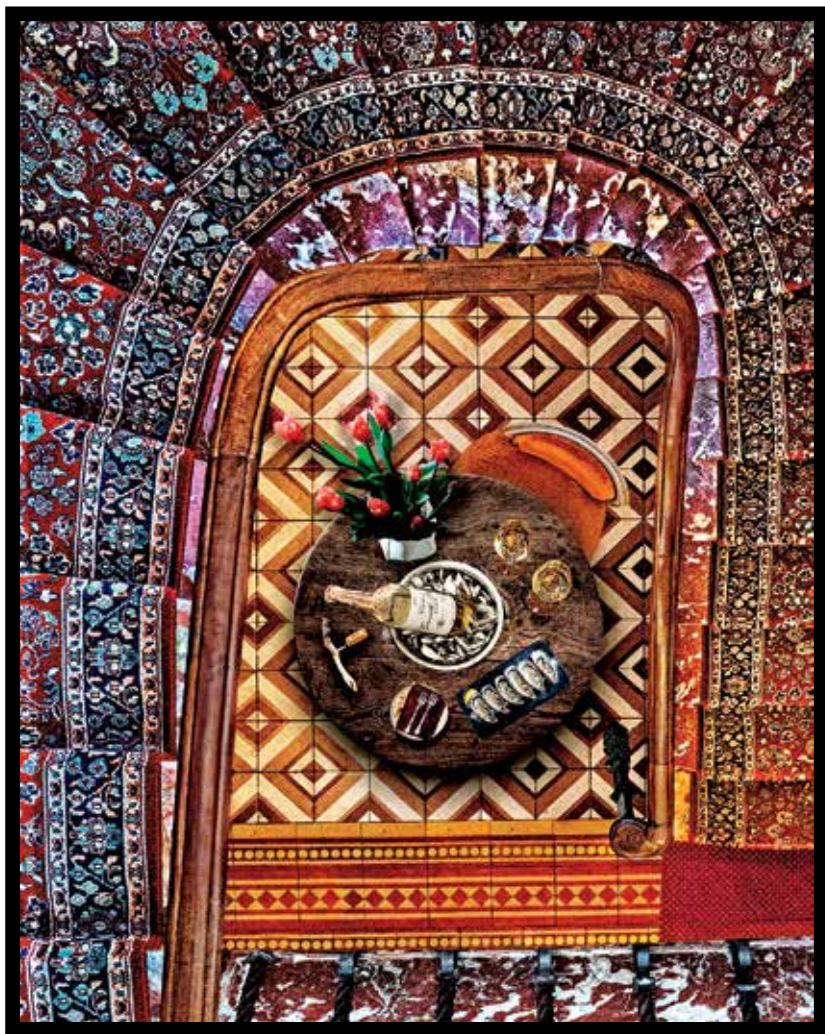


Celebrating 50 Years of Fine Wine

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

MARCH 2022



Graves and oysters

© Gail Skoff

SPOTLIGHT ON CORBIÈRES ■ CRU BEAUJOLAIS
VALUE OF THE MONTH ■ BURGUNDY SAMPLER
PIEDMONT REDS FOR EVERY OCCASION

VALUE OF THE MONTH

by Tom Wolf

2020 GRAVES BLANC CHÂTEAU GRAVILLE-LACOSTE

Bordeaux may be best known for its grand red wines, but this region along France's Atlantic coast also produces *blancs* that sing as apéritifs or alongside the daily local catch. Situated south of the left bank's prestigious châteaux, the appellation Graves is among the best sources for delicious and versatile white wines. Its clay-and-limestone soils are ideal for growing Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc, and Muscadelle: grapes that are used for both sweet Sauternes and dry Graves. All three varieties feature in this white from Hervé Dubourdieu's Château Gravelle-Lacoste. Because Hervé's vines are five decades old and therefore have access to deep water reserves, and because their location is in one of Graves's cooler microclimates, this *blanc* is incredibly consistent, year in and year out. Crisp and refreshing, with notes of citrus, cut grass, and subtle tropical fruits, it pairs as well with oysters as it does with fresh goat cheese and grilled cod, along with many more springtime culinary possibilities right around the corner.

\$21.00 PER BOTTLE

\$226.80 PER CASE

UPCOMING

Spring Sale!

Visit our retail shop or

shop.kermitlynn.com

between TUESDAY, MARCH 22 and
SATURDAY, APRIL 2 for our Spring Sale.

Dozens of springtime selections from Italy and France:
Piedmont, Sicily, Burgundy, the Rhône, and more!

BURGUNDY, NORTH TO SOUTH

6-BOTTLE SAMPLER

by Jane Berg, KLWM NEW YORK

ONE OF OUR PRODUCERS recently sent me a photo he snapped of the Roche de Solutré, the magnificent limestone cliff west of Mâcon that stands tall and proud above a sea of Chardonnay. “Regarde comme c’est beau la Bourgogne!” he said: *Look how beautiful Burgundy is!* How funny, I thought. Born and raised only a couple hundred kilometers to the north in the Yonne Valley, he was enjoying a quick vacation to *le sud* (as he called it), leaving him awestruck by the change in scenery. It got me thinking: if a local *vigneron bourguignon* could revel in the variety of his native region, why couldn’t I? With a mini-excursion in mind, our March sampler offers a tour of Burgundy from north to south—an opportunity to compare and contrast the patchwork of soils, climate, and terroir expressions from the top of the region in Chablis down to the Mâconnais. Sometimes the most enriching journeys are right under our nose.

PER BOTTLE

2019 CHABLIS “VIEILLES VIGNES” • SAVARY \$36.00

Stony and slightly opulent, with a touch of beeswax and caramelized citrus.

2019 VÉZELAY BLANC “GALERNE” • MONTANET-THODEN 35.00

This gently honeyed Vézelay is texturally chalky and primed for the main course.

2017 MOREY SAINT DENIS “EN LA RUE DE VERGY”

RÉGIS BOUVIER 69.00

Charming and fragrant, seeping with morello cherry and spices like pepper and clove.

2019 SAINT-AUBIN ROUGE “LES EDUENS” • DOMAINE LARUE 40.00

Transparent and mouthwatering, a pristine rouge with racy acidity.

2019 GIVRY ROUGE IER CRU “A VIGNE ROUGE”

DOMAINE FRANÇOIS LUMPP 64.00

The wine of the pack for me. Expect to be wowed.

2017 POUILLY-FUISSÉ “LA CROIX VIEILLES VIGNES”

DOMAINE ROBERT-DENOGENT 60.00

An ample and stately white Burgundy that’s both chiseled and generous.

Normally \$304.00

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$259**

(a 15% discount)

PIEDMONT REDS FOR EVERY OCCASION

by Tom Wolf

2019 MONFERRATO ROSSO TENUTA LA PERGOLA

We often talk about the ultimate bistro wine, but what about the ultimate trattoria wine—the kind of carefree, delicious red you can drink from a carafe at lunchtime alongside a plate of pasta or assorted salumi? Having spent countless hours collectively at roadside lunch stops throughout Italy, we can tell you this bottle, with its perfect balance of bright red fruit, tannin, and acidity, is the trattoria *rosso* of our dreams.

\$14.00 PER BOTTLE **\$151.20** PER CASE

2020 LANGHE NEBBIOLO PIERO BENEVELLI

When we describe the flavors of red wine, we tend to speak primarily of red- or black-fruited notes, but Benevelli's Langhe Nebbiolo offers so much zest and mouthwatering acidity, the first flavor that comes to mind when I taste this classy red is blood orange. Deceptively light on its feet, it finishes with an impressive tannin that begs for a hearty stew or your favorite cut of steak.

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

2017 BAROLO "VIGNA SANTA CATERINA" GUIDO PORRO

Hillside vines, phenomenal sun exposure, limestone-rich marl soils, and an incredibly talented and experienced Piemontese *vignaiolo* combine to deliver one of the most expressive red wines you'll taste all year. Both succulent and structured, this Barolo bursts with explosive aromas and flavors of black cherries, rose petals, black tea, and spices, which make this bottling approachable now even though it will evolve into an epic *rosso* over the next five, ten, and fifteen years.

\$57.00 PER BOTTLE **\$615.60** PER CASE

CORBIÈRES SPOTLIGHT

by Chris Santini, KLWM BEAUNE

IF YOU'D LIKE a travel tip for France, I have a good one for you: go to Corbières! A swath of hills, mountains, and small villages in southern France, the region thankfully is still largely unknown and well preserved. Living is good in those hills, with plenty of artsy villages, locavore restaurants, B&Bs with old-school charm, hikes and sites galore, and, of course—the reason we're here—a plethora of local wines that are most often affordable and pleasantly drinkable, and, at their best, truly exceptional.

Bruno Laboucarié, our man in the north of Corbières for the last forty years or so at Domaine de Fontsaïnte, embodies that quality of life by permanently beaming with joy, wearing his smile from ear to ear. Maxime Magnon, our guy in the south of Corbières, on the border of Catalan country, left his home in Burgundy (where the livin' ain't too bad, either) to settle down in the bohemian-tinged village of Durban-Corbières. Both make wines full of pride, joy, and depth.

While Fontsaïnte may be most famous for their Gris de Gris, the Demoiselle *rouge* cuvée has always been their hidden treasure, so to speak. Gnarled vines, well over a century old, surrounding the historic Laboucarié family home reliably churn out year after year a strawberry fruit, spice, and chocolate-toned *rouge* that, while rich and full, remains balanced.

Maxime Magnon is also an aficionado of old vines, which he farms assisted by cows, sheep, horses, and a donkey, and from which he manages to produce incredibly pure, velvety smooth wines that deeply reflect their terroirs. His *blanc*, La Bégou, is what I would want a Corbières *grand cru* to taste like, if they had that sort of thing there—regal, rich, and savory. His Rozeta *rouge* has a fun and uplifting Beaujolais-like black cherry spritz thing going on at first glance, which rapidly gives way to a gutsy, intense, rock-infused soul. A recent article in the French press summed up my thoughts exactly on Maxime's wines as possessing "both density and depth, of a disconcerting ease to be drunk."



PER BOTTLE PER CASE

2019 CORBIÈRES ROUGE "RÉSERVE LA DEMOISELLE"		
DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE	\$21.00	\$226.80
2019 CORBIÈRES BLANC "LA BÉGOU"		
MAXIME MAGNON	57.00	615.60
2019 CORBIÈRES ROUGE "ROZETA"		
MAXIME MAGNON	49.00	529.20



Looking Forward

GROTTAFUMATA

by Anthony Lynch

What would Foillard's Morgon taste like if it were grown high up on an active volcano?

WE CAN FINALLY answer this question thanks to the latest release from Grottafumata, a dynamic young estate run by Mauro Cutuli and Mariangela Prestifilippo. Never did we think, upon tasting their stellar olive oil several years ago in a wine bar on Mount Etna, that we would be dealing with a rising star of Sicily's *winemaking* scene. But when Mauro reached out the following year to let us know the couple had vinified their first Etna *bianco* and *rosso*, we couldn't refuse a tasting.



Grottafumata is, in a sense, the antithesis of many of the changes Etna has seen in recent times. As multinational wine brands have settled looking to cash in on the Etna name, bulldozing vast swaths of land in preparation for planting and erecting super-wineries overnight, Mauro and Mariangela have gone back to the roots. They painstakingly sought out great vineyard sites planted to old vines, making deals with old *contadino* farmers no longer interested in working the steep land. They grow the fruit organically and vinify it naturally in rented cellar space, and the results—tiny volumes of wines infused with Etna's exotic, smoky aura—speak for themselves.

Grottafumata's 2019 *rosso* showcases Nerello Mascalese up to one hundred years old, fermented and aged in tank, bottled unfiltered with barely any sulfur. We've heard of Etna reds being called "Burgundian," and comparisons with Barolo are not unfounded, but what about Beaujolais? Featuring the silky, juicy texture and brightly perfumed red fruit of great *cru* Beaujolais along with the volcanic grit of old vines rooted deep in decomposed lava stone, this is an irresistibly joyful expression of Etna, unlike any other we have tasted.

2019 TERRE SICILIANE NERELLO MASCALESE "LATO SUD"

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE





Mauro Cutuli and Anthony Lynch

© Gail Skoff

PUNTA CRENA

by Emily Spillmann, KLWM BEAUNE



BEHIND the postcard-worthy image of Punta Crena's vines toeing the cliffs over a glassy blue sea is the story of a family without pretense, a little yellow house in Varigotti, and an extraordinary sense of hospitality that surpasses typecasting. For sure, at Punta Crena, you'll find Paolo Ruffino's *mamma* at an informal market stand, selling produce and olives from the family's thousand-year-old trees. You'll be hard pressed to miss Paolo's children peeking out from amid the vines, and there will be airy sea-salt focaccia and homemade *trofie al pesto* like you've never tasted. But there will also be a sense of simplicity that defies grandiosity. To meet Paolo is to encounter the rare graciousness of being welcomed by a friend—one with the humor to serve fried anchovies in a carnival-style paper cone while he pours you a glass of *rosato*. This sincerity—perhaps above all else—is palpable in Punta Crena's wines, each of which is easygoing and friendly, overflowing with charm. They are excellent summer wines, so you know what to do.

2020 ROSATO “PETTIROSSO ALLEGRO”

It is hardly an exaggeration to compare Paolo Ruffino to the *pettirosso allegro*—the cheerful robin on the label of his *rosato*. He has been known to jump nimbly up and down in excitement at the sight of guests, exuding the light and carefree spirit you'll discover in this bottle of happy bubbles.

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

2020 VERMENTINO “VIGNETO ISASCO”

Salty, wildflowerly, mouthwatering freshness. Medium-bodied. Sharp. Balanced. A wine with character and that sublime capacity to transport you, if only briefly, to a seaside paradise.

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

2020 ROSSESE “VIGNETO ISASCO”

While Punta Crena's wines are easy quaffers, it is also possible to geek out about them, if that's your thing. Rossese is a somewhat obscure Ligurian grape with a knack for communicating its terroir—in this case, Varigotti's red clay—which brings uncommon roundness, the wild Ligurian brush with its herbal notes, and the emblematic coastal air salinity.

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

ALSATIAN PINOTS

by Anthony Lynch

2016 PINOT GRIS GRAND CRU “FLORIMONT” • KUENTZ-BAS

Alsatian Pinot Gris is an often-misunderstood category—a pity, considering the pleasures it can afford, especially once it’s acquired a few years of bottle age, as with this late release from the historic Kuentz-Bas estate. Unlike light, crisp Italian Pinot Grigio, the grape achieves a sun-drenched plumpness that translates to a lusciousness on the palate, no doubt from the dry, sunny climate Alsace enjoys in the rain shadow of the Vosges. With a subtle touch of sweetness, Florimont is far from a dessert wine, as its complementarity to bratwurst, pork chops, and roasted root vegetables attests. It is a *grand cru* that confers exceptional finesse—in other words, this is a full-bodied white with a featherweight touch.

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

2020 PINOT BLANC “VIEILLES VIGNES” MEYER-FONNÉ

This old-vine blend features Pinots Auxerrois, Blanc, and Gris, but the point of this cuvée is not to discern which Pinot contributes what aroma or flavor. All three work in perfect harmony, creating a delicate white subtly scented of flowers and green apple, finishing on a flinty note that makes glass number two hard to resist. Félix Meyer has mastered the art of crafting bone-dry whites of purity and precision, and this pristine beauty is just the place to start.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE **\$259.20** PER CASE

2019 PINOT NOIR “LES JARDINS” DOMAINE OSTERTAG

Here are three reasons to start paying attention to Alsace’s Pinot Noirs:

1. **NOVELTY:** Due to increasingly consistent ripening, talented Alsatian vignerons have been taking their *vin rouge* more and more seriously. Alsace is no longer synonymous only with world-class whites.
2. **FLAVOR PROFILE:** Alsatian Pinot has a character of its own. Dark and spicy with an earthiness that recalls a walk in the forest, this bottling bears that unmistakable signature.
3. **VALUE:** Great producers like Ostertag are crafting delicious Pinots at prices that do not come close to their Burgundian counterparts.

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

CRU BEAUJOLAIS

by Dixon Brooke

2020 MORGON “VIEILLES VIGNES” JEAN PAUL & CHARLY THÉVENET

Charly Thévenet and his father, Jean Paul, now bottle a range of five different wines in their cellars in Villié-Morgon, although this old-vine Morgon bottling—for many years the only wine the family produced—still rules the roost. If Beaujolais were Burgundy (thank goodness it isn't!), we might consider Morgon to be Vosne-Romanée, with its haunting perfume and silky texture, the proverbial iron fist in a velvet glove.



\$40.00 PER BOTTLE **\$432.00** PER CASE

2020 CÔTE-DE-BROUILLY NICOLE & ROMAIN CHANRION

Variations on granite, much like limestone in Burgundy, are the soil signature that combines with the Gamay grape to deliver the inimitable results of the Beaujolais. The Côte-de-Brouilly's inactive volcano imparts a distinctive smoky, flinty quality to the wines grown here, adding backbone to their ripe fruitiness. Nicole Chanrion, who has worked the northern flank of the Côte for five decades, is now joined by her son, Romain, and together they continue this domaine's worthy tradition of producing soulful, deep, structured reds from their family's old vines. Their wines are among the longest-lived in the region.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE **\$302.40** PER CASE

2020 CHIROUBLES “CUVÉE LÉA” GUY BRETON

Not since my early days in the retail store (circa 2000) have we worked with a grower in Chiroubles . . . until now! When “Max” Breton showed an interest in expanding his range of wines, I suggested Chiroubles as a terroir that could fit his preferred style (light, bright, and juicy). This *cru* is blessed with high-altitude, steep, decomposed granite slopes and a lot of old vines that are very difficult to work. If you are willing to put in the elbow grease—which fewer and fewer seem prepared to do—the results can be mesmerizing. The crunchy, lip-smacking berry fruit of this beauty are simply delicious, as all proper Beaujolais should be, and there is intellectual interest to boot!

\$40.00 PER BOTTLE **\$432.00** PER CASE

From the Archives

NICOLE CHANRION

by Kermit Lynch

1995 CÔTE DE BROUILLY DOMAINE DE LA VOÛTE DES CROZES

IF I DID NOT LIKE my other Beaujolais producers so much, I would tell you that Nicole Chanrion makes the best of them all, because when you have your nose in a glass of hers, you cannot imagine any other Beaujolais possibly surpassing it. And it is such glorious WINE, you know, so essentially, definitively *wine*-like.

The aroma of her 1995 is super, a mixture of red fruits like raspberry and cherry, but above all crushed fresh strawberries, you know, the way it would smell if you picked up a bunch of fresh strawberries in your hands and mashed them up right under your nose. Forget any prejudice about *wimpy* Beaujolais. This aroma is *macho*. And it rises regally out of a solid, intense structure. This is typical Chanrion. One of a kind. And so swallowable. (Swallow two glassfuls and say swallowable five times as fast as you can.)

—September 1996



Nicole Chanrion, circa 1998

© Gail Skoff

KERMIT LYNCH
WINE MERCHANT
1605 SAN PABLO AVENUE
BERKELEY, CA 94702-1317
WWW.KERMITYLNCH.COM

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
PERMIT NO. 11882

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



TO PLACE AN ORDER

Visit us online: SHOP.KERMITYLNCH.COM

Call us on the phone: (510) 524-1524

Retail shop: Open Tuesday–Saturday 11 A.M. to 6 P.M.

TO CELEBRATE our fiftieth year in action, we're looking through our archives at some of the incredible domaines we've had the pleasure to represent. This issue highlights the timeless creations of a true Beaujolais icon (p. 11), whose consistently delicious wines over a nearly thirty-year period never cease to impress. They don't call her *La Patronne* (The Boss) for nothing! In our "Looking Forward" segment (p. 6), we travel to Sicily to taste an utter delight from high on the blackened slopes of Etna. It has been a real pleasure welcoming this young domaine into the fold, and you can look forward to exciting new things to come from them in the near future. Thank YOU for making these discoveries possible! —*Kermit, Anthony, and Dixon*

VISIT US AT 1605 San Pablo Avenue, Berkeley, CA

SHOP.KERMITYLNCH.COM

OR CALL [510] 524-1524

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT—TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant makes no representation as to the legal rights of anyone to deliver or import any alcoholic beverages or other goods into any state. Buyer warrants he or she is solely responsible for the transport of the purchased products and for determining the legality and the tax/duty consequences of bringing the products to the buyer's chosen destination. In placing an order, the buyer represents to Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant that he/she is at least 21 years of age and the person to whom delivery will be made is at least 21 years old.