



The evenings that grow dark early are ideal for hosting unhurried meals with friends from around the small hilltop town of Serralunga d’Alba.

In Bandol, Agnès Henry likes to recreate her grandmother’s beef stew, which, she says, “perfumes the house and clouds the whole kitchen on Sunday mornings . . . As if, in the middle of winter, we opened a *hammam* of southern scents.”

Winter feasting in France and Italy, though, isn’t just about hearty reds and simmered meat dishes. North of Provence, in the foothills of the French Alps, the Quenard family withstands the cold months by embracing seemingly every method of melting the local cheeses—Emmental, Beaufort, and Reblochon—on their own or atop a bed of potatoes. With its fantastic acidity and aromas of fresh flowers and citrus, their Altesse serves as the perfect foil to rich, bone-warming fondues, *raclettes*, and *tartiflettes*.

Finally, as far north as the selections in this month’s club go, Félix and Aura Meyer love to make a hearty fish and vegetable stew, which features some of their Riesling and pairs beautifully with their *grand cru* Kaefferkopf cuvée.

—TOM WOLF



LA MATELOTE DE POISSON AU RIESLING (ALSATIAN FISH STEW)

BY FÉLIX & AURA MEYER

4–5 pounds freshwater fish: pike, tench, perch, trout, and especially eel	5½ tablespoons butter
Onions, carrots, leeks, parsley, tarragon, bay leaf, thyme, and nutmeg	6 tablespoons flour
2 cups Riesling	1 cup crème fraîche
Salt and pepper, to taste	4 egg yolks
	Button mushrooms, for garnish
	Puff pastry crescents, if desired

Clean fish and cut into pieces. Then, using the heads, prepare a “fumet”: 8 cups water, onions, carrots, leeks, parsley sprigs, tarragon, bay leaf, thyme, and a dash of nutmeg. Simmer with fish heads for about 30 minutes.

In a pot, put 6 cups of fumet and 2 cups of Alsatian wine, preferably Riesling. Add other fish pieces: first, the eel, which cooks the longest, and then, in order, the pike, tench, perch, and, finally, trout. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer for 20 minutes or so.

While fish is cooking, prepare a roux using the butter and flour. Let cool. Then, little by little, add the liquid in which the fish cooked. Reduce sauce over low heat for 10 minutes. At the last moment, thicken it by adding the crème fraîche mixed with egg yolks.

Arrange the pieces of fish in a dish and pour hot broth over the top. If desired, decorate the plate with puff pastry crescents and button mushrooms.

Serve your *matelote* with fresh Alsace-style egg noodles and a bottle of our 2018 Riesling *grand cru* Kaefferkopf.

Serves 6

JANUARY 2023

CHEVALIER

WINTER FEAST



WINTER FEAST

Winter has settled in, and wine producers across France and Italy have officially entered their off-season. While there are still tasks to be done in the vines and cellar, this is the time of year when winemakers and their families spend more time at home, recuperating from the long days of summer and fall past and recharging for the next season.

Every vigneron has his or her own way of relaxing, but what they all have in common is more time to unwind in the kitchen and around the dinner table with their families. As one vigneron told me a couple of years ago, “This period represents calming down and, finally, the feeling of having accomplished the best possible harvest and the discovery of the new vintage that we ‘raise’ as a child. In short—a gentle and peaceful period. So our cooking is, too, and we love to cook comforting foods.”

For some, like Guido and Giovanna Porro, this means setting pots of *ragù* to gently simmer on the stove for hours while snow blankets their undulating vineyards outside.



2021 ROUSSETTE DE SAVOIE “ALTESSE”
◆ ANDRÉ & MICHEL QUENARD \$27

THE ALTESSE GRAPE, also known as Roussette, did not get its name by accident. Translated to “Highness”—as in, Your Highness—Altesse is perhaps Savoie’s most . . . well, majestic, native variety. It boasts delicate, complex floral aromatics and fantastic acidity, and well-made versions such as this one also have the capacity to age and transform in bottle over many years. The wine is bone-dry yet offers a wonderful nose of bergamot and honeysuckle, along with a zippy freshness supported by all the minerality you would expect from fruit grown in stony soils in the Alps. Locals drink it with melty cheeses (think fondue and *raclette*) and delicate freshwater fish, but this white is quite versatile: savor it on its own before a meal or with salads, fried foods, or anything with a touch of spiciness. Another glass, please, Your Highness!



2018 RIESLING GRAND CRU “KAEFFERKOPF”
◆ MEYER-FONNÉ \$62

AROMATIC FIREWORKS and pinpoint precision are hallmarks of the Meyer-Fonné house style, and from a *grand cru* site such as Kaefferkopf, an extra gear of power and drive raises things to a new level of intensity. Dense and chiseled, this is serious Riesling, a wine whose deep complexity has only just begun to emerge beneath layers of chewy flesh, stone, and steely acidity. Give it time to breathe in the glass, and don’t hesitate to let a bottle age for a few more years in your cellar, if you wish.



2019 SAINT-VÉРАН “LES POMMARDS VIEILLES VIGNES”
◆ DOMAINE ROBERT-DENOGET \$54

KNOWING THAT THE MACONNAIS has a reputation as a more “casual” winemaking region than its northern counterpart in Burgundy, you might assume that the wines are somehow lesser or more simple than the storied whites of Chablis or the Côte de Beaune, but you would be doing yourself a disservice. This Saint-Véran is far from an insignificant wine! Vines more than fifty years old running through limestone and clay produce a wine that offers a creamy and luscious mouthfeel intertwined with a dry, stony minerality. Showing aromas of sweet mandarin, lime leaf, and a hint of spice, it is a Burgundy with the fleshiness, depth, and texture to warm your bones on a cold winter night, and a great match for richer cuisines. Given its similar pedigree to much more expensive Meursault or Puligny, you can do no better than to stock your cellar with this undervalued, yet exceptionally charming jewel.



2020 LANGUEDOC ROUGE “LOU MASET”
◆ DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC \$24

LOU MASET is the Occitan name for a little farmhouse. This little farmhouse, outside the Languedoc village of Montpeyroux, is surrounded by Cinsault, Grenache, Carignan, Syrah, and Alicante Bouschet vines that make up this fulfilling everyday blend created by Sylvain Fadat and Désirée Alonso-Fadat. At one point in time, a wine like this might have served to hydrate thirsty farmworkers snacking on *saucisson* during their midday break in a small shack among the vines. For our purposes, this is a tasty *rouge* that you can uncork any and every day of the week for straightforward, honest pleasure.



2019 BANDOL ROUGE ◆ DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON \$47









MADE PREDOMINANTLY from the noble Mourvèdre grape, Bandol reds perfectly translate the sun-kissed landscape of Provence. At once profound and generous, they have a somewhat rustic, earthy side while expressing the jovial personality of the Provençal people. At Tour du Bon, vigneronne Agnès Henry crafts dense, potent reds from clay and limestone soils tucked beneath the medieval village of Le Castellet. This part of the appellation is shielded from cooling sea breezes, so her wines show a full-throttle ripeness and almost bloody, animal character that shines alongside lamb and game dishes, rich tomato sauces, and other hearty Mediterranean cuisine featuring plenty of garlic and herbs. Delicious today, this Provençal beast will have no problem aging and evolving in bottle for twenty more years.

2018 BAROLO “GIANETTO” ◆ GUIDO PORRO \$60

A LONGTIME STALWART of traditional Barolo, Guido Porro produces wines from four distinct *crus* within his home village of Serralunga d’Alba. Gianetto, first produced in 2011, is a southeast-facing vineyard that yields his most immediately approachable Barolo. After a spontaneous fermentation and three years aging in massive Slavonian oak casks, this Nebbiolo is finally in bottle and ready to go. Rather shocking for a four-year-old Barolo, it is already beautifully expressive, flaunting a wide-open perfume of silky rose petals and voluptuous fresh raspberry. Even the palate is uncommonly friendly for such a young wine of this pedigree, reflecting the charm of the 2018 vintage. While further aging is certainly an option, nobody would call you crazy if you cracked into this delicious, elegant young Barolo right away.



					
2021 Roussette de Savoie “Altesse” <i>André & Michel Quenard</i> SAVOIE	Altesse	30-year-old vines Marl, limestone scree	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52° F Decant optional	Wildflowers, honey, bergamot Racy, delicate, mineral	Drink now through 2030
2018 Riesling Grand Cru “Kaefferkopf” <i>Meyer-Fonné</i> ALSACE	Riesling	Vines planted in 1978 Clay, limestone, sandstone	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52° F Decant optional	Lime, white flowers, tropical fruit Intense, generous, direct	Drink now through 2032
2019 Saint-Véran “Les Pommards Vieilles Vignes” <i>Domaine Robert-Denogent</i> BURGUNDY	Chardonnay	52-year-old vines Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cool</i> 50–54° F Decant recommended	Stone fruit, vanilla, toasted almond, cream Full-bodied, fleshy, luscious, deep	Drink now through 2027
2020 Languedoc Rouge “Lou Maset” <i>Domaine d’Aupilhac</i> LANGUEDOC	40% Grenache, 40% Cinsault, 10% Carignan, 5% Syrah, 5% Alicante Bouschet	20-year-old vines Limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant recommended	Black cherry, spice, <i>garrigue</i> herbs Savory, chewy, earthy, charmingly rustic	Drink now
2019 Bandol Rouge <i>Domaine de la Tour du Bon</i> PROVENCE	55% Mourvèdre, 25% Grenache, 15% Cinsault, 5% Carignan	38-year-old vines Clay, limestone, silt, sandstone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant recommended	Blackberry, game, iron, Provençal herbs Grippy, dense, powerful, structured	Drink now through 2040
2018 Barolo “Gianetto” <i>Guido Porro</i> PIEDMONT	Nebbiolo	Vines planted in 1998 Clay, limestone, marl	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant recommended	Raspberry, rose petal, tar, black tea Ethereal, elegant, supple, expressive	Drink now through 2032

front cover: Aura Meyer presents an Alsatian *baeckeoffe*. © GAIL SKOFF
inner panels: © GAIL SKOFF
far left top: © ANDRÉ & MICHEL QUENARD
far left bottom: © MEYER-FONNÉ
middle top: © DOMAINE ROBERT-DENOGET

middle bottom: © DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC
near left top: © DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON
near left bottom: © GAIL SKOFF
back cover: © GAIL SKOFF