

December 2019

KLWM

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## 2017 RIESLING KUENTZ-BAS

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**I**ntroducing this bottling to readers in our December 1997 newsletter, Kermit wrote, “If you have a soft spot for dry, steely Riesling, you won’t find one more typical, and at such a painless price.” The twenty-two years since then have witnessed a few transitions at Kuentz-Bas, and yet that claim is as true today as ever. Olivier Raffin took over the helm in 2017, and in his first vintage, he has produced a white wine that is pure and *typique* of Alsatian Riesling, perhaps the noblest of the region’s four “noble” grape varieties (the other three being Muscat, Pinot Gris, and Gewurztraminer). This dry and mineral *blanc* carries notes of orchard fruit, chamomile, and honey. The warmth of the vintage, combined with the domaine’s practice of completing malolactic fermentation, created a white wine that has generous body while retaining great acidity and freshness. This is textbook Alsatian Riesling, a standard that is as essential at Kuentz-Bas now as it was when we started importing their wines more than two decades ago. —TOM WOLF



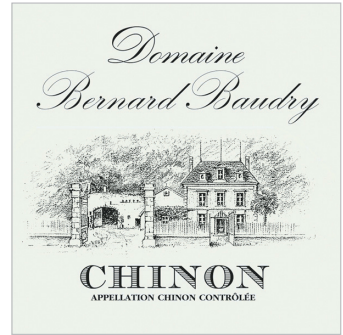
**\$14.95** per bottle      **\$161.46** per case



*Husseren-les-Châteaux*

## 2017 CHINON BERNARD BAUDRY

**ne producer** who is largely responsible for Chinon's notoriety is Bernard Baudry, and his son Matthieu, who now manages the domaine. The Baudrys farm vineyards scattered across Chinon, from parcels that sit on clay-and-limestone slopes to those nestled along a gravel-and-sand riverbank. They accordingly produce many unique styles of wine even though they all fall within the appellation of Chinon. This cuvée comes from their highest vineyard, which rests on a plateau of gravel, sand, and limestone, and it is arguably their best entry point into the charm of Loire Valley Cabernet Franc, lithe and less dense than the bottlings from their clay-and-limestone *terroirs*. Spontaneous fermentation and unfiltered bottling lead to a delicate, peppery wine with notes of blackberries, currants, and leather. Matthieu Baudry says the reds of Chinon are best enjoyed with food, and this particular bottling is versatile enough to accompany a wide range of *plats*, from lentil soup to charcuterie to roast chicken. —TOM WOLF



**\$27.00** *per bottle*      **\$291.60** *per case*

					
2017 Riesling <i>Kuentz-Bas</i>	Riesling	25- to 45-year-old vines Loess, silt, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F Do not decant	Orchard fruit, chamomile, honey Pure, <i>typique</i> , fresh	Drink now
2017 Chinon <i>Bernard Baudry</i>	Cabernet Franc	30- to 35-year-old vines Sand, limestone, gravel plateau	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant optional	Blackberries, currants, leather Lithe, peppery, delicate	Drink now through 2025

## KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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## CREAMY, CHEESY POTATO GRATIN

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

*Few dishes are as wonderful as a well-made potato gratin. Serve it with almost any type of meat, though it goes especially well (and is perhaps mandatory) with roast beef. It's superb with roast chicken or roast lamb leg, but somehow, for me, it's just not right with roast pork. I'm not sure why. Potato gratin has many delicious variations: sautéed chanterelles nestled between the layers; black truffles sliced into each layer (use less cheese); alternated with caramelized onions, an ancient style. Serve the gratin with a butter lettuce salad speckled with chives and a glass of Riesling from Kuentz-Bas for a simple winter lunch.*

1¾ tablespoons unsalted butter  
2½ pounds potatoes: Yukon Gold, German  
Butterball, or Yellow Finn  
6½ ounces heavy cream  
1 teaspoon sea salt

1 nutmeg for grating (you'll use  
about ¼ teaspoon in total)  
1½ ounces grated Gruyère or Comté  
cheese (about 2 cups)

Butter very well a 6-cup casserole, soufflé dish, cazuela, or other baking dish. Peel potatoes and slice ⅛ inch thick on the flat side on a mandoline or other slicer. Discard the last tips of each potato that can't be sliced further. Drizzle a layer of cream on the bottom of the dish. Place a layer of overlapping potatoes on the bottom of the dish in even, regular rows, from one side to the other. Be sure to lay slices all the way to the edges of the casserole and into the corners. Do not leave any spaces between slices; the bottom should not show through. Drizzle potatoes evenly and completely with cream and sprinkle lightly with salt. Grate a sparse, fine dusting of nutmeg on potatoes. Sprinkle a light layer of cheese evenly on top of potatoes. Place another layer of potatoes in the same manner, pressing down gently to even out the layer. Repeat the process with each layer until potatoes are used up. Save perfect slices for the top layer. Pour cream around the edge of the gratin to fill all spaces. Cream should come just to the top of potatoes. Finish top with cream and cheese. Dot top with remaining butter. Cover potatoes with parchment paper and cover tightly with foil. Place dish on a baking sheet lined with foil to catch any overflow. Bake at 350° F for 1 hour 20 minutes. Remove foil and parchment and bake at 390° F for 30 more minutes or until top is nicely browned. Rotate the pan 180° in the oven after 10–12 minutes. Gratin is done when it can be easily pierced with the tip of a knife and cream is thick and saucy. Rest gratin for 12 minutes before serving.

*Makes 6 servings*