

limestone's trademark crisp and mineral profile as well as Chablis's quintessential orchard fruit and briny oyster-shell flavors with a remarkable purity. This goes also for Jean Boxler's Gewurztraminer Réserve and Champalou's Vouvray Brut. In these bottlings, the luscious and exotic Gewurztraminer and racy, mineral, stone-fruited Chenin Blanc deliver specific and unmistakable expressions of Alsace and Vouvray, respectively.

You'll find the same qualities in the regions of France and Italy where red grapes are most often bottled on their own, as in the Beaujolais, Piedmont, or Tuscany. The Thévenets' old-vine Morgon showcases a gorgeous union of grape—Gamay—and sandy, granitic terroir, while Castagnoli's Chianti Classico delivers Tuscan Sangiovese in all of its elegant, unadorned, and soulful glory. Finally, Silvio Giamello's Barbaresco expresses an identity so alluringly pure and clear that Nebbiolo from this part of Piemonte might just become one of your favorite reds forever. This is the magic of single-variety wines. —TOM WOLF



## NEBBIOLO

The variety's tannin, with its evolution, makes this wine fascinating. When the Nebbiolo is drawn off, the tannins are not so strong and the aroma is very fruity (raspberry, cherry), like a light wine. Then, during aging in wood, the tannin begins to emerge, and the aroma becomes more complex. Finally, with refinement in the bottle, the tannin slowly softens, and the aromas become more intense and evolve into spices.

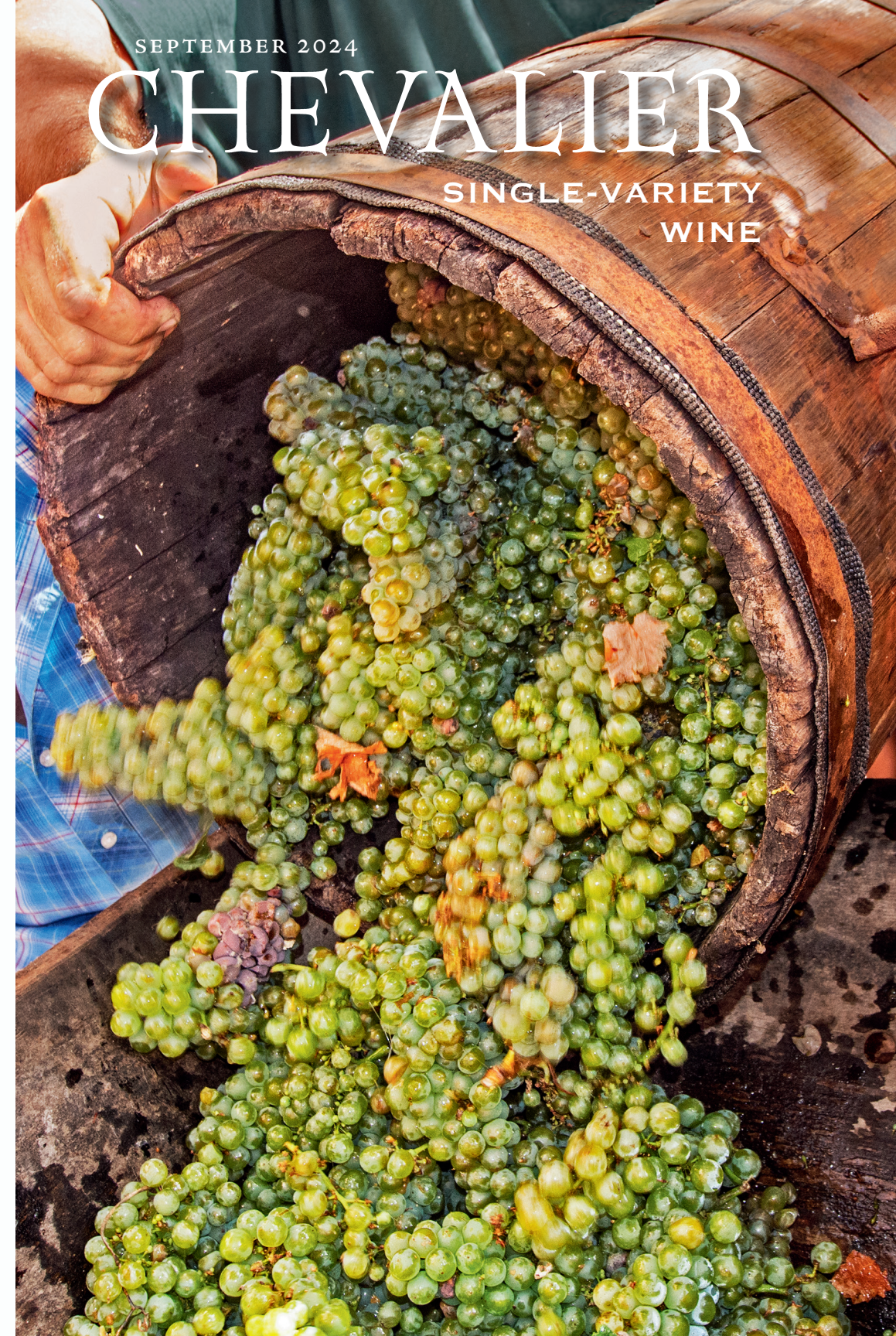
The classic match is with a roast veal or a selection of mature hard cheeses—30-month Parmesan, Tuma, or Testun, for instance. For dessert, it can be combined with bunet, the classic dessert in our area, based on bitter cocoa, eggs, milk, and amaretti. I also like it with 70/80% dark chocolate. — SILVIO GIAMELLO



## CHENIN BLANC

Chenin produces wines that represent the unvarnished reflections of their winemaker, vintage, and terroir. The wines can be smooth and mineral, and their expressions change over time, allowing notes of exotic fruits, white truffle, or a toasted character to emerge. In my work in the cellar, I like to be surprised by certain vintages and to reflect on the nuances of sugar balance that I wish to express. Nothing is written or obvious—it is up to us to highlight their particular qualities.

I have a sweet tooth and like to live with the seasons. For pairing with Chenin, I really like the creaminess and smoothness of the goat cheese from our region, as well as truffle cheeses and cow's blue cheese! I also enjoy it with sushi, sashimi, other makis, Thai curries, and my mother's *blanquette de veau*! — CÉLINE CHAMPALOU



## SINGLE-VARIETY WINE

While some of France and Italy's greatest wine regions—especially around the Mediterranean coast—specialize in blends, many, more inland and with more continental climates, have flourished in wines that contain just a single grape variety. For countless reasons—historical, cultural, geological—these regions have gravitated toward varietal wines, and generations of growers have continued to refine and perfect the marriage of grape variety and terroir.

Take Domaine Roland Lavantureux's Chablis. As in all of that appellation's greatest bottles, Chardonnay serves as a lens through which to transmit the magic of Chablis's Kimmeridgian terroirs. Through this lone grape, you can sense this



VOUVRAY BRUT ♦ CHAMPALOU \$30

IT IS UNCOMMON, across the world of wine, for a producer to cultivate a single grape variety alone. Of the nearly two hundred growers whose wines we import, a tiny fraction do this. Thierry Allemand in Cornas (Syrah). The Raveneaus in Chablis (Chardonnay). The Lapierras in Morgon (Gamay). Then there are the Champalous, who live and work in Vouvray, just downriver from the Château du Clos Lucé, where Leonardo da Vinci spent his final years. Of this small and impressive set of single-grape devotees, Catherine, Didier, and their daughter Céline draw the widest range of styles out of one material. From a dry sparkler to two of the most sublime late-harvest wines on this planet—and three styles in between—they have not only found but also mastered the diverse, exquisite possibilities of Chenin Blanc.

Their Vouvray *pétillant* is crafted in the *méthode traditionnelle*: the secondary fermentation takes place in bottle, and then the wine is aged extensively on its lees—in this case, two years—before being disgorged and recorked. From clay and limestone vineyards, they are able to obtain remarkable complexity in their Brut, while the texture shows both a creamy richness and an austere minerality. For this reason, this wine makes a great bargain alternative to Champagne, but it is important not to overlook the fact that it comes from a terroir and grape variety of its own. The Champalous like to serve it at the end of a meal, but this dry sparkler works well from the *apéritif* all the way through dessert.

2022 CHABLIS ♦ ROLAND LAVANTUREUX \$44

AMONG THE PRODUCERS we work with in France and Italy, perhaps no one has transformed their domaine as comprehensively—and tastefully—in the last decade as brothers Arnaud and David Lavantureux. They have added a hand-



ful of beautiful *premier* and *grand cru* cuvées to their lineup, quickly turning 4 Rue Saint-Martin in Lignorelles into one of the region's most respected addresses. But, in spite of all the exciting new additions, the family's foundational wine is this village Chablis. As you'll see, the wine is a crystal-clear translation of the Kimmeridgian limestone of Chablis—Chardonnay the way it can only taste from these soils. In addition to its crisp, saline finish, you'll find rich, layered fruit and impressive length on the palate. Make way for the new generation!

2021 GEWURZTRAMINER “RÉSERVE” ♦ ALBERT BOXLER \$59

JEAN BOXLER'S CREATIONS epitomize how special the wines of Alsace can be, particularly the incredible diversity of terroirs and grape varieties that make the region so exciting and unique. Kermit can remember when Gewurztraminer was the most prized and demanded grape of Alsace in the United States—how times have changed. Its fortunes have fallen along with those of Sauternes growers. But the reason for its popularity back then still holds true today: it is capable of producing some of the most complex, delicious, age-worthy white wines in the world. There are few better ways to experience its charms than through Boxler's talented hands. Many classical French food pairings exist, although spicy Asian cuisine is also a great combination. From his vines planted in limestone (Boland and Heimbouurg crus of Turckheim), Boxler's Réserve bottling always has great acidity and an ethereal quality that makes it one of the most noble bottlings of this grape in the world.



2022 MORGON “VIEILLES VIGNES”  
♦ JEAN-PAUL ET CHARLY THÉVENET \$42

IT'S NOT EASY TO raise the bar when your father revolutionized winemaking in a given region, but that is precisely what Charly Thévenet has accomplished with recent vintages of old-vine Morgon. Building upon the creed of sustainable



farming and natural winemaking that brought the “Gang of Four” to the limelight, Charly has added his own touch, resulting in cru Beaujolais that presents hedonistic pleasure and serious pedigree: chilling the grapes down before fermentation preserves vibrant fruit and freshness, while his decision to forgo punch-downs and pump-overs yields a silky-fine grain without sacrificing underlying structure. Dip your nose into this Morgon for a kaleidoscope of sublime aromas—the spice-box perfume could well come from Vosne-Romanée, but no, this is pure Gamay grown in granite, as swallowable as we could ever dream of.

2020 BARBARESCO “VICENZIANA” ♦ SILVIO GIAMELLO \$45

SILVIO GIAMELLO'S CELLAR in the town of Barbaresco is like a temple of fine Nebbiolo: quiet, dark, and saturated with a mystical energy that permeates the air while divine vinous scents waft up from the glass he has ceremoniously filled with a sample of the latest vintage. Silvio crafts utterly pure, transparent Barbaresco capable of wooing the senses and stirring up deep emotion in the lucky few who taste his modest production—its minuscule numbers and his reserved demeanor ensure that his wines stay under the radar. He is a *vignaiolo* in the truest sense of the term, a farmer whose work in the cellar relies solely on patience, tasting, and the wisdom passed down from previous generations. This entails natural fermentations, aging the wines in *botti grandi* (oak casks), and bottling them unfiltered.

The 2020 bottling is a master class in how to produce Nebbiolo that is simultaneously lithe and full of character and will certainly offer thrills to those capable of keeping their hands off it. It presents a wonderfully intense aroma of classically styled Barbaresco, layered with underbrush, tobacco, and bitters. A delicate and savory palate, framed by fine Nebbiolo tannins and plenty of refreshing acidity, suggests it will live a long and prosperous life. If you wish to drink it young, it is certainly open for business today, especially paired with sautéed wild mushrooms or a pan-seared ribeye.

2019 CHIANTI CLASSICO ♦ CASTAGNOLI \$31

UNCORKING A TRUE CHIANTI is the easiest way to experience the amazing potential of Tuscan Sangiovese. By “true” Chianti, we are referring to wines hailing from the original Chianti Classico zone, grown sustainably in poor soils on hillside sites, vinified by local artisans, and raised in traditional large oak *botti*. This formula is responsible for wines that excel at table alongside Tuscan, or even generally Mediterranean-inspired, cuisine. It has created wines that seamlessly ally rusticity with nobility, offering a satisfyingly chewy bite when young and divine delicacy with bottle age. And, best of all, these wines are often very modestly priced!

Castagnoli's magnificent terroir is pristinely reflected in the glass: abundant, well-ripened fruit maintains an excellent acidity that perks up each sip and leaves you salivating for your next bite. Thick and saucy, it echoes the flavors of herbs and stewed tomatoes with which you'd coat a serving of hot pappardelle. With balance, grip, and rustic, earthy nuances, this is the real deal, straight from the Tuscan countryside.



Vouvray Brut <i>Champalou</i> LOIRE	Chenin Blanc	20-year-old vines Clay, limestone	Serve <i>cold</i> 46–50°F  Do not decant	Honeysuckle, brioche, lime zest  Crisp, bone-dry, mineral	Drink now through 2030
2022 Chablis <i>Domaine Roland Lavantureux</i> BURGUNDY	Chardonnay	30-year-old vines Kimmeridgian limestone, clay	Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52°F  Decant optional	Meyer lemon, chalk, brine  Dense, textural, chiseled	Drink now through 2030
2021 Gewurztraminer “Réserve” <i>Albert Boxler</i> ALSACE	Gewurztraminer	40- to 67-year- old vines  Limestone	Serve <i>cool</i> 50–54°F  Decant optional	Lychee, rose petal, grapefruit  Exotic, succulent, ambrosial	Drink now through 2030
2022 Morgon “Vieilles Vignes” <i>Jean-Paul et Charly Thévenet</i> BEAUJOLAIS	Gamay	Vines planted in 1929, 1936, 1962–1963  Sandy granite	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F  Decant optional	Strawberry, smoke, earth  Bright, silky, dusty tannin	Drink now through 2030
2020 Barbaresco “Vicenziana” <i>Silvio Giamello</i> PIEMONTE	Nebbiolo	41- to 48-year-old vines  Clay with lime- rich marl	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F  Decant recommended	Black cherry, cracked pepper, soft leather  Perfumed, elegant, complex	Drink now through 2035
2019 Chianti Classico <i>Castagnoli</i> TUSCANY	Sangiovese	Vines planted in 1993–2010  Galestro, loam, limestone	Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62°F  Decant recommended	Blood orange, rosemary, black olive  Refined, high-toned, mineral	Drink now through 2030

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