

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

MARCH 2024



David Lavantureux shows off fossils in his Chablis vines

©Jimmy Hayes

THE MARINE PAST AND PRESENT OF CHABLIS
A TASTE OF VALLE D'AOSTA • TOP VALUES
THREE ISLANDS • SOUTHERN FRANCE REDS

THE MARINE PAST AND PRESENT OF CHABLIS

by Tom Wolf

LOOKING OUT at the undulating hills of Chablis, littered with ancient marine fossils, it's hard not to envision the ocean that once covered this land. Row upon row of Chardonnay vines rise and fall along ridges that roll into the horizon like waves of a massive swell.

Chablis is home to arguably France's greatest union of grape variety and terroir. It's as if the appellation's relatively cool climate and 150-million-year-old limestone slopes alchemize the singularly expressive Chardonnay into a bracing, briny elixir that vividly evokes this place and its geological past.

Every last one of these white wines is crisp and mouthwateringly saline, but they also take on their own added dimensions, depending on the producer and their specific place of origin within the appellation of Chablis. Only briefly, once a year, do we have the opportunity to showcase three domaines producing first-rate Chablis at the same time. Do not miss the chance to discover and explore them all!

2022 CHABLIS "LES TRUFFIÈRES" HENRI COSTAL

Costal's Les Truffières sits at the more generous end of the spectrum, inviting you in with fleshy fruit, a stony core, and ample body. It offers a dreamy pairing for Dungeness crab or grilled shrimp.

\$39.00 PER BOTTLE

\$421.20 PER CASE

2022 CHABLIS 1^{ER} CRU "VAILLONS" HENRI COSTAL



Hailing from one of the village's venerated *premiers crus*, Costal's Vaillons blends grapes from different parts of the hillside, which results in an impeccably balanced *blanc*. Notes of spring flowers, flint, and ripe apples come into focus, making an endlessly fascinating and delicious Chablis.

\$52.00 PER BOTTLE

\$561.60 PER CASE

2022 CHABLIS “VIEILLES VIGNES” ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

Blending three parcels of the Lavantureux brothers’ oldest vines, this bottling takes the trademark notes of citrus, chalk, and brine of Chablis and dials up the density and texture. At once concentrated and chiseled, it pairs beautifully with lobster or a lemony baked cod topped with capers.

\$51.00 PER BOTTLE

\$550.80 PER CASE

2022 CHABLIS 1^{ER} CRU “VAU DE VEY” ROLAND LAVANTUREUX

Years ago, Roland Lavantureux sold two hectares of his very steep Vau de Vey holdings because the land was hard to work and, as a result of its east-facing exposition, didn’t benefit from as much warmth and balanced ripening as it does today. Realizing its newfound potential, his sons recently reacquired one hectare and have done great justice to this cooler, exposed site by drawing out its salinity and minerality. Pair this wine with raw oysters, grilled fish, or roast chicken to bring out Vau de Vey’s remarkable purity and finesse.



\$75.00 PER BOTTLE

\$810.00 PER CASE

2022 CHABLIS • FAMILLE SAVARY

Possibly the most extroverted bottling on these pages, the Savary family’s Chablis opens up with notes of ripe orchard fruit that beautifully counterbalance its underlying crisp minerality. Pair it with pretty much anything at your next potluck or picnic.

\$34.00 PER BOTTLE

\$367.20 PER CASE

2022 BOURGOGNE EPINEUIL FAMILLE SAVARY

Chardonnay has long attracted the most love in this outer satellite of Burgundy, but Savary’s Epineuil, made from Pinot Noir grown right down the road from Chablis, shows how pretty and complete reds from these parts can be. Bright and elegant, with notes of cherry and earth, this joins the ranks of our favorite bistro-friendly red Burgundies.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE

SOUTHERN FRANCE REDS

by Jane Augustine & Madison H. Brown

2022 BEAUMES-DE-VENISE ROUGE DOMAINE DE DURBAN

I think of Durban as our Dupeuble of the south: two historic KLWM domaines we've imported for decades, providing us with value-driven wines that reward beyond expectation. This gulpable weeknight *rouge* will be a no-brainer restock for the devout many who are hip to its southern charms: rustic yet fresh, aromatically lifted, and plush, velvety tannin—all at a painless price point. The 2022 has appetizing notes of dried thyme and rosemary beneath its many layers of luscious red fruit, making it an epicurean dynamo with everything from veggie pizza to pot roast. —MHB

\$23.00 PER BOTTLE

\$248.40 PER CASE

2022 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE “POIGNÉE DE RAISINS” DOMAINE GRAMENON

As an early adopter of biodynamic farming, Michèle Aubery-Laurent transformed her remote domaine in Montbrison-sur-Lez into a benchmark producer of Grenache-based reds. With this cuvée, perhaps the most iconic in her lineup, she reimagined what Grenache could be: easy-drinking, weightless, and precise. Today, Poignée de Raisins—which translates enticingly to a “fistful of grapes”—has gone on to influence countless contemporary growers across France who embrace a similar style. But for a taste of the original *glou-glou* southern Rhône *rouge*, pull the cork on this bottling. —JA

\$33.00 PER BOTTLE

\$356.40 PER CASE

2021 LANGUEDOC ROUGE “LOU MASET” DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC

The very quaffable Lou Maset from Sylvain Fadat is one of my favorite wines from the Languedoc. Sylvain has devoted a lifetime getting to know his exceptional Montpeyroux terroir and has managed to harness its every quality in this single bottling. Raised in a combination of *foudres* and stainless steel, the wine displays the crunchy limestone terroir on which it grows, alongside the sun-kissed fruit from which it's pressed. Few *rouges* strike this balance of generosity and tension, and Lou Maset is one of them. —JA

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE

\$259.20 PER CASE

2020 BANDOL ROUGE “SAINT FERRÉOL” DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON

Tour du Bon can sometimes be overlooked among our more spotlight-stealing Bandol producers such as Tempier. But meeting Agnès Henry at this incredible domaine last spring felt like a revelation. As I swirled and sniffed and jotted my notes in her quaint little tasting room off the sunny courtyard—wafts of *garigue* and citrus blossom drifting in through the open door—I found myself battling an internal dilemma: part of me wanted to shout this vinous discovery from the rooftop; the other part wanted to tuck it away like a prized jewel. Consider this page my rooftop. Saint Ferréol is a Mourvèdre masterpiece, produced only in exceptional vintages. Deeply complex with a stony minerality steeped in herbal aromatics, it calls for a luxurious cut of meat or a spot in your wine treasure trove. —MHB

\$83.00 PER BOTTLE

\$896.40 PER CASE

2022 VIN DE FRANCE ROUGE “ST JACQUES” MAXIME MAGNON

In the Hautes-Corbières, where Maxime Magnon toils in his wildly grown, biodynamic vineyards, cool things are afoot. The latest cuvée from this naturalist vigneron blends equal parts Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Carignan from a plot of vines he had been coveting for some time, not too far from the sea. Like Maxime’s other red cuvées, this one is soulful, sunny, and robust. It boasts the same *je ne sais quoi* and windswept charm we’ve come to expect from his wines: seriously Southern, a touch renegade, and disarmingly playful. —JA

\$39.00 PER BOTTLE

\$421.20 PER CASE

2022 ALPILLES ROUGE “GRENACHE” DOMAINE HAUVETTE

It is only natural—sensible, even—to draw parallels between a wine and its maker, with the best wines possessing a living soul that holds a mirror to endearing qualities like affability or poise. This bold and vibrant Grenache certainly reminds me of vigneronne Dominique Hauvette, whose no-nonsense air and scrupulous approach to winemaking have resulted in her flawless track record for impeccable, natural wines. When she’s not tending her biodynamic vines or in the cellar brewing infallible wines according to lunar cycles, she trains champion race horses—and approaches both passions with indefatigable energy and prowess. A thoroughbred of pure Grenache, this unbridled *rouge* is fresh and lithe, teeming with juicy dark fruit and ample *goût de terroir*. —MHB

\$133.00 PER BOTTLE

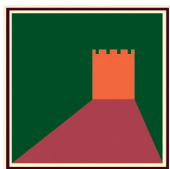
\$1,436.40 PER CASE

A TASTE OF THE VALLE D'AOSTA

CHÂTEAU FEUILLET'S 6-BOTTLE SAMPLER

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

HIDDEN AWAY in the mountainous terrain to the east of Mont Blanc and just north of Piedmont is the Valle d'Aosta, Italy's smallest region. Not a lot of wine gets produced in this tiny outpost. To succeed as a wine-maker in the unique, high-elevation microclimate, you must be courageous, committed, and confident of your footing: the terraced granite escarpments are harrowing to work and are all the more treacherous to navigate thanks to a crumbly dusting of sandy topsoil. We work with only one such determined grower, Maurizio Fiorano of Château Feuillet. He produces an array of nervy, glacial whites and silky reds that pull off the acrobatic feat of balancing intensity with freshness, texture with perfume, and drinkability with potential for aging. What is Maurizio's secret?



A combination of factors contributes to the superb balance in the wines of Château Feuillet. Vineyards enjoy a privileged southern exposition that means long hours of gentle sunlight for an auspiciously slow ripening season. In some years, grapes can be harvested as late as early November without becoming overripe. The temperature shifts between night and day are drastic, which gives buoyancy and freshness to Feuillet's lineup, along with charm and character. And somehow—a factor we can't explain with science—each wine is a tonic that captures the intoxicating purity and energizing vigor of the crisp Alpine air.

PER BOTTLE

2022 VALLE D'AOSTA MOSCATO BIANCO \$35.00

Raised in stainless steel, Moscato produces aromas that are fiercely locked into this bottling. Honeyed, yet bone-dry, it has a hint of chestnut and would be as charming for an apéritif as with a cheese or dessert course.

2022 VALLE D'AOSTA TRAMINER AROMATICO 35.00

Expressive and pedigreed, Feuillet's Traminer might be the white Burgundy equivalent of the bunch. It spends some time on its lees, giving it a rounder mouthfeel. Pair it with fattier fish or slices of salty speck.

2022 VALLE D'AOSTA PETITE ARVINE 37.00

A grape of Swiss origin, Petite Arvine is a versatile white, persistent in length, with a mouthwatering and crystalline minerality. It soaks up the sun but maintains a flinty edge.



Valle d'Aosta

© Dixon Brooke

2021 VALLE D'AOSTA ROSSO TORRETTE SUPERIEUR \$37.00

A bright and plummy wine with a velvety texture, made from the native Petit Rouge variety. Serve this beauty with bolder fare in need of a refreshing companion.

2022 VALLE D'AOSTA ROSSO CORNALIN 38.00

A spicy, smoky red with rustic undertones, Cornalin has pretty black fruit and is a great match for well-seasoned sausages and other charred meats.

2021 VALLE D'AOSTA ROSSO FUMIN 43.00

A robust and pleasantly tannic rosso, Fumin has a floral quality with a bit of a bite—similar to peppery Syrahs of the northern Rhône.

Normally \$225.00

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$169**

(a 25% discount)

THREE ISLANDS

by Anthony Lynch

2022 VERMENTINO ISOLA DEI NURAGHI “FRIA” • DEPERU HOLLER

Grown on a rocky escarpment in northern Sardinia, this Vermentino is the epitome of a great Mediterranean white. There is fleshy, golden, sun-ripened fruit, an evocative note of wild herbs and flowers drifting through a summer breeze, and the finish is not just saline, but full-on salty, as if a Mediterranean storm surge somehow ended up in the tank. The vines are farmed organically, regularly licked by cleansing winds off the coast, and the wine is fermented spontaneously and bottled unfiltered. You won't find a more authentic or refreshing expression of island Vermentino than this.

\$37.00 PER BOTTLE **\$399.60** PER CASE

2022 CORSE CALVI ROUGE “CLOS REGINU” DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

The Reginu plateau of northwest Corsica sits just fifteen minutes from the Mediterranean, but you wouldn't know it. These vineyards are surrounded by craggy hills that block access to the sea, while towering Monte Grosso to the south, which often features a dusting of snow, makes the island's azure beaches feel even more distant. Given the remote location, it's no wonder why this Niellucciu-dominant blend tastes wild, even by Corsican standards. The hints of smoke, brambles, and singed herbs make this biodynamically grown red a great candidate to open next time you cook a rosemary-rubbed meat over hot coals.

\$21.00 PER BOTTLE **\$226.80** PER CASE

2021 ETNA ROSSO “SCIARE VIVE” VIGNETI VECCHIO

This bottling made up mostly of ancient-vine Nerello Mascalese from the northern slopes of Mount Etna is named for the solidified lava flows (*sciare*) that cut across the landscape like jet-black scars. It captures the elegant, perfumed side of Etna, with bright notes of sour cherry and cracked pepper that come to life when the wine is served slightly cool. Give it some time to breathe if you can, then pour it alongside Sicilian-inspired fare such as ragù-stuffed arancini, grilled tuna steaks, or wood-fired pizza topped with fennel *salsiccia*.

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

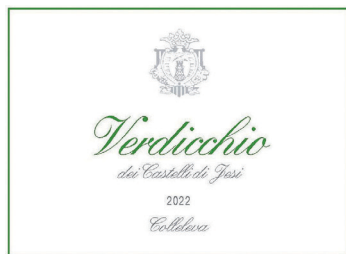
TOP VALUES

by *Dustin Soiseth*

2022 VERDICCHIO DEI CASTELLI DI JESI COLLELEVA

A common scenario plays out again and again in wine shops around the country. An affordable wine seemingly comes out of nowhere, wowing wine lovers with its deliciousness and value. Customers can't get enough, and it soon sells out. But when the eagerly anticipated next vintage arrives, something is off. Maybe it's just the variability of the vintage, or maybe the producer cut corners to make more wine. Whatever the reason, though, the magic is gone.

A more uncommon scenario is when, after a spectacular debut, the next vintage is just as good, as is the one after that, and the one after that. That's the case with this unassuming Verdicchio from the Marche. The 2014 vintage arrived with a bang, and the wine has been a customer (and staff) favorite ever since. It's sourced from vineyards planted on hillsides that face east into the cooling breezes of the Adriatic Sea, which offer protection from the summer heat. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel, and aging is brief to preserve freshness. The nose on the 2022 has hints of peach and pear. In the glass, soft fruit up front precedes a crisp, pleasantly grassy finish with a kiss of acidity. Remarkably refreshing and delicious, it produces a spark, an ineffable element that says, "Something special is happening here." I'm not sure what the secret is, but I suspect it's magic.



\$16.00 PER BOTTLE

\$172.80 PER CASE

2022 CABERNET SAUVIGNON LES TRAVERSES DE FONTANÈS

Cyriaque Rozier's Bordeaux-meets-Languedoc red wears the basic *Pays d'Oc* appellation for bureaucratic reasons only—Cabernet Sauvignon is not permitted by local A.O.C. regulations. In all other ways, it is remarkable, beginning with a vivid crimson robe and aromas of raspberries and hot stones. Fifty-year-old Cabernet vines, tended with organic and biodynamic methods, yield soft, ripe red fruit with a hint of glycerine richness followed by a finish that is wonderfully dry and chalky, speaking to the vineyard's limestone-based terroir.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE

\$216.00 PER CASE

CHENIN BLANC

by Anthony Lynch

2022 JASNIÈRES “DYANE” CHRISTINE DE MIANVILLE

Christine de Mianville is a Jasnières specialist who handcrafts tiny quantities of profound, textured whites in the Loire’s northernmost outpost for Chenin Blanc. She meticulously farms her single hectare of land organically with the help of



her beloved donkeys, Bonnie and Icare, treating her grapes as one would treat precious *grand cru* fruit from France’s most prestigious sites. Her wines ferment spontaneously to full dryness, a method that makes it possible to bottle unfiltered. The *cu-vée* Dyane captures the pristine fresh fruit Chenin displays from this silex-laden terroir, mirroring the sensation of biting into crisp slices of white peach, nectarine, and guava. Give it a moment to unwind in a carafe before indulging in this spectacular expression of dry Chenin Blanc.

\$86.00 PER BOTTLE

\$928.80 PER CASE

2019 VOUVRAY “BOIS GUYON” CATHERINE ET PIERRE BRETON

Catherine and Pierre’s son, Paul, has set up shop in Vouvray, working in his own small *cave* about an hour upriver from the domaine’s headquarters in Bourgueil. Catherine’s family hails from here, and Paul has taken it upon himself to replant and make wine from a parcel his grandparents once farmed called Bois Guyon. While they produced a late-harvest *moelleux*, Paul has opted for a *demi-sec* style utterly unique in its combination of honeyed richness and flinty verve. This bottling is hard to resist on its own, but you might also try serving it with a simple cheese platter, salty-sweet yakitori, or buffalo chicken wings.

\$38.00 PER BOTTLE

\$410.40 PER CASE

2022 SAVENNIÈRES • CHÂTEAU D'ÉPIRÉ

Paul Bizard, the new generation in charge at this historic Loire Valley property, has wasted no time in showing his youthful energy and ambition since taking over management. His very first step was to initiate an organic conversion, a monumental challenge in a place defined by a stormy oceanic climate and unforgivingly rocky soils. This latest release suggests his work is already paying off, as it stands among the most expressive young Savennières Épiré has bottled. The fleshiness on the palate reflects the Loire's sunny 2022 summer, yet it finishes dry and chiseled as ever, with lingering notes of acacia blossom and stone.

\$31.00 PER BOTTLE

\$334.80 PER CASE



Savennières

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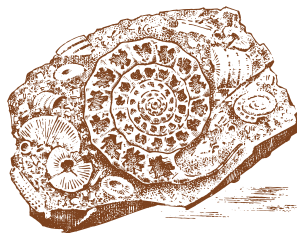
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While Meursault has provided the warmest memories, the white Burgundy that raises the hair on my back, that arouses passions ranging from teeth-gnashing outrage to utmost euphoria, is not even from the Côte d'Or. It is Chablis, northernmost Chablis, the yellow to golden-green wine from the gray, forgettable village of the same name, which has over two thousand inhabitants yet still manages to seem smaller than Meursault.

—KERMIT LYNCH, *Adventures on the Wine Route*



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