, rugged Sardinia. Montisci farms the inland highlands of the island around the town of Mamoiada, in decomposed granite. The wines he ekes from this special terroir do particular justice to the local Cannonau, genetically a close relation to Grenache. Sporting rich primary fruit, an intense granitic backbone, and tannins already mellowing from extended large cask aging, this monument to Sardinian viticulture delivers impressive power and authenticity and promises a long life in your cellar.

\$128.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,382.40 PER CASE

2021 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE “LA SAGESSE” DOMAINE GRAMENON

Domaine Gramenon is in the Drôme Provençale, the southern portion of this beautiful French *département* that transitions us from the northern to the southern Rhône. Lavender fields and olive groves share the landscape with its vineyards. Some of the best Grenache in southern France has been produced here for decades, under the direction of Michèle Aubéry-Laurent and more recently her son, Maxime-François Laurent. This pearl of their production is from a selection of some of their oldest and “wisest” vines. Purity, depth, and vibrant fruit are the signature of this exceptional wine, which can be enjoyed young, old, and in between.

\$48.00 PER BOTTLE

\$518.40 PER CASE

VALUES OF THE MONTH

by Tom Wolf

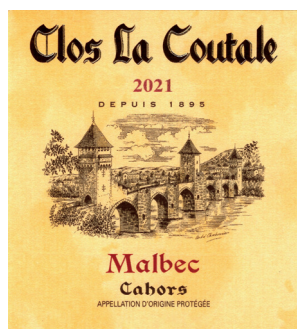
2022 BOURGUEIL ROSÉ DOMAINE DE LACHANTELEUSERIE

Our love of Loire Valley rosé and our relationship with the Boucard family of Domaine de la Chanteleuserie go back almost to our founding, but it wasn't until more recently that these two loves found each other. For decades, the Boucards have sent us some of the Loire's most joyous and over-delivering reds made from Cabernet Franc, but now the family also produces an elegant and charming rosé from the region's great red grape. The first thing you'll notice is how enchanting the wine's floral aromas are. As you take a sip, though, the flowers fade and are replaced with elegant notes of strawberry, herbs, and a final, bracing wave of citrus zest. This rosé offers a beautiful accompaniment not only to the last of summer's produce but also to the roasted brussels sprouts and spicy fried chicken I'll be making for months to come.



\$19.00 PER BOTTLE **\$205.20** PER CASE

2021 CAHORS • CLOS LA COUTALE



If you are as eager as I am to enter the season of stews, roasts, and game, you cannot go wrong with Clos La Coutale's earthy and spicy Cahors as your new go-to *rouge*. Originating halfway between Bordeaux and Montpellier, this blend of mostly Malbec and a splash of Merlot has both the class and rusticity to make a pot that's been braising for hours on your stove feel at once comforting and refined. The notes of plum, brambly fruit, and leather sing alongside a cassoulet or duck confit. If nearby Bordeaux, where Coutale's Philippe Bernède sources the *grand cru* barrels for this

bottling, is the polished and urbane one in the family, Cahors is the sneakily sophisticated but humbler country cousin, loaded with personality you'll enjoy getting to know.

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

PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

Clos Canarelli

by Chris Santini, KLWM BEAUNE

PERHAPS MORE THAN any other region in France, Corsican wine has evolved and changed at breakneck speed these last few decades. While other regions have seen their share of small shifts and changes, fifty years ago the spirit and essence of the wines of Burgundy, Bordeaux, the Loire, or the Rhône, for example, were similar to today. In that same period in Corsica, however, wine production first faced extinction and then suffered a misguided thrust toward nondescript and inexpensive table wines, until a small group of brave and dedicated pioneers painstakingly built from scratch what today has surpassed any level of quality the island has ever experienced before. The top domaines of Corsica now inspire awe around the world and are universally recognized for their uniqueness, soulfulness, and exceptional quality. What a long way to have come in such a short time! The pioneers responsible can be counted on a single hand, and our man in southern Corsica, Yves Canarelli, is most certainly one. Canarelli has brought a revival to Figari and neighboring Bonifacio, encouraging biodiversity in his vines on dry and difficult terrain, reintroducing forgotten grapes and techniques, all while sharing skills and being a source of tutelage and guidance to the next generation arriving in the region.

PER BOTTLE PER CASE

2021 CORSE FIGARI ROSÉ \$49.00 \$529.20

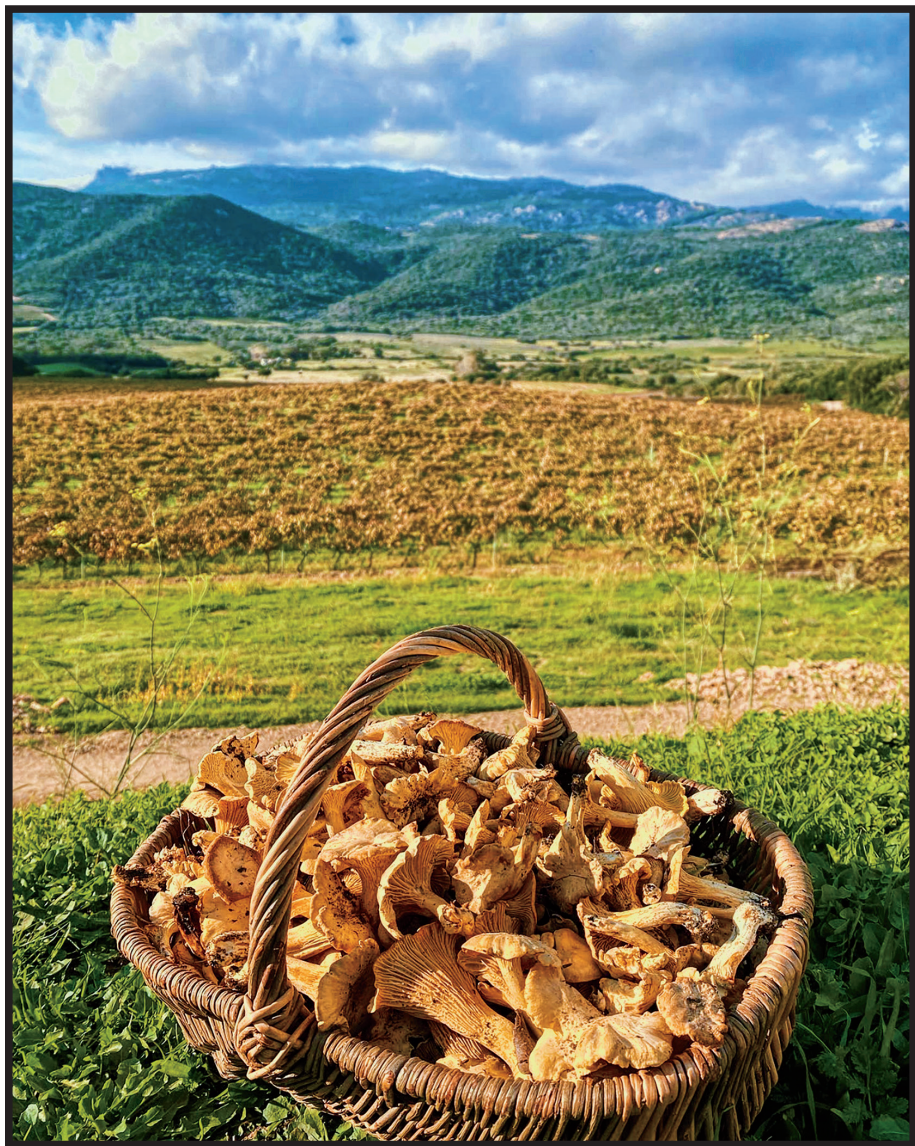
An eyebrow-raiser of a wine, with subtle fruit and a sea-salt breezy finish. One of the wines from Canarelli's original line-up, which put him on the map long ago.

2022 BONIFACIO BLANC "TARRA DI SOGNO" 104.00 1,123.20

The leading wine guide in France recently declared this to be the "first grand cru of Corsica, reigning without rival." Enough said!

2021 CORSE FIGARI ROUGE "AMPHORA" 98.00 1,058.40

A revival of ancient Roman technique, and a symbiosis and maceration of crushed grapes in beeswax-lined cooked clay. Pure, silken, herbal, and delicious.



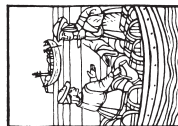
Autumn in Figari

© Clos Canarelli

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I WAS IMPORTING Beaujolais from a *négociant* firm near Mâcon and meanwhile searching for growers who bottled their own Beaujolais. There weren't many back then. But I kept hearing about a vineyard with legendary status for its combination of aspects from Fleurie and Moulin-à-Vent. A flowery wine with depth and structure—Fleurie “Les Moriers.” And there, right at the top of this famous piece of earth, famous at least in the Beaujolais region, stood the house of Michel Chignard, and below the modest home, his winery. And in his winery, exceptional wines.

—Kermit, on his discovery of Michel Chignard, our longest-standing continuous import from Beaujolais. Michel's son, Cédric, is featured on this month's cover.

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