

# CHEVALIER

HOME  
AWAY  
FROM  
HOME

MAY  
2022



## HOME AWAY FROM HOME



The dissemination of grapevines across Europe tells the story of human history, paralleling patterns of migration and trade routes over thousands of years. Genetic studies have proven that *vitis vinifera* originated in the Caucasus Mountains, from where it followed the spread of early civilizations westward, assisted by the commercial savvy of great empires such as Greece and Rome to find new homes across modern-day Spain, France, Germany, Italy, and beyond.

Different cultivars evolved over time, adapting to their new environment, while also being subject to crossing with wild vine species which ultimately led to the great diversity of grape varieties we know today. The notion of a variety being “indigenous” to a specific area is often a vast oversimplification, referring not to the grape’s true place of origin but rather to where it has favorably settled and proven to be well adapted to the local conditions over a considerable period of time.



If transporting grapevines from one place to propagate them somewhere else has been happening for millennia, it must be recognized that certain varieties have responded better than others to their new home. This month’s club examines surprising examples of grapes grown outside their “native” region. You’ll taste six wines made from varieties not typically associated with the terroir in question, but who have found a “home away from home”:

- Just south of Burgundy, Chardonnay has settled the slopes of Beaujolais, featuring in the region’s rare Beaujolais *blancs*. Dupeuble’s rendition deliciously demonstrates how this well-traveled grape interprets its surroundings outside of its spiritual homeland.
- Cassis, on the Provençal coast, prominently features Marsanne in its blend. Known for its role in northern Rhône whites, and specifically Hermitage, the grape finds a very different expression when transplanted to a Mediterranean terroir.
- Corsica’s Sciaccarellu is supposedly indigenous to the island’s south, where it thrives in the soils of decomposed granite. Simon Giacometti, who farms a rare pocket of granite in the northern Corsican appellation of Patrimoine, fashions a mesmerizing pure Sciaccarellu outside of the grape’s typical range.
- Château La Roque blends Syrah and Mourvèdre for its epic “Cupa” bottling. The rocky limestone slopes of Pic Saint Loup appear to be a worthy second home for these grapes, which are associated with the northern Rhône and Provence, respectively.
- Federico Staderini took a gamble when he planted Pinot Noir in the cool, high-altitude foothills of the Tuscan Apennines. Unlike anything made in Burgundy, his dazzling Cuna bottling suggests his vision paid off.
- High in the Dolomites, Peter Dipoli found a plot of land whose microclimate he deemed perfectly suited to Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Far from Bordeaux, these grapes provide a serious expression of Italian mountain terroir.

—ANTHONY LYNCH

2020 BEAUJOLAIS *BLANC*  
◆ DOMAINE DUPEUBLE \$20

THE BEAUJOLAIS is not necessarily the first place you'd look to find great Chardonnay, but who could resist the combination of old vines, limestone soil, and a beckoning price tag? Certainly not us. In the 510 years since founding their family domaine, the Dupeubles have selected the sites less favorable to Gamay, the region's main cash crop, and planted Chardonnay for a Beaujolais *blanc*. Plump, juicy fruit dominates the nose, with an inviting abundance of citrus and peach, the whole upheld by a lively acidity. Like a delicious Burgundy but less fussy, Dupeuble's white is just as reliable as their hedonistic *rouge*.



2020 CASSIS *BLANC*  
◆ CLOS SAINTE MAGDELEINE \$42

CLOS SAINTE MAGDELEINE is crafting Cassis like we have never tasted before. Vigneron Jonathan Sack has had an immediate impact since stepping into his father's shoes at the helm of the domaine, going organic in the vineyards and championing noninterventionist methods like native yeast fermentation to capture an authentic expression of this stunning seaside terroir. The abundant white limestone and perennial marine influence bring nerve and a coastal salinity, while lovely Mediterranean

scents—anise, yellow flowers, citrus, peach—are delivered with newfound focus and precision. The pinpoint, sea-breeze finish and total finesse throughout are truly exceptional among Provençal whites.

## 2020 VIN DE FRANCE *ROUGE* “SEMPRE CUNTENTU”

◆ DOMAINE GIACOMETTI \$32

IN AN ARID, rugged offshoot of the Patrimoine appellation known as the Désert des Agriates, the Giacometti family creates wines that reflect the rustic nature of the land without sacrificing approachability or generous, succulent fruit. While red Patrimoine, made from the Niellucciu grape, is a dark, profound, brooding wine—an unapologetic dose of Corsican oomph—this bottling is 100% Sciaccarellu, so it cannot call itself a Patrimoine. The perfume leaps out of the glass with such exuberance that it can barely be contained, flamboyantly mimicking the vivid scent of fresh-pressed berries, as if a fistful of ripe summer fruit had been smooshed against a hot stone. The name of this cuvée is Corsican for “always happy,” and you’ll understand exactly why immediately upon pulling the cork.

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## 2019 PIC SAINT LOUP *ROUGE* “CUPA NUMISMAE”

◆ CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE \$32

SOMETIMES IT PAYS to have a wine with a bit of muscle. That’s what you’ll find in this Pic Saint Loup, a hearty blend of Syrah and Mourvèdre from one of southern France’s grandest terroirs. Pic Saint Loup has proven its potential to produce fine wines time after time—in fact, we have been importing great examples for more than thirty years. The region is characterized by rocky limestone hillsides that force the vines to dig deep for hydration, higher altitudes where cooling winds temper the southern heat, and the aromatic influence of the ubiquitous *garrigue*.

Château La Roque’s “Cupa Numismae,” named after a centuries-old gold coin found buried in its soil bearing these words, is a barrel-aged red made from organically grown grapes and bears the robust structure and velvety tannins that reflect this exceptional terrain. Open this bottle now to experience its intense black fruit, or opt to cellar it for a decade or more to discover its wonderful aging potential.





## 2017 TOSCANA ROSSO ♦ CUNA \$58

KNOWING what a finicky grape Pinot Noir can be, it takes a special personality to make it thrive in Tuscany, and Federico Staderini uses his agronomy experience, his passion for Tuscan history, and his incredible intuition to accomplish the feat. Seemingly weightless but densely packed with rich, complex flavors, this wine evokes oddly paired descriptors that in this case are perfectly apt: spicy yet velvety, crisp on the attack with a long, round finish, plums on the nose but sour cherry on the palate. Federico likens it to “the elegance and the levity of a sail blown by the wind on a luminous ocean.” Try it with homemade tapenade topped with an abundance of the best-quality olive oil you can get your hands on.



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## 2016 ALTO ADIGE MERLOT-CABERNET SAUVIGNON “IUGUM”

♦ PETER DIPOLI \$68

WHEN IT COMES to importing wines from Italy, we tend not to go for cuvées made from internationally prevalent grapes, because the country boasts so many native varieties. Every once in a while, however, if the terroir has something really interesting to say and the wine is simply too good to pass up, we make an exception. Peter Dipoli’s Iugum is one of these rare bottles.

An Alto Adige native, Dipoli studied the land intensely in a search for great terroir, ultimately settling on high-altitude sites flanking the Adige Valley to craft his one-of-a-kind wines. Having located a steep plot with soils of clay and limestone, he proceeded to plant Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, with the goal of producing a substantial red with significant staying power. High above the valley floor, the vines here benefit from cool nights and a long ripening season. Iugum is vinified in large wood fermenters and extensively aged in oak *barriques* before release no less than four years after the vintage. An outstanding Italian cousin of Right Bank Bordeaux, the wine features a sturdy mountain frame enveloped by silken, hedonistic dark fruit—a testament to this spectacular terroir rather than the varietals or their *élevage*. For such a powerful wine, the restraint and nuance are remarkable, making Iugum good for the table or the cellar.



2020 Beaujolais Blanc <i>Domaine Dupeuble</i> BEAUJOLAIS	Chardonnay	45-year-old vines Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–50° F Decant optional	White flowers, honeycomb, citrus Refreshing, smooth, creamy	Drink now
2020 Cassis Blanc <i>Clos Sainte Magdeleine</i> PROVENCE	40% Marsanne, 30% Ugni Blanc, 25% Clairette, 5% Bourboulenc	40-year-old vines, on average Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–50° F Decant optional	Anise, white peach, wild broom Luscious, crisp, saline	Drink now
2020 Vin de France <i>Rouge</i> “Sempre Cuntentu” <i>Domaine Giacometti</i> CORSICA	Sciaccarellu	20-year-old vines Clay, granite	Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60° F Decant optional	Crushed raspberry, cracked pepper, myrtle Juicy, exuberant, crunchy	Drink now
2019 Pic Saint Loup <i>Rouge</i> “Cupa Numismae” <i>Château La Roque</i> LANGUEDOC- ROUSSILLON	65% Syrah, 35% Mourvèdre	40-year-old vines Clay, limestone scree	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant recommended	Blackberry, black cherry, licorice Dense, chewy, grippy	Drink now through 2035
2017 Toscana Rosso <i>Cuna</i> TUSCANY	Pinot Nero	Vines planted in 2004, 2005, 2007 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant recommended	Ripe cherry, forest floor, spice Pure, silky, elegant	Drink now through 2035
2016 Alto Adige Merlot-Cabernet Sauvignon “lugum” <i>Peter Dipoli</i> ALTO ADIGE	80% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon	Vines planted in 1992 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant recommended	Blackberry, plum, cigar box Firm, structured, powerful	Drink now through 2035

front cover: Château La Roque.  
© CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE  
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in the Désert des Agriates.  
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“Beaujolais blanc is as rare as it is good. While Chardonnay has long been grown in the Beaujolais, whites represent only 2% of regional production. It is a very different expression of Chardonnay than you'll find in Burgundy, even though we are technically permitted to call it Bourgogne blanc. But we opt to label it as Beaujolais blanc to pay homage to our local terroir. It is an elegant white wine with less weight than white Burgundies and more fruit, providing lots of pleasure.”

GHISLAINE DUPEUBLE, *Domaine Dupeuble*

“ In the 1960s, the vigneronns of Cassis chose to increase plantings of Marsanne to give local wines an identity of their own, differentiating them from other appellations of Provence. At the time, the climate was colder than it is today, and Marsanne brought structure, body, and vinosity to the wines of Cassis, which were then quite light.



Cassis's terroir of sandy marls from the Cretaceous is much different from the granitic soils of the northern Rhône. Marsanne finds a distinct expression wherein the lack of acidity is made up for by the minerality of the soils and the proximity to the Mediterranean, which brings a saline signature. This minerality and salinity compensate for the richness Marsanne can develop in hot years—especially when it is raised on fine lees, which brings subtle bitter notes that provide structure and length to the wine. ”

JONATHAN SACK, *Clos Sainte Magdeleine*