

Three of the world’s most renowned—revered, even—wine regions share something very interesting in common. It has nothing to do with soil, what kind of grapes are grown, or winemaking practices. Rather, it is their latitude: Bordeaux, the northern Rhône, and Piedmont all lie in the path of the 45th parallel, the imaginary line that represents the halfway point between the equator and the North Pole.

Naturally, this shared latitude exerts a fundamental impact on climate. The 45th parallel appears to roughly bisect the northern hemisphere’s grape-growing belt, lying at the crossroads of more marginal climates to the north and warmer zones to the south. And yet, it would be foolish to draw generalizations about the climates of these three great wine regions based solely upon their latitude: other geographical factors, such as altitude and proximity to mountains and bodies of water, have just as strong an impact on local weather systems, and ultimately leave their imprint on the wines.

Is it possible, then, to draw parallels, if you will, between the wines of Bordeaux, the northern Rhône, and Piedmont? Is the 45th truly, as experts have called it, the “ideal latitude for the world’s great wines\*,” or is it merely a fortuitous coincidence? When it comes to fine wine, tasting is believing—see for yourself with these six bottles. —Anthony Lynch

*\* For further reference, “The Magic of the 45th Parallel,” by Olivier Bernard and Thierry Dussard, explores this subject in greater depth.*



2016 BORDEAUX *BLANC* • CHÂTEAU DUCASSE \$17

Hervé Dubourdieu is a perfectionist, and as such we are always guaranteed great wines, whether it is this easy-to-love, dry white or his golden, succulent cuvées of Sauternes. Hervé farms in the Haut-Barsac, a prestigious appellation and microclimate in Bordeaux. He blends 60% Sémillion, 35% Sauvignon Blanc, and 5% Muscadelle into this *blanc* to achieve a gorgeous harmony between viscosity and acidity. Pale in color and streaked with vibrant minerals, the Ducasse *blanc* also has a juicy roundness. The combination makes for a wine that is easy to pair with many dishes—from lunch fare (quiches, salads, sandwiches) to shellfish. His *blanc* remains one of the benchmark values of our portfolio, continuing to punch above its price point. The 2016 vintage brings an extra bit of exuberant fruit to go with its habitual mineral snappiness, all delivered with Hervé’s trademark jazzy flair.

2015 CONDRIEU • LIONEL FAURY \$59

For many years, Condrieu was considered one of the great white wines of France. It is the birthplace of the beguiling Viognier grape and the home of its greatest expression. Lately, in my opinion, the appellation has suffered greatly from global warming, coupled with a trend toward more new wood and a general preference for riper, more obvious wines. The result has been an increasingly one-dimensional wine in Condrieu—decadent and unctuous but lacking in delineation, balance, and refreshment. The humble and authentic Condrieu produced by Lionel Faury in Chavanay turns this unfortunate trend completely on its head. Lionel and I share the same taste (I’d like to think good taste), and he is one hell of a vigneron and winemaker. Vintage after vintage, he produces highly perfumed, well-balanced, utterly delicious Condrieu that we are very proud to sell.

2015 DOLCETTO DI DIANO D’ALBA “SÖRÌ CRISTINA” • IL PALAZZOTTO \$16.95

While Dolcetto is not the most prestigious grape variety grown in Piedmont, these unpretentious, straightforwardly delicious wines can be found in every roadside trattoria in the area, where patrons gulp them by the carafe at all hours of the day. The Söri Cristina from Il Palazzotto, a small, family-run estate managed by fourth-generation grower Paolo Olivero, is a soft, fruity, and elegant Dolcetto, conjuring violets and purple berries. The word “söri” in the local dialect refers to a hilltop area with good sun exposure that produces great wine—a word that is therefore added to historical names of vineyards to identify a superior *terroir*. Paolo’s Dolcetto is an honest ambassador of this workhouse grape that the Piemontese drink daily with their robust cuisine. Serve it slightly chilled and frequently.



2013 LALANDE-DE-POMEROL • CHÂTEAU BELLES-GRAVES \$32

Lalande-de-Pomerol has much in common with its more distinguished neighbor, Pomerol. With the area’s mosaic of different soils and subtle changes in slope and aspect, there is more variation within either appellation than between the two. This plethora of micro-*terroirs* is what gives each chateau’s wine a unique signature. Belles-Graves is the epitome of a “classic” Bordeaux estate—that is, the Chateau produces wines of subtlety, depth, complexity, and age-ability that consistently reflect the *terroir* from which they are born. At Belles-Graves, it’s all about the gravel: you feel it crunching under your feet when you step out of the car, you see it in the vineyards, and you taste it in the wine. These small stones conserve the day’s heat, allowing the fruit—Merlot with a touch of old-vine Cabernet Franc—to ripen fully each year. This gives Belles-Graves a plump roundness on the palate and a silky façade to the muscular spine concealed within. Soft and refined, it can be appreciated in its youth, while the powerful structure lurking beneath promises a bright future in your cellar.

2015 CÔTE RÔTIE “BESSET” • BARRUOL/LYNCH \$79

Today, Côte Rôtie is enjoying a comeback. These once-neglected steep slopes overlooking the Rhône are now highly sought after by vignerons who recognize the potential for a delicious and distinctive expression of Syrah. Among them is Louis Barruol, proprietor of Chateau de Saint Cosme in Gigondas, who has developed a small project purchasing fruit from some of the finest *terroirs* upriver and crafting several micro-cuvées of traditional Côte Rôtie. This entails selecting sustainably grown Serine (an old clone of Syrah) from top vineyard sites and vinifying in neutral wood with the grape stems, as was once common practice, before an unfined and unfiltered bottling. The *lieu-dit* Besset lies at the top of the slope, where cooling breezes offset the richness endowed by the full southern exposure in a warm vintage. From the classic aromas of graphite, black fruit, and roasted spice, to the total finesse of its tannins, this is Côte Rôtie at its best.

2010 BAROLO BUSSIA “CASCINA DARDI” • A. & G. FANTINO \$55

Traditional lore in Piemonte’s Langhe hills dictates that the best sites to plant Nebbiolo are those where the snow melts first. These are generally south-facing hill-sides, where an abundance of direct sun ripens Nebbiolo to its fullest. The Bussia vineyard—and especially the Dardi subsection, home to the Fantino brothers’ holdings—undoubtedly represents one of the warmer *crus* in the Barolo zone, its steep grade and southern exposure ensuring maximum sunshine each vintage. The excellent situation of Bussia and the brothers’ expert touch yields a Barolo with the best of all worlds: great typicity, soaring aromatics, fine structure, loads of complexity... While it certainly has classic grippy tannins and firm acidity, its powerful core seems concealed behind a silkiness of fruit that is uncommon for the King of Wines when young. It can be held for many years, but the generous aroma and soft edges make this young Barolo hard to resist.

HUÎTRES AU BORDEAUX BLANC

by ANDRÉ CHATENOU, CHÂTEAU DE BELLEVUE

*The oysters should be cooked in their shells, over hot vine embers if possible. Shuck the oysters and place them on the grill (with their juice) when the flame has died down. Allow the juice to evaporate, but before it has completely disappeared, add a touch of white wine. Once it starts to bubble, take them off the grill and eat them warm, accompanied by the same chilled wine.*

CAILLETES DE L’ARDÈCHE

by PIERRE GONON, DOMAINE GONON

*Sort and wash 6 cups of mixed greens: spinach, chard, celery, and herbs. Blanch them and cook for several minutes. Then, wrap them in a bundle of fabric or cheese cloth, and hang them to dry overnight. The following day, combine 1 lb ground pork shoulder and ½ lb of ground pork liver in a large bowl. Finely chop the mixed greens and work them into the ground meat with your hands. Add a chopped onion and 3 cloves of garlic, minced. Add some salt and pepper, a half cup of eau de vie and some thyme. When your mixture has been nicely mixed, mold one handful of meat at a time into small, flattened patties. Wrap the patties in caul fat. Cook in a ceramic dish, loosely touching, at 350°F for 20–30 minutes. You can eat them fresh out of the oven with some boiled or steamed potatoes.*

*Make sure to never put cabbage in your greens mix, as your caillettes from the Ardèche would then be from the Drôme, and for that Pierrot Gonon would never forgive you. If you don’t have a lot of friends, you can still prepare in large batches and freeze the caillettes (preferably raw) to cook in smaller batches whenever you want them.*

BAGNET VERT

by CHRISTOPHER LEE

*I learned this recipe from Elena Rovera, the hardest-core practitioner of local, organic, and sustainable agriculture I know. Elena owns the agriturismo Cascina Cornale in the tiny Piemontese town of Magliano Alfieri, on the road from Alba to Asti, which follows the Tanaro River. She sells her goods from a cool room where you collect your (need I say it?) organic produce of local heritage crops and leave your money in a small basket. Across the alley is her small, thirty-seat restaurant that serves Piemontese food. She struggles to survive but somehow manages from year to year, mainly on her conviction, determination, and sheer will. Tell me, what’s better than a capable woman made of steel, wire, and intellect? Similarly, bagnet vert is a seemingly plain dish of immense character. You’ll need a dozen good anchovies packed in salt, preferably Italian; 2 cups of very fresh parsley, chopped fine as sand; 1 cup of soft, white, untoasted bread crumbs; 1/2 cup finely grated Parmigiano cheese; some sea salt, red wine vinegar, and (of course) olive oil.*

*Soak the anchovies in cool water for about an hour. Peel anchovies off the bone, separate into halves, and rinse gently to remove any remnants of tail bits or veins. Drain on a paper towel. In a large mortar, pound parsley in small handfuls, each with a pinch of salt, to a smooth paste. Add bread crumbs, Parmigiano, and 1 tsp vinegar. Stir in 3/4 cup of olive oil slowly to form a thick sauce the consistency of pesto. Add a few drops of water if needed. On each plate, spread about a half cup of sauce and lay 6 anchovy halves skin side up on top, as if they are spokes on a wheel. Serve immediately.*





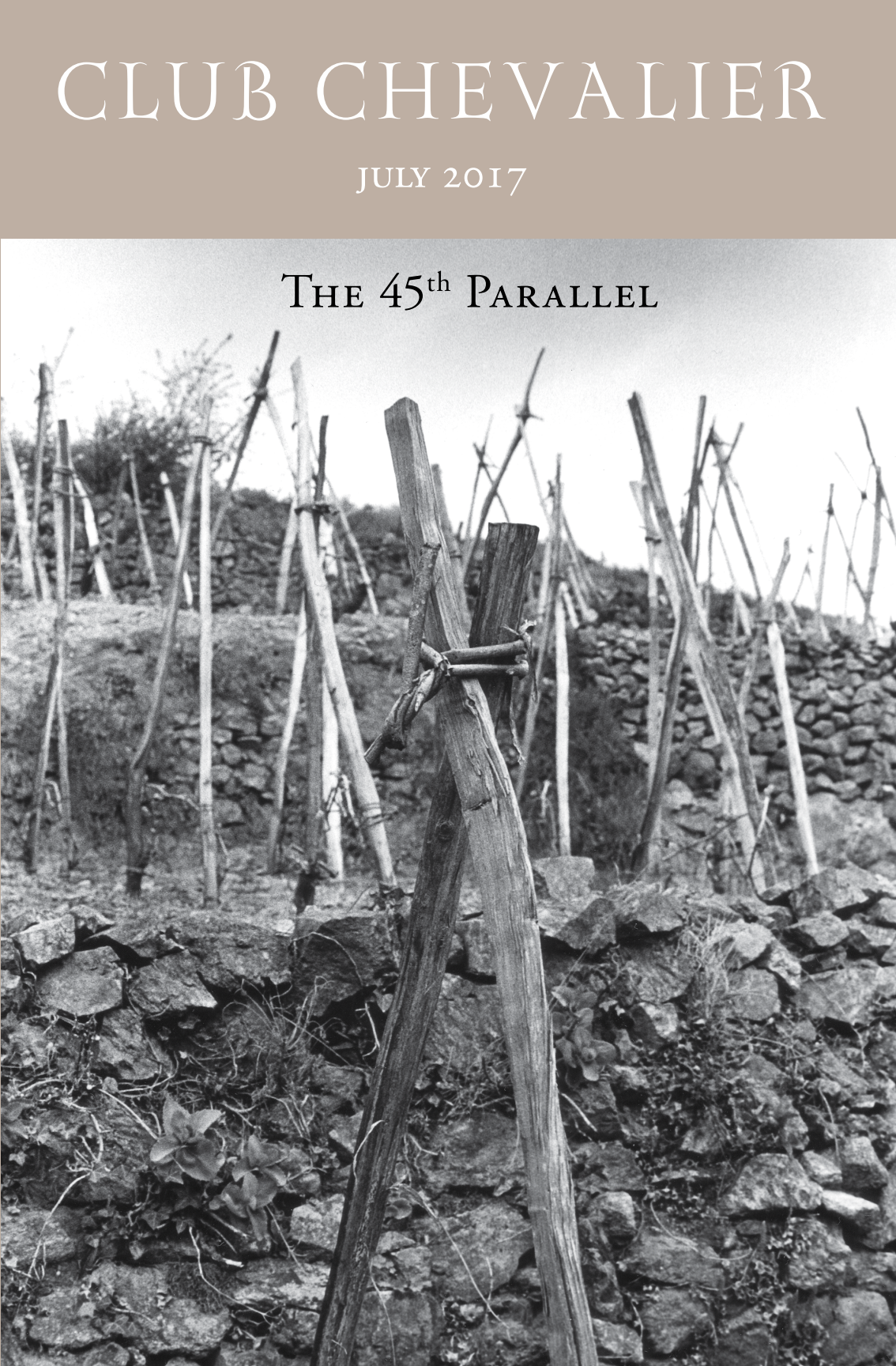


<b>2016 BORDEAUX BLANC</b> Château Ducasse <i>Bordeaux</i>	60% Sémillon, 35% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Muscadelle	45 to 48 year-old vines Clay & limestone on fissured rock	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F	Orange blossom, gunflint, exotic fruit; zingy, succulent, mineral, saline	Drink now
<b>2015 CONDRIEU</b> Lionel Faury <i>Northern Rhône</i>	Viognier	Vines planted between 1976–2007 Granite	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–54° F	Wildflowers, lychee, stone fruits; luscious, full-bodied, refined	Drink now
<b>2015 DOLCETTO DI DIANO D’ALBA “SÒRÌ CRISTINA”</b> Il Palazzotto <i>Piedmont</i>	Dolcetto	Vines planted in 1985 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cool</i> 55–60° F	Violets, ripe black cherries, smoke; soft-bodied, silky, delicate	Drink now
<b>2013 LALANDE-DE-POMEROL</b> Château Belles-Graves <i>Bordeaux</i>	88% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc	Merlot: 35 years avg Cabernet Franc: 60 years avg Clay, gravel	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant 1–2 hrs	Blackberry, plum, black truffle; voluptuous, velvety, with gravelly tannins	Drink now through 2030
<b>2015 CÔTE RÔTIE “BESSET”</b> Barruol/Lynch <i>Northern Rhône</i>	Syrah	40 year-old vines Mica schist	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant 1–2 hrs	Roasted spices, black fruit, smoke, graphite; deep, dense, fine and perfumey	Drink now through 2035
<b>2010 BAROLO BUSSIA “CASCINA DARDI”</b> A. & G. Fantino <i>Piedmont</i>	Nebbiolo	21 year-old vines Sandy clay & marl	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant 1–2 hrs	Ripe red cherry, tar, rose petals; silky, sumptuous, structured	Drink now through 2035



BORDEAUX	NORTHERN RHÔNE	PIEDMONT
PRINCIPAL GRAPE VARIETIES: <i>Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc</i>	PRINCIPAL GRAPE VARIETIES: <i>Syrah, Viognier, Marsanne, Roussanne</i>	PRINCIPAL GRAPE VARIETIES: <i>Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto</i>
LANDSCAPE: <i>alluvial plains bisected by Gironde estuary; some gentle slopes</i>	LANDSCAPE: <i>steep terraced hillsides on banks of Rhône river</i>	LANDSCAPE: <i>steep rolling hills surrounded by mountains on three sides</i>
CLIMATE: <i>oceanic with mild temperatures and frequent rainfall</i>	CLIMATE: <i>continental with slight Mediterranean influence and frequent wind (mistral)</i>	CLIMATE: <i>continental with hot summers and cold winters; morning fog (nebbia) in summer</i>
<i>In 71 AD, Pliny the Elder recorded the first real evidence of vineyards and wine production in Bordeaux.</i>	<i>Recent genetic testing at UC Davis revealed Viognier to be closely related to the Piedmont grape Freisa, and a cousin of Nebbiolo.</i>	<i>In 2014, the vineyard landscape of Piedmont (Langhe-Roero and Monferrato) was added as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.</i>

MAP: Baldwin & Cradock, *Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, London 1834



# CLUB CHEVALIER

JULY 2017

## THE 45<sup>th</sup> PARALLEL