
RACLETTE

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

Raclette is a semi-hard cow's milk cheese of medieval origin from the Swiss canton of Valais. It began as a cheese handy to shepherds, who melted it before an open fire and then scraped it onto bread or potatoes while tending their flocks in the cold of a mountain winter. These days, the dish is served more often as a collection of disparate ingredients onto which molten cheese is drizzled. Still, it remains a mountain dish. A heating device, often a lamp or grill designed for the purpose, is used to melt the cheese (you can melt the cheese in an oven or on the stovetop). A Raclette dinner is brilliantly balanced, with vinegary pickles offsetting the rich cheese. Some cooks like to include an array of vegetables, either grilled or roasted, as the accompaniments to Raclette. I find an earthier presentation appealing: French cornichons; pickled onions and little carrots; pickled button mushrooms; cured meats. I prefer roasted potatoes to boiled ones, in imitation of the shepherds' mountain fire. If you can't find Raclette, substitute Gruyère, Comté, or Gouda. A choice of meats could be Italian speck or bresaola, jambon de Bayonne, bündnerfleisch, or a simple pork salami. Slivered raw scallions or spring onions are a terrific foil. Rustic bread is nice. And my choice of wine would be the beautiful, bright Chignin Gamay from Quenard.

1½ pounds creamer or other
small potatoes, roasted in
coals or in the oven, wrapped
in 3 layers of foil with a few
drops of water and a pinch
of salt
French cornichons

Pickled button mushrooms
Slivered raw scallions or spring
onions
Pickled cippollini onions
Vegetables, if you wish
1½–2 pounds Raclette cheese
Crusty country bread

Arrange all ingredients except the Raclette and bread on a platter. Slice the Raclette thinly and warm it gently in the oven on a parchment-lined baking platter or cast-iron frying pan until the cheese begins to melt. With a thin-blade spatula, scrape the softened cheese onto the potatoes. Grate pepper over the top. Cut thick slices of country bread. Serve while the cheese is soft.

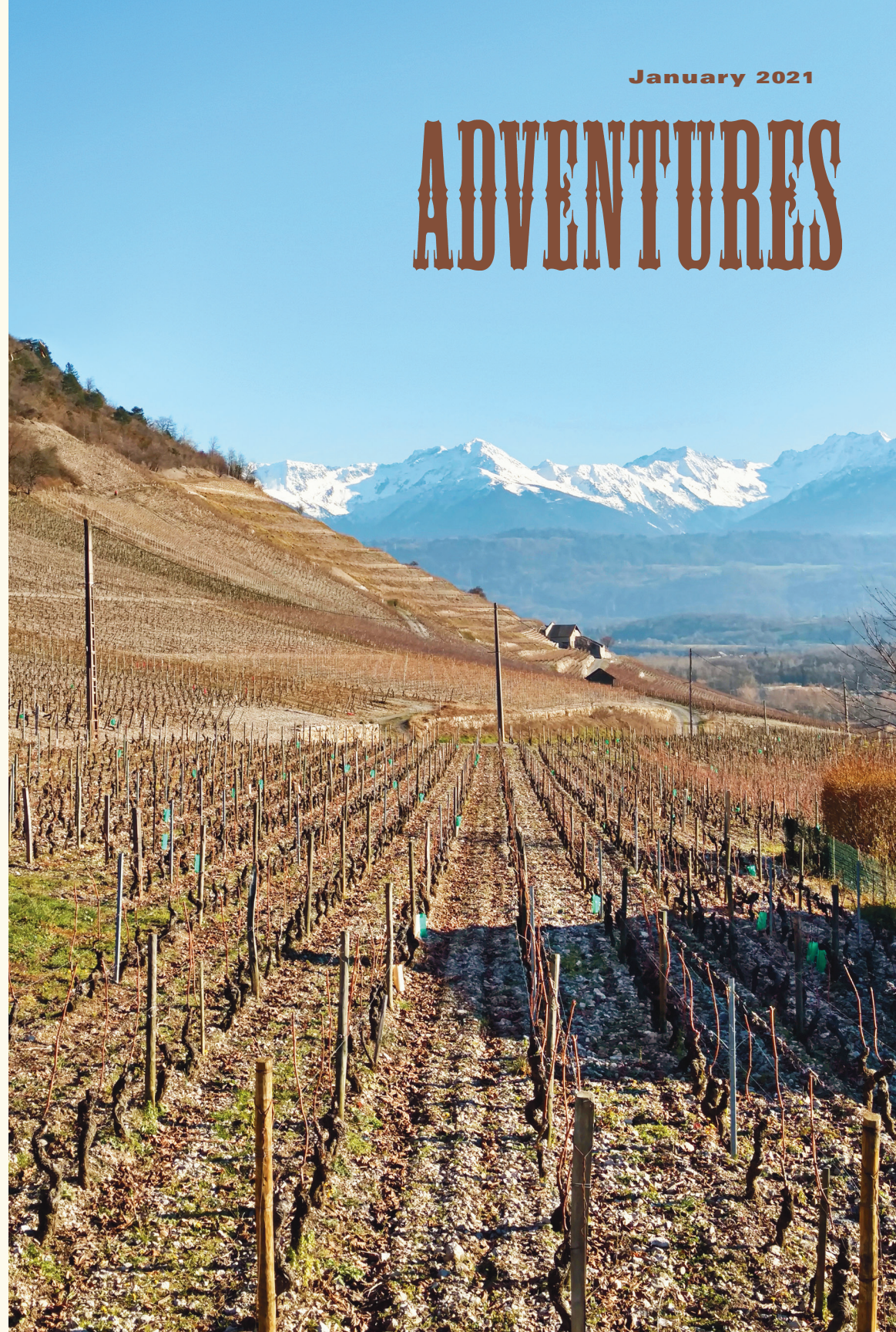
Serves 4



Christopher Lee is a former head chef of Chez Panisse and Eccolo restaurants in Berkeley and co-founder of Pop-Up General Store in Oakland. Visit his website: oldfashionedbutcher.com.

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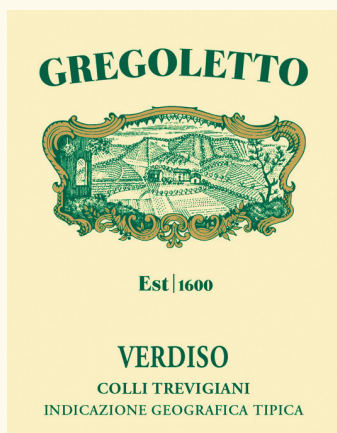
ADVENTURES



2019 COLLI TREVIGIANI VERDISO GREGOLETTO

Gregoletto is a small, family-run Prosecco *azienda* devoted to quality above quantity. In addition to their *col fondo* Prosecco (refermented in bottle, the old-fashioned way), they also make still white wines from obscure grape varieties that speak to the deep tradition of viticulture in the hills of the Veneto. The first recorded evidence of Verdiso, an indigenous grape that thrives in the foothills of Treviso, dates back to 1788, when it was planted at the nearby Cistercian Abbey of Santa Maria in Follina. Because it ripens late, it has suffered in popularity, and the Gregolettos are among the last to grow Verdiso in the Veneto today. They fully appreciate its potential, dedicating some of their prime hillside land in Premaor and Miane—where they also grow Glera for Prosecco—to this underrated grape that is capable of producing outstanding floral, mineral, and zesty *bianchi*. Gregoletto's Verdiso is exquisite at apéro hour, alongside oysters, or with a light first course of fish or risotto. —TOM WOLF

\$20.00 per bottle \$216.00 per case



LEFT
Gregoletto
COVER
Vines at André et
Michel Quenard
© Dixon Brooke

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2019 CHIGNIN GAMAY ANDRÉ ET MICHEL QUENARD

Should you ever spend time skiing, snowshoeing, or simply enjoying the winter sights in French Alps towns like Megève or Val-d'Isère, you will no doubt want a glass of the region's wine to go with your fire upon returning from the cold. You would do well with a bottle of Jacquère—Savoie's signature crisp white wine—but if you are in the mood for a red that isn't too heavy, try this lively Chignin Gamay from André and Michel Quenard. The Quenards have been making wine just west of the Alps for almost a century, and today they represent one of Chignin's essential family domaines.

André and Michel are now largely retired; Guillaume, the next generation, oversees the vines and the cellar, producing stellar wines from this off-the-beaten-path region. Even though he fashions this cuvée from the Beaujolais's star grape variety, this is very much Gamay from Savoie, and not its neighbor more than a hundred miles to the northwest. With notes of mixed black and red fruit and a spine of minerality, Quenard's Gamay is crunchier, more aromatic, and more succulent than most bottles you'd find in Beaujolais. Après-ski doesn't get much better than this. —TOM WOLF

\$19.00 per bottle \$205.20 per case



					
2019 Colli Trevigiani Verdiso Gregoletto	Verdiso	20-year-old vines, on average Sandstone, marl	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F Do not decant	Almonds, green apple, fresh herbs Floral, mineral, zesty	Drink now
2019 Chignin Gamay André et Michel Quenard	Gamay	30-year-old vines Limestone scree	Serve <i>cool</i> 54–58° F Decant optional	Raspberries, black cherries, stones Stony, succulent, ripe	Drink now