

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

JANUARY 2019



An Alsatian baeckeoffe presented by Aura Meyer

© Gail Skoff

DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC SAMPLER
NEW ARRIVALS FROM ALSACE, BURGUNDY, AND SICILY
GHISLAINE DUPEUBLE: LA CHEVALIÈRE

MEYER-FONNÉ: *TERROIR* MASTERY

by Dixon Brooke

I KNOW OF NO BETTER LESSON in *terroir* than a three-hour tasting with Félix Meyer in Katzenthal, Alsace. I made my annual pilgrimage to see him during the first week of December to taste through all of his 2017s, and again I left with my head in the stars.

2017 GEWURZTRAMINER “RÉSERVE”

As usual with Félix’s Réserve cuvées, this wine is a blend of fruit from various parcels across all of his holdings (including no less than three *grands crus* in this case), planted in sandstone, granite, and limestone. The incredibly complex aromas soar out of the glass with an underpinning note of rose petal, the full-bodied and almost oily texture is classic, and the finish really sets it apart—long, stony, and fresh. Meyer’s wines will never leave your palate tired; you will always be craving another sip. I can name no other grower whose bottles more consistently provide so much drinking pleasure.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE **\$313.20** PER CASE

2017 PINOT GRIS “RÉSERVE”

Félix is helping to redefine a new and drier style of Pinot Gris, surely the hardest style to manage well in the region. His third consecutive triumph is his best, in my book, and ample proof that he has unlocked the key to this challenging but oh so rewarding style. This is once again a complex blend from his trilogy of *terroirs*, aged in *foudre*. From the exceedingly fine and elegant nose to the creamy and lacy texture, the overall balance and touch, and its hint of salty freshness, this wine shows how understated, finessed, and downright glorious dry Pinot Gris can be in Alsace. Bravo.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE **\$313.20** PER CASE

2017 RIESLING “RÉSERVE”

Meyer’s Riesling in 2017 is a lesson in balance, with the grape’s trademark acidity wrapped in a cloak of delicious pulp. A plateau of sandstone marl above the *grand cru* Sporen in Riquewihr provides a stunning foundation for blending with his granite holdings in Katzenthal and neighboring Ammerswihr (Kaepperkopf *grand cru*). The explosive nose manages to be powerful, bright, and stony simultaneously, and the palate sports the type of structure, balance, and salivating nervousity that you would normally expect only in a *grand cru* of the highest order.

\$26.00 PER BOTTLE **\$280.80** PER CASE

— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

DOMAINE DUPEUBLE

by Jane Berg

*The raw material of Beaujolais is hermaphrodite:
the flavors of red wine, but often the texture and balance of a white.*

—ANDREW JEFFORD

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, but the Beaujolais from stars like the Gang of Four evoke a certain carefreeness in me. One single sip transports me to a courtyard in Villié-Morgon, uncorking bottle after bottle, getting tipsier than intended. Then there are the Beaujolais from Chignard and Diochon that always make me stand a little taller, study my glass a little longer, and recall that *structured Gamay* is not an oxymoron. But the perfectly simple village *rouge* of Domaine Dupeuble, which joyfully toes the line between these two styles, offers the charm and drinkability of the most effusive Morgons with the class and frankness of a chiseled Moulin-à-Vent. To navigate that sweet spot between the two, Ghislaine Dupeuble vinifies without the least bit of sulfur until bottling, in thick slabs of cement vats that keep the fruit fresh and crunchy. But don't take my word for it, as KLWM isn't the only one to hold this estate in high esteem.

This year, Ghislaine became one of the youngest people in history—and one of very few women—to receive the prestigious Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole. Awarded by the French *ministre d'agriculture* to the likes of Jacques Pépin, Yann Arthus-Bertrand, Louis Pasteur, and even Kermit Lynch himself, the medal recognizes those who have made and continue to make a significant impact preserving France and its agricultural resources. The award is a particular honor and accomplishment after only 20 years since joining the family's 500-year-old estate. Ghislaine, however, graciously accepts without any ego. She insists the passion and savoir-faire of her late parents, Damien and Danièle, laid the groundwork for her success. If that's the case, let's raise a glass of Dupeuble *rouge* in her parents' honor, and cheers to Ghislaine's very first vintage as a Chevalière—or whatever the French word is for a female knight.



2017 BEAUJOLAIS

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE

\$161.46 PER CASE

MOURVÈDRE

by Chris Santini

IN PROVENCE, old-timers say that Mourvèdre, much like man, is happiest when it can see the sea. It's not that the grape is demanding about the view from its perch, but rather that to face the sea is to be sheltered from the often harsh and hot winds of the mistral. Offering Mourvèdre such prime real estate speaks volumes on its value and importance. Once considered the noblest grape of the coast, from Nice to Spain, it has seen its home diminished over the years to the environs of Bandol and a few small pockets of resistance sprinkled here and there, notably in the Roussillon. Sadly, the reason is all too familiar—its low yields and finicky development led growers to opt for more productive and easier-to-grow varieties. Even in Bandol, the grape was once on the verge of disappearing, saved in the 1930s only by the determination and charm of the Peyraud family at Domaine Tempier, who convinced the entire appellation to go back to the way of Mourvèdre.

Today, that tradition remains strong in Bandol, especially in the hands of Agnès Henry at Domaine de la Tour du Bon. Independent and philosophical, she guides her Mourvèdres through different interpretations, be it rosé or *rouge*, in cement, wood, or clay amphorae. Her 2015 Bandol *rouge*, long the estate's flagship wine, is all that we love most about Bandol: layers of juicy black fruits with chew and a real sense of place, with black olive tapenade on the nose. Only in Provence . . .

Heading west, not far from the Spanish border in the heart of French Catalan country, another philosopher-vigneron, Olivier Vinci, makes a wildly meaty and minty *rouge* from a rare remaining parcel of very old-vine Mourvèdre. At Olivier's neck of the woods overlooking the Mediterranean to the east and Spain to the south, he vinifies slow and long, with the utmost lack of intervention.

For both the Bandol and the Catalan wines, leave time once opened—or decant—before drinking, to allow the olive or minty eucalyptus notes to reach their peak. Then you can truly celebrate the grandest grape of the southern French coast.

2015 BANDOL ROUGE DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE **\$388.80** PER CASE

2015 CÔTES CATALANES ROUGE "COSTE" DOMAINE VINCI

\$38.00 PER BOTTLE **\$410.40** PER CASE

WHITE BURGUNDY

by Anthony Lynch

2016 MEURSAULT “CUVÉE LÉO” DOMAINE DE CHÉRISEY

What we have here is a young-vine bottling from the uppermost, rockiest portion of Meursault’s slope. The wine grew up in stainless steel without ever passing through wood, so it is an altogether different expression of this great appellation than we typically see, favoring fresh fruit over nuttiness and clean crispness over luscious richness. It was bottled straight off its lees, unfinned and unfiltered, to preserve the integrity of its youthful flavors. Try a bottle to experience the lighter, brighter side of Meursault—you’ll find that its prestigious *terroir* shines through nonetheless.

\$65.00 PER BOTTLE

\$702.00 PER CASE

2016 MÂCON FARGES “VIEILLES VIGNES” HENRI PERRUSSET

Moving south, we arrive in the sunnier Maconnais, a part of Burgundy blessed with just the slightest hint of the Mediterranean’s balmy influence. Riper fruit mingles with floral charm, backed by a lively acidity and the concentrated minerality of deeply rooted vines planted in the 1940s. Perrusset excels at crafting wines that are accessible, true to their origin, and reliably delicious at a great price—that’s satisfaction guaranteed.

\$21.00 PER BOTTLE

\$226.80 PER CASE

2016 POUILLY-FUISSÉ “LA CROIX VIEILLES VIGNES” • DOMAINE ROBERT-DENOENT

Young brothers Antoine and Nico at Robert-Denoent are stars of the Maconnais, and rightfully so: they farm incredibly old vines in the region’s top *terroirs*, allowing their vineyards to shine through organic farming and all-natural vinifications. This 2016 marks a new departure for them, as they began experiments with biodynamics and a move toward larger barrels and less new wood. Their top cuvée, La Croix is a bit of an anomaly: the soil of dark, flaky schist is without equal in all of Burgundy. It provides a stimulating stoniness to counterbalance the thick layers of dense, fleshy fruit. Of the three wines on this page, this tightly wound beast stands to improve the most with cellaring, though it has much to offer today.

\$51.00 PER BOTTLE

\$550.80 PER CASE

DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC SAMPLER

by Dixon Brooke

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL and interesting region of France you have never visited is probably the Languedoc-Roussillon, the wide swath of southern Mediterranean France that stretches from the Roman settlement of Nîmes in the east (near Avignon) all the way to the Spanish border. Full of surprises, far more diverse than you would imagine, the region has known the vine since long before Roman times. Wine country here straddles a series of hills and plateaus that are conveniently situated between the mountains and the sea, which explains the freshness you might not expect in the wines from this area. Additionally, the myriad soil and stone types and grape varieties give these vigneron quite the palette of options to work with.

Nobody in our portfolio epitomizes the magic of this special region more than Sylvain Fadat, a blue-collar, salt-of-the-earth vigneron turned artist of the vine and organic agricultural leader in the rustic mountain village of Montpeyroux. Sylvain makes wines with no artifice, raw interpretations of this rugged land refined with skill and steady observation over many years. This sampler offers what we think is truly the best possible introduction to the Languedoc-Roussillon for the uninitiated. I think it is equally compelling to the seasoned connoisseur. Sylvain's wines can and should be appreciated both young and old.

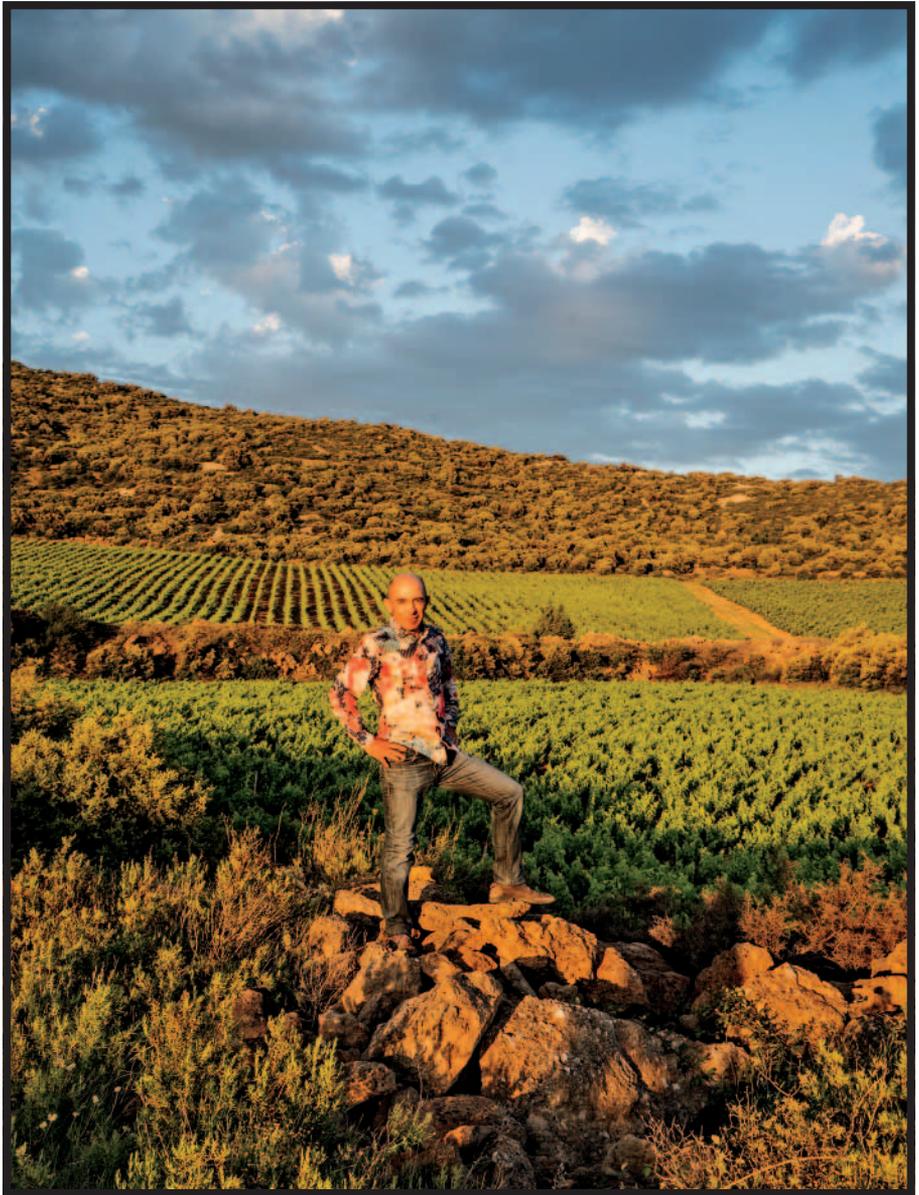
PER BOTTLE

2017 LANGUEDOC BLANC "LES COCALIÈRES"	\$35.00
<i>Unique four-grape blend, seamlessly combining fruit, flowers, and herbs.</i>	
2017 LANGUEDOC ROSÉ "LOU MASET"	18.00
<i>One of the year's most delicious rosés. Smooth and refreshing.</i>	
2017 LANGUEDOC ROUGE "LOU MASET"	18.00
<i>Younger-vine Grenache and Cinsault made in a light, easy-to-drink style.</i>	
2015 LANGUEDOC MONTPEYROUX ROUGE "CUVÉE AUPILHAC"	26.00
<i>Deep and powerful, the signature wine from the domaine's blue marl soils.</i>	
2016 VIN DE FRANCE "LE CARIGNAN"	38.00
<i>One of the world's best examples of this grape. Great ager.</i>	
2016 LANGUEDOC MONTPEYROUX ROUGE "LES COCALIÈRES"	35.00
<i>High-altitude mountain red from volcanic basalt and limestone. Brighter and softer than the two reds above.</i>	

Normally \$170.00

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$136**

(a 20% discount)



Sylvain Fadat in his Cocalières vineyard

© Gail Skoff

RHÔNE NORTH TO SOUTH

by *Dustin Soiseth*

2016 CÔTE RÔTIE “LA BOISSELÉE” BARRUOL/LYNCH

Traditionally, blending is the rule, rather than the exception, in Côte Rôtie. Despite the proliferation of single-vineyard prestige cuvées, stalwarts like Jean-Paul Jamet and Louis Barruol continue to produce classic Côte Rôtie composed of multiple vineyards that, when blended, showcase the whole of the appellation. This elegant 2016 bottling is made from six different parcels expertly vinified by Louis Barruol—a fourteenth-generation vigneron, by the way—and blended by Kermit in Louis’s ancient cellars. At the risk of sounding inelegant, the 2016, with its concentrated fruit and smoky black olive note, is straight-up delicious.

\$80.00 PER BOTTLE **\$864.00** PER CASE

2016 CÔTES DU VIVARAIS ROUGE DOMAINE GALLETY

We usually consider the southern and northern Rhône valleys as separate regions, with Grenache dominating in the south and Syrah in the north. In the area where north and south meet, though—the Côtes du Vivarais—the distinction isn’t so clear-cut. Take Alain Gallety’s brooding red that, like a vinous Janus, faces both north and south. Here Syrah and Grenache are equal partners. The deep fruit and savory elements of the former join with the cherry and licorice-scented aromas of the latter in a hybrid that would make a Prius envious.

\$26.00 PER BOTTLE **\$280.80** PER CASE

2017 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE BLANC “CLOS LA ROQUÈTE” • FRÉDÉRIC & DANIEL BRUNIER

If ever a wine qualified as a “winter white,” it’s this one. The satiny, luxurious blend of Grenache Blanc, Clairette, and Roussanne is a liquid scarf that wards off the gloom of short, cold days with a foreshadowing of the ripe summer stone fruits to come.

\$54.00 PER BOTTLE **\$583.20** PER CASE



ITALIAN REDS

by Anthony Lynch

2017 COLLINE SAVONESI CRUVIN PUNTA CRENA

If you want to get to know the Crovino grape, a red variety indigenous to the Ligurian coast that is today extinct save for a lonely hectare in cultivation by the Ruffino family at Punta Crena, then here is your chance. The hot, dry 2017 vintage concentrated the grapes such that Crovino's unique characteristics are enhanced tenfold. Black pepper, sweet exotic spice, and smoky dark fruit are delivered with an intensity that makes its smooth, well-rounded structure come almost as a surprise. This, I daresay, is undoubtedly the best Crovino you've never tasted.

\$34.00 PER BOTTLE **\$367.20** PER CASE

2014 CHIANTI CLASSICO PODERE CAMPRIANO

Elena Lapini and her husband, Luca Polga, are the type of bon vivants you'd more expect to encounter in the Beaujolais than in Tuscany: down-to-earth, quick to laugh, and always eager to pull a cork and whip out a homemade *salame*. The Chiantis they craft from their little hillside vineyard overlooking the town of Greve are classic Tuscan country wines, brimming with earthy flavors of the land and right at home alongside the rustic local cuisine. The cool 2014 vintage provides a level of drinkability not typically associated with Sangiovese: you'll find that jovial Beaujolais spirit in this bottle, with bright red fruits, a balsamic, herbal note, and supple tannins—all with a savory Tuscan twist. You'll definitely want to get that *salame* and pocketknife ready for this one.

\$30.00 PER BOTTLE **\$324.00** PER CASE

2017 ROSSO DEI DARDI • A. & G. FANTINO

Brothers Alessandro and Gian Natale Fantino own prime land in Barolo country—some of the top vineyards in Monforte d'Alba. While their venerable Barolos belong in every collector's cellar, it is their beguiling everyday *rosso* that I find myself craving the most. Its perfumed Nebbiolo fruit and sweet, tender tannins would make a full-grown Barolo look back longingly at its former self, nostalgic for its sprightly youth. Serve it ever-so-slightly chilled.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE **\$216.00** PER CASE

SICILIA

by Anthony Lynch

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL MASSERIA DEL PINO

Nearly everything we have tasted from this humble little property, almost a kilometer above sea level on the northern slopes of Mount Etna, has blown our minds. First we brought you their chewy volcanic red. Next we secured a small allocation of their one-of-a-kind *rosato*, which sold out instantly. And then we learned about the olive oil. It is made from the local San Benedetto variety, planted alongside the vineyards in ashy decomposed lava stone and produced via ancestral methods. Just as you might expect from an Etna *rosso*, this oil is beautifully fragrant, elegantly refined on the palate, and finishes with an energetic bite.

\$24.00 PER 500-ML BOTTLE **\$259.20** PER CASE

2016 VITTORIA CALABRESE • PORTELLI

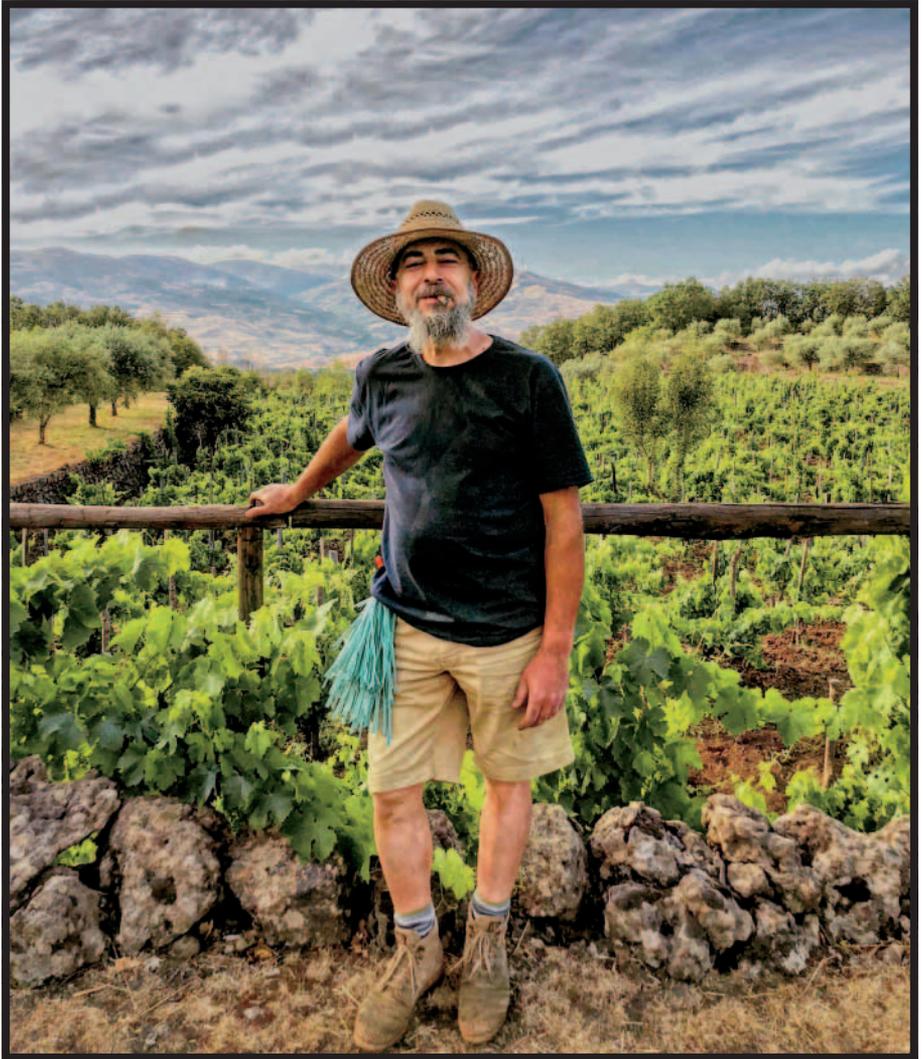
Calabrese is the local name for Nero d'Avola in the Vittoria region of southern Sicily, but the vine does not originate from Calabria, and its clusters do not look like spicy sausages (a hypothesis I drew up while hungry). The name is, in fact, an Italianization of the old Sicilian *calea* (grape) and *aulisi* (from Avola). Calabrese has made a second home for itself in the arid hills around Vittoria, displaying more graceful traits relative to the dense, tannic wines it produces closer to Avola. Portelli's version features ravishing flavors of black cherry leading to supple, gentle tannins. Try it with Calabrese sausage for a deliciously redundant pairing.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE **\$237.60** PER CASE

2017 ETNA ROSSO "SCIARE VIVE" VIGNETI VECCHIO

Vigneti Vecchio's vineyards are a sight to see: *alberello*-trained vines up to 130 years old poke out of a moonlike landscape of dusty volcanic sand that is occasionally bisected by errant solidified lava flows, called *sciare*. Carmelo Vecchio had a vision when he decided to bottle his first wine from these minuscule familial plots, and today that vision is bearing fruit we all can enjoy. This red's satiny texture allows it to gloss over the palate with utter delicacy, while suggestions of smoke, white pepper, and brandied cherries linger seductively after each sip.

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE **\$388.80** PER CASE



Cesare Fulvio of Masseria del Pino

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KERMIT ON ALSACE:

“ It is the notion of *terroir* that makes a second sip more interesting than the first and the last glass more interesting than the first. Without *goût de terroir*, you get what there is in one whiff, and there is no mystery to unfold taste after luscious taste. ”

January 1998 Newsletter



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