

MAY 2024

# CHEVALIER

THE FRENCH  
MEDITERRANEAN



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Over thirty years ago, after decades of traveling to every idyllic corner of France and Italy, Kermit ultimately chose Bandol as his French home base, where he would spend a significant part of each year. All it takes is one trip to the region to understand why. With the Mediterranean Sea on the horizon, Provence—and southern France, more broadly—has an enchanting force that makes you think, “Why would I settle anywhere else?”

If the thick, old, sturdy vines planted along the French Mediterranean could talk, there’s a good chance they’d say the same. Receiving an abundance of sun and refreshed by constant winds, they enjoy ideal conditions for balanced ripening and minimized disease and pest pressures. (One crucial result of these conditions is they make progressive farming an easier path to choose than in other, more

climatically challenged regions.) The grapes here also seem to inevitably absorb a little of that irresistibly salty air, which lends their wines a salinity that can make up for lower acidities that southern grapes—the white ones, in particular—tend to possess.

These qualities are present not only in wines that originate mere feet from the sea, like Clos Sainte Magdeleine’s appellation-defining Cassis. Even several miles inland, as in Pic Saint Loup, vineyards reap the benefits of the Mediterranean. Pierre Ravaille of Héritage du Pic Saint Loup says, “We have a big marine influence when the wind is at sea, so there’s more humidity in the air. The leaves can benefit from this humidity, which we see especially in August, just before harvest. It reduces water stress and leaves more freshness in our wines.”

In the cellar, the defining feature of the Mediterranean is the cultural and historical predominance of the blended wine. Unlike more northern, continental regions, where single-variety wines reign, southern France’s wines mirror its cultural melting pot. *Blancs* tend to feature some blend of Marsanne, Ugni Blanc, Clairette, and Bourboulenc—or Vermentinu and Biancu Gentile if you go as far south as Corsica. *Rosés* and *rouges*, meanwhile, showcase the charms of Syrah, Mourvèdre, Grenache, Cinsault, and the Corsican varieties Niellucciu and Sciaccarellu. —TOM WOLF



2022 CASSIS *BLANC* ♦ CLOS SAINTE MAGDELEINE \$45

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 vibrance, 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.



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2022 ÎLE DE BEAUTÉ *BLANC* ♦ YVES LECCIA \$37

YVES LECCIA WAS AMONG the first to replant the long-lost Biancu Gentile grape, an exclusively Corsican variety that almost went extinct until a group of proud and passionate vigneron took action to salvage it. Today, Yves blends



BG with Vermentinu for the domaine's entry-level white, an absolutely lip-smacking, thirst-quenching creation that perfectly summarizes the appeal of these island wines. Sun-ripened fruit, sea mist, and an alluring note of fresh herbs bring Leccia's stunning Mediterranean vineyards straight to your glass.

2022 PIC SAINT LOUP ROSÉ ♦ HÉRITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP \$22

THE NORTHERNMOST, coolest appellation of the Languedoc, Pic Saint Loup has all the makings of an exceptional terroir for rosé. Its rocky calcareous slopes, covered in *garrigue* and wild pine forest, reach altitudes that favor vivid fruit and a crackling freshness in wines of all three colors. The Ravaille brothers of Héritage du Pic Saint Loup, who have practiced biodynamics for more than twenty years, steer far from commercial considerations with their rosé, as its deep color attests. Its intense aromatics vividly evoke the Pic's rugged nature, and an almost chewable minerality brings to mind slabs of shattered limestone incarnated as energy, drive, and uncommon length on the palate.



2021 CORBIÈRES ROUGE "ROZETA" ♦ MAXIME MAGNON \$52

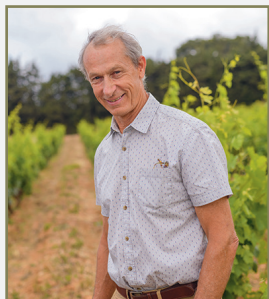
THAT MAXIME MAGNON is one of southern France's star vignerons is especially remarkable given he is native not to the south but to the Ain, a small region bordering Switzerland. In 2004, he settled in the Languedoc's Corbières region, identifying incredible untapped potential in its steep plots of old vines and relatively inexpensive land. As you'll taste in this Carignan-based blend, his reds feature the spice, *garrigue*, and generous fruit typical of sun-ripened Medi-



terranean rouges, but with a delicacy, explosiveness, and *joie de vivre* that recall the most delicious *cru* Beaujolais. His use of techniques like cold maceration, whole-cluster fermentation, and an eschewal of sulfur during vinification is a direct reflection of his Beaujolais training, producing a mesmerizing display of balance in reds like the Rozeta. It's no wonder Maxime is so widely respected across southern France and beyond.

2018 BANDOL *ROUGE* ♦ DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE \$52

TERREBRUNE VIGNERON REYNALD DELILLE seems to be a quiet, reserved man, but a twinkle in his eye appears as soon as he begins pouring samples of his Bandols. Upon seeing his guests' excitement when tasting his wines, he suddenly becomes eager to provide an in-depth explanation of why the wines taste the way they do. This explanation is rooted in terroir, as Terrebrune benefits from geographical and geological features that make it unique in the Bandol appellation. The vineyards lie directly in the path of marine breezes that sweep off the



Mediterranean, providing his wines with a mouthwatering saline quality. Additionally, the fissured limestone from the Triassic era allows vine roots to probe deep for freshness—crucial in the dry Provençal summers. Extreme precision in farming and vinification make Terrebrune special as well. This chewy, gamey Bandol suggests Reynald is onto something—here is a full-bodied dose of Terrebrune terroir you can enjoy over the next twenty years.



2020 CORSE FIGARI *ROUGE* ♦ CLOS CANARELLI \$58

IN RECENT DECADES, Corsica's wine scene has experienced a total revolution. In spite of its ancient history of viticulture, the island's production had long been plagued by an overemphasis on quantity, with the vast majority of the volume represented by bulk wine sent to mainland France for blending. Fortunately, a resurgence in enthusiasm for traditional methods, along with technological advances in winemaking, have allowed for a return to the quality-oriented wines that Corsica had been praised for years ago. At the forefront of this upheaval are producers such as Yves Canarelli. Ever since joining the family domaine in 1993, Yves has focused on replanting native varieties and working the vineyards biodynamically to bring out the best of his terroir in the Figari appellation, located on the southern tip of the island.

Clos Canarelli's Corse Figari *rouge*, composed primarily of Niellucciu filled out by Syrah and Sgiaccarellu, has the depth and intensity that you would expect from this wind-swept, sunbaked land, as well as a certain finesse that complements its rugged edge.





2022 Cassis Blanc Clos Sainte Magdeleine <b>PROVENCE</b>	40% Marsanne, 30% Ugni Blanc, 25% Clairette, 5% Bourboulenc	Vines planted in 1972–2009 Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F Decant optional	Peach, sea spray, lemon curd, fennel Crisp, saline, elegant	Drink now
2022 Île de Beauté Blanc Yves Leccia <b>CORSICA</b>	70% Vermentinu, 30% Biancu Gentile	5- to 20-year-old vines Clay, limestone, schist	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F Decant optional	Citrus, stone fruit, acacia, maquis Textured, precise, herbaceous	Drink now
2022 Pic Saint Loup Rosé Héritage du Pic Saint Loup <b>LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON</b>	40% Syrah, 30% Mourvèdre, 20% Grenache, 10% Cinsault	10- to 50-year- old vines Red clay, marly limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F Decant optional	Lime blossom, watermelon, tomato leaf Brambly, refreshing, ample	Drink now
2021 Corbières Rouge “Rozeta” Maxime Magnon <b>LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON</b>	40% Carignan, 30% Grenache, 30% Cinsault	50- to 60-year- old vines Limestone, schist	Serve <i>cool</i> 56–60°F Decant optional	Plum, strawberry, cassis, rose petal Bright, fruit-forward, mineral	Drink now through 2028
2018 Bandol Rouge Domaine de Terrebrune <b>PROVENCE</b>	85% Mourvèdre, 10% Grenache, 5% Cinsault	20-year-old vines Clay, Trias limestone	Serve <i>slightly</i> <i>cool</i> 58–62°F Decant recommended	Red berries, <i>garrigue</i> , leather, tobacco leaf Velvety, complex, fresh, chewy	Drink now through 2040
2020 Corse Figari Rouge Clos Canarelli <b>CORSICA</b>	80% Niellucciu, 15% Syrah, 5% Sciaccarellu	Vines planted in 1997 Granite	Serve <i>slightly</i> <i>cool</i> 58–62°F Decant recommended	Black cherry, earth, smoke Dense, rich, structured	Drink now through 2030

front cover: A view of the Med. © JOANIE BONFIGLIO  
inner panel, left: Vineyards at Clos Sainte Magdeleine.

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inner panel, right: Vineyards at Domaine de Terrebrune.

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far left top: © CLOS SAINTE MAGDELEINE

far left bottom: Yves Leccia. © YVES LECCIA

middle top: © HÉRITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP

middle bottom: Maxime Magnon. © GAIL SKOFF

near left top: Reynald Delille. © JIMMY HAYES

near left bottom: Yves Canarelli (middle left).

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# SPRING FAVA BEAN AND DUNGENESS CRAB SOUP

BY CHRISTOPHER LEE

*I love shellfish soups with beans in them, especially in the spring. Some folks think bean dishes are for the darkest of winter nights, but not so when the beans are fresh spring favas or when you chuck in lots of other spring vegetables and shower it with herbs to brighten things up. Suddenly it's a wonderful, light spring soup with shellfish as its backbone. The favas are a bit of work but entirely worth it. If it's your lucky day, the soft crab "butter" inside the top of the shell will be creamy pale golden yellow and flawless, tasting of salty-sweet seawater. It's an incredible delight to stir some of that into the finished soup—if you do, use just a little; it's quite rich. Try this at home . . . it's enchanting with the Cassis.*

2 pounds Littleneck clams  
¾ cup white wine  
1 bay leaf  
2 Dungeness crabs  
3 tablespoons good olive oil  
1 cup leeks, diced  
½ cup spring garlic, diced  
¾ cup roughly chopped  
San Marzano tomatoes  
1 pinch saffron

1 strip lemon peel  
1 strip orange peel  
1 cup asparagus, sliced on the bias,  
½ inch thick  
1 cup fava beans, blanched,  
all skins removed  
2 teaspoons tarragon, chopped  
1 tablespoon chives, chopped  
1 tablespoon chervil, chopped  
1 tablespoon parsley, chopped



Open clams in a covered pan in ¼ cup wine plus ¼ cup water and bay leaf. Pluck them from the pan as they open, and set them in another bowl. Remove meat and discard shells. Strain and save the delicious broth. Drop crabs into a pot of boiling unsalted water and cook for 11 minutes after the boil returns. When

cool, crack crabs and pick all meat from the shells and legs. Cover shells with approximately 4 cups water, bring to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes, then strain. Add clam broth to this liquid. This is the broth for the soup. Gently cook leeks and spring garlic, cover ajar, in olive oil and a little water until soft. Stir in tomatoes, saffron, lemon peel, and orange peel. Add asparagus and fava beans and stir for a few minutes. Add remaining wine, cook uncovered over medium heat for 5 minutes, add crab and clam broth, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cook until vegetables are soft, add crab and clams, and bring back to a simmer. Off heat, stir in the crab butter, ladle into warm bowls, and shower with chopped herbs.

*Serves 4*