

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

APRIL 2020



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ITALIAN 12-BOTTLE SAMPLER  
NEW ARRIVALS: RHÔNE, SICILY, TUSCANY  
A FRAGRANT RED FROM LE MARCHE

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# ITALIAN SAMPLER

by *Dustin Soiseth*

**T**HE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH POET William Cowper coined the phrase “variety is the spice of life” in “The Task”: “Variety is the spice of life, that gives it all its flavor.” The poem examined everyday English life, but it could have easily been written by an Italian *vignaiolo* from a quiet, out-of-the-way region, attempting to persuade a skeptical customer to try something new. It must be challenging to give your life to your vines, honoring your region’s history and traditions, only to release the fruits of your labor into a crowded marketplace dominated by more renowned regions like Tuscany and Piedmont. “If you like Chianti, I’m sure you’ll love my Rossese,” our imaginary wine-maker would say. And while those regions are justifiably famous, they represent only a fraction of what Italy has to offer. To limit yourself to them is to miss out on the chaotic, messy, bewildering yet sublime variety of Italian wine.

Our Italian portfolio is full of wonderful producers from throughout the country, and we’ve gathered a dozen of them here to demonstrate how delicious variety can be. This sampler offers invigorating whites from Puglia, Sardinia, and the Veneto, and refreshing reds from Liguria and Sicily; wines made from Frappato, Verdiso, Lumassina, Molinara, Verdeca, Rondinella, and Rossese. We even include a few bottlings from Tuscany and Piedmont, just because. They’ll pair perfectly with the strangely shaped pasta or the oozy Italian cheese you’ve always passed up, until now.

PER BOTTLE

2018 COLLI TREVIGIANI VERDISO • GREGOLETTO . . . . .	\$20.00
2018 LUMASSINA • PUNTA CRENA . . . . .	22.00
2018 VERMENTINO DI SARDEGNA “STRIA” • VIGNE RADA . . . . .	24.00
2018 VALLE D’ITRIA “FARAONE” • I PASTINI . . . . .	19.95
2018 BARDOLINO CHIARETTO “NICHESOLE” • CORTE GARDONI . . . . .	14.00
2018 TOSCANA ROSATO • CASTAGNOLI . . . . .	22.00
2018 VINO ROSSO • ELVIO TINTERO . . . . .	9.95
2017 MONFERRATO ROSSO • TENUTA LA PERGOLA . . . . .	14.00
2018 DOLCETTO “SÖRÌ SANTA LUCIA” • IL PALAZZOTTO . . . . .	22.00
2017 VITTORIA FRAPPATO • PORTELLI . . . . .	25.00
2018 TOSCANA ROSSO “BANDINELLO” • GEGGIANO . . . . .	25.00
2015 ROSSESE DI DOLCEACQUA SUPERIORE • TENUTA ANFOSSO . . . . .	32.00

Normally \$249.90

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$199**

(a 20% discount)

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# BRAND NEW FROM LE MARCHE

## NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

*by Anthony Lynch*

### 2018 LACRIMA DI MORRO D'ALBA AZIENDA SANTA BARBARA

If ever a wine could be described as a beacon of pure joy, it might just be the rare Lacrima di Morro d'Alba from Le Marche, near central Italy's Adriatic coast. This dry red's ambrosial perfume of lavender, roses, and tooth-staining wild berries is completely intoxicating, while its lithe, juicy freshness makes imbibing feel like a divine privilege.

Made from the Lacrima grape—presumably named for the teardrop-like shape of its berries—in the gentle hills around the town of Morro d'Alba, near Ancona, this Marche specialty nearly went extinct before being revived by a handful of vigneroni in the 1980s. Lucky for us, they salvaged this gem of a variety, which reaches an aromatic expression that, next to any other red wine, feels like stepping into technicolor for the first time: you'll gaze in awe at brilliant flowers and succulent fruits bursting with sweet nectar; you may even feel something mystical we usually don't experience in wine.

The wizard behind this is Stefano Antonucci, also the author of our crisp bargain Verdicchio. Grown where the Adriatic meets the Apennines, his Lacrima is equally befitting for delicacies of the sea or land. But served chilled, on a sunny spring day, this luminous red will refresh and enliven regardless of what surrounds it.

**\$24.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$259.20** PER CASE



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# FRUIT OF THE WOODS

by Tom Wolf

**T**HE FIRST THING I remember eating in Tuscany was panna cotta with a *frutti di bosco* sauce. I knew *frutti*—"fruit"—but I asked what *di bosco* meant. "Of the woods," the waiter replied. This response didn't tell me exactly which fruit lay atop my dessert, but trying to solve that mystery with my taste buds—rather than asking—ended up being part of the fun. In their book *Vino Italiano: The Regional Wines of Italy*, Joseph Bastianich and David Lynch write that "good Chianti, or Brunello di Montalcino . . . has a foresty, smoky quality; drinking it is like eating berries in the woods, the spicy scents of the underbrush mingling with the sweetness of the fruit." The wines below evoke a wide range of berries, but all three share that irresistible woodsiness.

## 2018 TOSCANA ROSSO "BANDINELLO" VILLA DI GEGGIANO

The only *rosso* on this page that isn't 100 percent Sangiovese, the Bandinello comes from central Tuscany, closer to Siena than to Florence. The addition of Ciliegiolo juice helps make it Geggiano's juiciest, most approachable, and most versatile wine when young.

**\$25.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$270.00** PER CASE

## 2016 CHIANTI CLASSICO • CASTAGNOLI

Vintages 2015 and 2016 were both outstanding in Tuscany: the former is generally characterized by ripe, robust wines, and the latter by fresher, higher-acid wines that still have the structure for longevity. Combine this vintage trend with Castagnoli's high-elevation *terroir*, which tends to give its reds more freshness and acidity anyway, and you have a sublime, succulent Chianti Classico.

**\$30.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$324.00** PER CASE

## 2016 ROSSO DI MONTALCINO PODERE SANTA MARIA

Marino Colleoni made this red with Brunello di Montalcino grapes that barely missed the cut for his Brunello bottling. It could, accordingly, evolve beautifully for a decade or more in a cool cellar, but if you can't resist opening it now, let it breathe in a decanter for an hour or two. Its flavors are the most ethereal of these wines', but, paradoxically, this *rosso* also has the most structure.

**\$56.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$604.80** PER CASE

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# NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN RHÔNE

*by Emily Spillmann and Chris Santini*

## 2018 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE *BLANC* “LA CRAU” DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

There is not much *blanc* from the famed La Crau vineyard to go around, in France or in the United States, making it one of those rarities sure to leave its mark on any special occasion. That’s not to mention, of course, the fresh fennel aromatics followed by a juicy and creamy core of fruit and salt. Clairette, an unsung hero of the south, is the main grape here, undoubtedly one of many key elements to this singular wine. —CS

**\$86.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$928.80** PER CASE

## 2018 SAINT JOSEPH *BLANC* LIONEL FAURY

Kermit once said that when a wine lacks finesse, “a sniff and a sip can impress, but a second glass is not inviting.” At our Beaune office tasting, Chris was quick to say, “I’d have a second glass of that!”

Pretty self-explanatory if you trust Chris’s taste (and you should), but if you need more encouraging, it’s got floral aromas, and the rich palate is balanced by a slightly bitter finish. It will continue to reveal its flair after the first sniff and sip, and many glasses later. —ES

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



## 2017 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE *ROUGE* “LA CRAU” DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

If price were no object and you were looking for a single wine that represents a sense of place, is consistently delicious year in and year out, and can be opened now or cellared for ten years, I’d recommend this one hands down. I did say if price were no object. Which, when considering all the many famous wines that are much pricier, means that you’ve got a real bargain here. It’s a gem, and you won’t be disappointed. —ES



**\$105.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$1,134.00** PER CASE

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## 2017 HERMITAGE ROUGE “LA PIERRELLE” BARRUOL / LYNCH

Many say the small hill of Hermitage is *the* spot where Syrah reaches its absolute greatest heights, and some recent four-figure price tags of a few famous cuvées at auctions appear to reinforce that notion. Yet here is a wine that seems to not notice or care about any of that. Bold and mysterious, with a velvety texture and a certain rusticity, this wine seems to be of a different, bygone time, and above the fray of modern squabbles. —CS

**\$99.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$1,069.20** PER CASE



## 2018 VENTOUX ROUGE “MÉGAPHONE” FAMILLE BRUNIER

Ever been skiing in Provence? It's a bit of a secret among locals, but you can, in fact, on top of snowcapped Mont Ventoux for a month or so in winter—one chairlift and four small trails with real snow. Down the hill a bit lie the Ventoux vineyards. In the glass, fresh mountain air and exuberant Provençal olive and plum fruit make an unexpected, delicious encounter. —CS

**\$27.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$291.60** PER CASE

## 2018 CÔTES DU RHÔNE ROUGE SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH

A Proustian cookie, a bowl of hot soup, the sound of a familiar voice: life's simple pleasures. This is another one of them. Spicy, fruity, easygoing. It makes me think of Greg Brown purring his guileless “hey baby hey baby hey baby hey.” Simple, but there's something profound beneath all that, you know? —ES

**\$12.95** PER BOTTLE

**\$139.86** PER CASE

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# NEW ARRIVALS FROM SICILY

by *Anthony Lynch*

## 2018 TERRE SICILIANE CARRICANTE “SCIARE VIVE” • VIGNETI VECCHIO

Few places can produce a white that is an island wine, a volcanic wine, and a mountain wine all at once. But when the vineyards are situated high on the slopes of Etna, the active stratovolcano that towers almost eleven thousand feet over the Mediterranean, the stage is clearly set for something special and totally unparalleled in the world of wine. Factor in ancient practices and own-rooted vines surpassing a century in age, and Etna is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating grape-growing regions on Earth.

Carmelo Vecchio and Rosa La Guzza’s white captures every element of this spectacular setting, from the fresh herbal and lively citrusy notes that come from being so high up, to the subtle grit and salinity only achievable from volcanic vineyards in the middle of the sea, to the textural intrigue born from a brief skin maceration, as Etna tradition dictates. Serve it cool—not cold—and let it breathe as it slowly uncoils and brings all its intricacies to the table.



**\$40.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$432.00** PER CASE

## 2015 ELORO NERO D’AVOLA “SPACCAFORNO” RIOFAVARA

Sicily is far more than just Etna. Traveling south of the volcano’s blackened lava fields, beyond the bustling hubs of Catania and Siracusa, we arrive upon an arid landscape whose chalky nature is perfectly suited to what is arguably Sicily’s greatest native grape: Nero d’Avola. In the white soils of the Eloro appellation, near Ispica, the combination of copious sunshine, cooling coastal breezes, and water reserves deep in the bedrock provides Nero d’Avola with power, nuance, and superbly refreshing acidity. Riofava is the area’s pioneering proponent of organic viticulture, and their Spaccaforno bottling abounds with rustic charm and southern Sicilian soul.



**\$22.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$237.60** PER CASE

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## 2018 TERRE SICILIANE NERELLO MASCALESE “LATO SUD” • GROTTAFUMATA

Nerello Mascalese is as capable of producing robust, tannic wines as it is able to give delicate reds of great elegance. This Nerello from Grottafumata, on the southern face of Etna, falls in the latter camp, with low alcohol and vivid flavors of red fruit. The hints of cracked pepper, smoke, and sour cherry come into perfect focus with a nice chill, making this vibrant red the ideal substitute for a *cru* Beaujolais when you're leaning more Italian.

**\$45.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$486.00** PER CASE



*Mauro Cutuli of Grottafumata*

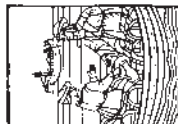
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“ Sometimes I think a tree  
or a fly has more sense than  
a human being. Then I realize  
that trees and flies do not  
know how to vinify. ”

—KERMIT LYNCH,  
INSPIRING THIRST

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