



ROUGE
MARCH 2021

2019 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE “POIGNÉE DE RAISINS” DOMAINE GRAMENON

FEW GRAPE VARIETIES are more earth-bound than Grenache. Wines made from this star of southern France often taste stony, full of *garrigue*, and, well, earthy. So it is something of a miracle that Domaine Gramenon has crafted a cuvée that proudly retains that essence of Grenache yet is still so ethereal. Largely due to this kind of paradoxical magic, Michèle Aubéry-Laurent and her son Maxime are among the most respected vignerons not only of the southern Rhône, where they produce roughly twenty distinct bottlings, but in all of France. They grow Grenache and Syrah, among several other regional varieties, but instead of making rich, robust wines—which is easy to do in these parts—their reds tend to sit at the more lively, exuberant end of the spectrum. Chalk this up to their devotion to biodynamic and organic farming as well as their more “natural” winemaking practices in the cellar. This Poignée de Raisins—“fistful of grapes”—accomplishes the elusive feat of boasting both soul and a soaring joie de



vivre. It doesn't get much more perfect than that.

—Tom Wolf

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE

\$324.00 PER CASE



LEFT
*Michèle Aubéry-Laurent
and her son Maxime*

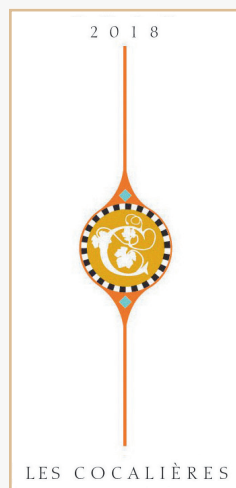
COVER
A sliver of Les Cocalières
© Gail Skoff

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

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2018 LANGUEDOC MONTPEYROUX ROUGE “LES COCALIÈRES” • DOMAINE D’AUPILHAC

IT TAKES A SPECIAL KIND of vigneron to look out across France’s most esteemed appellations and vineyard sites, deemed so decades if not centuries before, and proclaim, “I am going to create a new vineyard just as special from scratch!” But then again, Sylvain Fadat of Domaine d’Aupilhac is no ordinary vigneron. In the 1990s, Sylvain identified a volcanic amphitheater high in the Montpeyroux hills, with soils of basalt, raw limestone, and marine fossils, as a unique terroir perfectly suited to making extraordinarily elegant wine from Syrah, Grenache, and Mourvèdre. First, Sylvain had to move mountains to make this vineyard a reality—literally, by clearing huge boulders and some of the shrubbery that clung obstinately to the hillside. Then, he planted his vines, which are surrounded, to this day, by a landscape teeming with wildlife and aromatic herbs. He was vindicated right out of the gate: his earliest bottlings from Les Cocalières hold up, after twenty years in bottle, as stellar reds. The *rouge* he makes today from this site benefits even more from the older vines and Sylvain’s deepened experience with this terroir. It is no exaggeration to say that this cuvée shows some of the greatest finesse of any red wine from the south of France. —Tom Wolf



\$39.00 PER BOTTLE **\$421.20** PER CASE



<p>2019 Côtes-du-Rhône “Poignée de Raisins” <i>Domaine Gramenon</i></p>	<p>Grenache</p>	<p>4- to 30-year-old vines Clay, limestone varied with gravel, <i>galets roulés</i>, and/or sand</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant optional</p>	<p>Dark fruit, stones, <i>garrigue</i> Earthy, ethereal, lively</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p>2018 Languedoc Montpeyroux <i>Rouge</i> “Les Cocalières” <i>Domaine d’Aupilhac</i></p>	<p>40% Syrah, 30% Grenache, 30% Mourvèdre</p>	<p>Vines planted in 1999–2002 Limestone, basalt</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant optional</p>	<p>Black olives, black cherries, smoke Refined, restrained, elegant</p>	<p>Drink now through 2035</p>

GRILLED BAVETTE STEAK WITH THYME BUTTER

by Christopher Lee

Bavette is a juicy, flavorful cut of beef not commonly seen on American tables. Taken from underneath the fat cap of the whole rib, it is casually called “flap” by butchers. Bavette cooks tremendously well and accepts sauces happily, whether a reduction sauce with red wine or a simple maître d’hotel butter. Cooked medium-rare, the steak has a deep flavor, drawn out by the earthy, herby butter, that is a perfect match for both southern reds of this month’s Club Rouge selection. If you have difficulty locating bavette, skirt and hanger steak are both great alternatives; flank steak is too lean for this preparation. Rib eye steak with or without the bone, though a bit more expensive, is another wonderful choice.

4 ounces best-quality,
lightly salted butter

1½ teaspoons
black peppercorns,
preferably Tellicherry,
coarsely cracked with
a mortar and pestle

¼ teaspoon chopped garlic

1½ tablespoons fresh thyme
leaves, stripped from
stem, coarsely chopped

Optional: 1 tablespoon beef
marrow, finely chopped

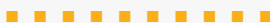
4 six-ounce bavette steaks,
each 1½ to 2 inches thick

1½ ounces grapeseed
or olive oil

Allow butter to soften at room temperature in a mixing bowl until pliable. When soft, add peppercorns, chopped garlic, and thyme and blend well. If using, add beef marrow. With a spatula, spread butter onto a piece of plastic wrap and shape into a log about 5 inches long. Roll butter into an even 1½-inch-diameter log, and twist the ends of the plastic to tighten around butter. Chill for 3 hours in refrigerator. When firm, cut into ¾-inch slices. Place pieces side by side on a parchment-lined plate and put in refrigerator. If you have two layers of butter slices, separate with a piece of parchment.

Brush steaks lightly with oil. Grill over medium-hot fire to medium rare (125° F internal temperature), turning every 2 minutes for even cooking, 10–12 minutes total cooking time, depending on thickness. Remove steaks to side grill to rest for 1 minute. Arrange steaks on a warm serving platter, place a piece or two of thyme butter on top of each steak, and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings



Christopher Lee is a former head chef of Chez Panisse and Eccolo restaurants in Berkeley and co-founder of Pop-Up General Store in Oakland. Visit his website: oldfashionedbutcher.com.