

ADVENTURES

February
2020



2018 CHIGNIN-BERGERON “LES ROCHES BLANCHES” ANDRÉ & MICHEL QUENARD

When you think of Roussanne, the Rhône Valley’s white-wine blends might come to mind first, but this *blanc* from Savoie—where the grape is called Bergeron—could change that. Throughout much of the nineteenth century, Bergeron enjoyed an exalted status in the Savoie. Then, around the turn of the century, phylloxera decimated the region’s vines,









leaving Bergeron to languish in relative obscurity until the 1970s, when André Quenard played a significant role in its resurrection. As Wink Lorch writes in her benchmark book, *Wines of the French Alps*, André “is remembered as one of those who fought for Chignin Bergeron to be the quality standard-bearer for Savoie, designated as a specific cru.” The Quenards farm the grapes for this bottling on near-vertical, white, limestone scree slopes—the best *terroir* for Bergeron, they argue, because of its drainage and sun exposure, allowing the grapes to fully ripen. Even though the grapes achieve full ripeness, Les Roches Blanches is racier than many of its regal, fuller-bodied Rhône cousins largely because Chignin offers a cooler, alpine climate. This medium-bodied white evokes peaches, honey, and pine resin. Perfect for winter nights and dishes like Chris Lee’s hearty, Savoie-inspired fish chowder, it is mouthwatering and refreshing on its own, too.

—TOM WOLF

\$32.00 per bottle

\$345.60 per case

					
2018 Chignin-Bergeron “Les Roches Blanches” <i>André & Michel Quenard</i>	Bergeron	20- to 80-year-old vines Steep limestone scree slopes	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F Decant optional	Peach, honey, pine resin Racy, voluptuous, textured	Drink now through 2025
2018 Corbières Rouge <i>Domaine de Font Sainte</i>	60% Carignan, 30% Grenache, 10% Syrah	Carignan: planted 1950, Grenache: 1986, Syrah: 1991 Silica, clay, limestone (gravelly, with large <i>galets roulés</i>)	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant optional	Blackberries, black cherries, <i>garrigue</i> Chewy, savory, complete	Drink now through 2025

2018 CORBIÈRES ROUGE DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

Domaine de Fontsaïnte is seemingly impervious to Mother Nature's whims. Heavy rains battered southern France during the spring of 2018, creating perfect conditions for one of wine's fiercest villains—mildew—and this vintage could have ended catastrophically for Bruno Laboucarié in Corbières. Indeed, he says that his young shoots and buds were threatened from spring through much of the summer. And yet, tasting his 2018 Corbières *rouge*—as delicious as ever—you would think conditions had been excellent from start to finish. How did Bruno achieve such a magical feat? To start, the excellent *terroir* at Domaine de Fontsaïnte allowed him to avoid most problems with the rain, with the vineyard's slight elevation and southeast exposure that provided as much sun as possible to the wet soil



and vulnerable vines. Expert vineyard management also proved crucial; Bruno's decision not to till the soils prevented additional mildew pressure from the moisture released by this process. The resulting 2018 Corbières *rouge* is as complete and consistent as ever, with notes of black cherries, blackberries, and *garrigue*. This wine is a meal unto itself, but it will pair beautifully with a wide range of grilled meats and vegetables.

—TOM WOLF

\$16.00 per bottle \$172.80 per case



LEFT *Bruno Laboucarié*

COVER *The view from the Quenards' vines.*
© Peter Hunken

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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SAVOYARD FISH CHOWDER WITH CHANTERELLES, CABBAGE, AND POTATOES

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

The French Alpine countryside has a rich larder that defines the local palate. Potatoes, cabbage, wild mushrooms, superb dairy, mountain fish, smoked meats—all are important parts of the region's cuisine. In Savoie, a cook would serve wild trout—sadly, not in our markets here. Instead, try steelhead fillets, available locally, or delicate ocean flatfish. This dish is sweetened by tender Savoy cabbage, butter, and crème fraîche, which echo the lusciousness of the wine and create an exquisite pairing with Quenard's Bergeron. If you're lucky enough to have a black truffle about, slice it into the sauce for an incredible delight.

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| 1¼ pounds boneless fillets of local steelhead* | 2 cups Savoy cabbage, cut
in 2-inch-square pieces |
| 2 teaspoons sea salt | 2 tablespoons unsalted butter |
| ½ pound chanterelles or hedgehog mushrooms | 2 ounces white wine |
| ½ pound creamer potatoes—Yellow Finn,
Yukon Gold, or German Butterball—
each about 1½–2 inches in diameter | 6 tablespoons crème fraîche |
| 1 leek, white part only, diced and rinsed in
cold water (about ¼ cup) | 2 tablespoons chives,
finely chopped |
| | Black pepper, freshly ground |

Cut fillets into 1-inch-wide pieces, saving any odd-shaped bits. Season fillets with ½ teaspoon salt and set aside. Place trimmings in a small saucepan with 1 cup water. Clean chanterelles with a small brush and trim off any wet edges and tips of stems. Add mushroom trimmings to fish scraps and set to simmer. Reduce broth to 4 ounces and strain. Discard scraps. Cut chanterelles into 1-inch-wide strips and set aside. Simmer creamer potatoes on low heat in 3 cups water with ½ teaspoon salt until soft and potatoes can be easily pierced with a knife, about 25 minutes. While potatoes are still warm, peel potatoes and discard skins. Slice potatoes into ¼-inch-thick slices and set aside. Split leeks lengthwise, then slice on the bias into ½-inch-thick pieces. Rinse cabbage in cold water, drain, and set aside. Sauté chanterelles, leeks, and cabbage over low heat in a covered shallow saucepan in 2 tablespoons butter until chanterelles begin to soften, about 2 minutes. Season with 1 teaspoon salt, and then add fish broth, white wine, crème fraîche, potatoes, and fish. Cover and simmer for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cover and simmer for 4–5 minutes, stirring gently, until fish is cooked and sauce is reduced. Adjust salt

* If steelhead is hard to find, sole, sand dabs, flounder, or other delicate ocean flatfish

if needed. Serve in warm bowls, sprinkle with chives, and grind black pepper over the top.

Serves 6 as appetizer or 3–4 as main dish