

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

APRIL 2024



*Sheep grazing at Château Thivin*

© Gail Skoff

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INTRODUCING BASTIEN JOLIVET  
VENETIAN VALUES • NEW ARRIVALS FROM THIVIN  
SPRINGTIME WHITES AND SPARKLERS

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# INTRODUCING BASTIEN JOLIVET

*by Dixon Brooke*

**K**ERMIT WAS ONE of the first American buyers to recognize the potential in the appellation of Saint-Joseph, the series of rolling granite hills on the west side of the Rhône River between Ampuis (Côte-Rôtie) and Tournon-sur-Rhône (Hermitage) planted to Syrah. I'm sure it was an aha moment for him back in the 1970s, realizing he could get hillside fruit, vinified by masters of the vine working outside the pressure of the spotlight, for a fraction of the price of the more famous growths noted above. That is what he set out to do, and the rest, as they say, is history. He unearthed "Saint Joe" treasures over the years such as Raymond Trollat, Joseph Panel, Gérard Chave, Pierre Gonon, and Philippe Faury, and we are still going strong.

Our latest discovery comes from the talented hand of young Bastien Jolivet, working his family's vineyards in the hamlet of Saint-Jean-de-Muzols. Saint-Joseph fans will know this as prime country, just north of the birthplace of the appellation in Mauves, and the site of Trollat's old vineyard that formed the backbone of his wines for years and now those of the Gonon brothers. In the rare moments when Jolivet is not outdoors tending his vines, he wields a magic wand in the cellar with both his whites and his reds. Ah, a young man committed to the hard work that makes great wine, while also possessing the instinctive touch it takes to accompany his fruit into an elevated realm . . . a rare find indeed.



*Jolivet's terraced Saint-Joseph vines*

© Bastien Jolivet

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## 2022 VIN DE FRANCE *BLANC* “CUVÉE DE LOUIS”

This beautiful blend of Roussanne and Viognier is grown at a high-altitude site in Lempis, in the mountains west of Saint-Jean-de-Muzols. Golden, luscious aroma and flavor, a delicious nectar infused with honeysuckle that invites you in at first sniff for a leisurely dip.



**\$32.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$345.60** PER CASE

## 2022 SAINT-JOSEPH *BLANC* “CLEF DE SOL”

Jolivet's white Saint-Joseph is an entirely different animal, made almost exclusively from the beguiling Marsanne grape, which reaches its loftiest potential in the granite soils of this part of France. Round and generous on first blush and then wound up, energetic, and fine-grained on the finish, this thoroughbred wine is sculpted for the cellar but still provides a lot of immediate gratification. His 2018 was one of the highlights of my travels on the wine route last year.

**\$52.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$561.60** PER CASE

## 2022 VIN DE FRANCE *ROUGE* “CUVÉE DE LOUIS”

Another high-flying wine from Lempis, this fresh and stony Syrah is the expression of a wild place without much human activity. Cool in the mouth, with a whiff of smoke and game, this soulful little country Syrah will do a jig with your pâtés and terrines.

**\$28.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$302.40** PER CASE

## 2021 SAINT-JOSEPH *ROUGE* “L'INSTINCT”

A classic interpretation of this great terroir for Syrah, fermented whole-cluster and aged in the traditional larger cask of the region, the *demi-muid*, 2021 has the added bonus of coming from a classic throwback vintage with slightly cooler average temperatures. It is a real-deal northern Rhône roasted-slope Syrah that walks the tightrope perfectly between creamy fruit, meaty tannins, and fresh spine—another great one for the cellar if you can keep your hands off it!

**\$49.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$529.20** PER CASE

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# VENETIAN VALUES

by Madison H. Brown

I ADORE OUR ITALIAN PORTFOLIO—for the intriguing diversity of its out-of-the-ordinary wines, as well as the fantastic value they present—and I find myself stocking up on Veneto more than any other region. The producers featured below have perfected the art of crafting singular and delicious wines made to be drunk with gusto. These bottles effortlessly capture the convivial spirit of the Venetian *bacaro*—a cozy wine bar where locals gather for pre-dinner snacking and an *aperitivo*—and fit the bill for an unceremonious glass or two while winding down over finger food and carefree conversation. No need for a cellar, decanter, patience, or prime cut of beef. Simple, yes, but joyously so.

## 2021 COLLI TREVIGIANI MANZONI BIANCO GREGOLETTO

Manzoni Bianco, a most inspired cross between Pinot Blanc and Riesling, is a rare variety you'll encounter only in small pockets of northeast Italy. Gregoletto's interpretation showcases the grape at its purest: notes of lime blossom and lychee, a silky texture, and mouthwatering minerality.

**\$20.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$216.00** PER CASE

## 2020 VENETO GARGANEGA "COL MOENIA" DAVIDE VIGNATO

Bone-dry renditions of Garganega (like this one) reward the curious drinker with a revelatory experience, and Col Moenia is a compelling introduction to this sprightly variety. Made from Davide's oldest, highest-altitude vines, this is full-throttle Garganega: aromatic, crisp, and complex with stony structure and a nutty, slightly bitter green-almond finish.

**\$24.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$259.20** PER CASE

## 2021 BARDOLINO "LE FONTANE" CORTE GARDONI

Tucked at the base of the Alps, a stone's throw from Lake Garda's crystalline shores, the Piccoli family cooks up some of the most thirst-quenching values in our entire portfolio. A blend of indigenous varieties, their Le Fontane is an ultralight *rosso* with juicy cranberry notes, a subtle kiss of black pepper, and gentle, tongue-tingling, lip-smacking tannin. Try it slightly chilled with a *pizza bianca*.

**\$19.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$205.20** PER CASE

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# SPRINGTIME SPARKLERS

by Tom Wolf

## VALLE D'ITRIA SPUMANTE BRUT • I PÁSTINI

This zingy floral sparkler from the southern tip of Italy is yet further proof that the world of sparkling wine is not divided solely between Champagne and Prosecco. Made from the local Puglian grape Verdeca, I Pástini's Spumante Brut brims with notes of orchard fruit and citrus and would pair beautifully with an assortment of *aperitivo* snacks or a pesto pasta.

**\$27.00** PER BOTTLE

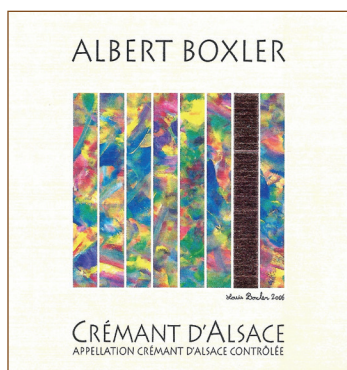
**\$291.60** PER CASE

## 2019 CRÉMANT D'ALSACE BRUT ALBERT BOXLER

If I were a French vigneron specializing in sparkling wines, I might resent Jean Boxler after taking a sip of this Crémant. It's hardly fair that a producer who works magic with dozens of still, single-variety bottlings can also make a blended sparkler this good! Soaring with aromas of brioche and praline, this lush and luxurious bottling sets the benchmark for Crémants everywhere.

**\$42.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$453.60** PER CASE



## 2011 BLANC DE BLANCS BRUT 1ER CRU J. LASSALLE

At KLWM, we are firmly in the camp of *not* needing a special occasion to pop the cork on a sparkling wine—everyone could use a little effervescence on a Wednesday night. Still, this bottling from J. Lassalle *does* command a special occasion. At thirteen years old, it embodies elegance and refinement from the first sip to the last. Evoking spring flowers, Meyer lemon, stone fruit, and herbs, this is an utterly sublime *premier cru* Champagne.

**\$118.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$1,274.40** PER CASE

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# LES BLANCS DU PRINTEMPS

by Dustin Soiseth

## 2022 SANCERRE • DANIEL CHOTARD

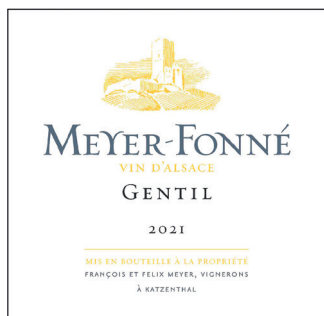
At first, Daniel Chotard was a rather reluctant vigneron, returning to the family domaine only after pursuing a career in education. His son Simon, by contrast, dove right in, earning a degree in enology and eagerly continuing a family tradition that dates back two centuries. From their vineyards on the slopes around the village of Crézancy-en-Sancerre, Simon's Sancerre is an honest, forthright expression of this classic region—crisp and refreshing, with a juicy ripeness imparted by the warm vintage.

**\$39.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$421.20** PER CASE

## 2021 GENTIL D'ALSACE • MEYER-FONNÉ

You'll often see terms like “steely,” “flinty,” or “bracing” to describe white wines. Indeed, those types of white wines are often among our favorites. However, sometimes steely or flinty just isn't what you're looking for. Perhaps you've been experiencing steely, bracing weather for the past several months and are yearning for something gentler. I tasted Félix Meyer's Gentil d'Alsace on a blustery day after a big late-season storm, and it only took one sip to remind me that spring was around the corner.



Gentil d'Alsace is a blended wine with rather strict requirements. At least half of the blend must consist of some combination of the four noble Alsatian varieties: Gewurztraminer, Muscat, Pinot Gris, and Riesling. After that, Sylvaner, Chasselas,

and Pinot Blanc are also permitted. Additionally, all the constituent grapes must be vinified separately and meet quality standards *before* being blended. Though quite affordable and made for everyday enjoyment, Gentil is arguably more labor-intensive to vinify than an Alsatian *grand cru*.

Félix's wines are renowned for their stunning aromatics, and this is no exception. Exotic, perfumed notes from Muscat swirl around classic Riesling aromas like pear and nectarine. A beautiful pale straw color belies the dense stone fruit on the palate. The wine has tension and texture, and it finishes with hints of nuttiness and a lemon zest twang. Now, after all the work that went into producing this lovely wine, all that's left to do is open a bottle and enjoy.

**\$23.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$248.40** PER CASE

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# RED BURGUNDY

by Chris Santini, KLWM BEAUNE

## 2021 CÔTE DE NUITS-VILLAGES DOMAINE GACHOT-MONOT



While 2021 was a year most vignerons would like to forget (a devastating April frost, a cold, wet summer spent warding disease away from grapes, harvesting amid ongoing Covid restrictions—and I could go on), there is a silver lining. The vintage is a throwback to Burgundy I remember from twenty years ago, with its bright fruit, crisp acid, and approachable fun. Sure, there's something to be said for the ripeness and depth of the warmer years, but I swear I haven't tasted any-

thing with this kind of simple pleasure and cool-climate charm since the 2004 vintage. I say crack a bottle and enjoy it now; it's open and ready. Otherwise, you may need to wait another twenty years to get such an opportunity again.

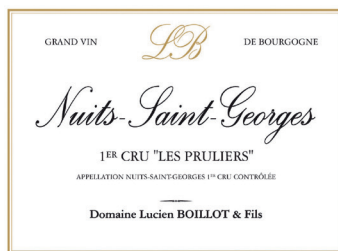
**\$47.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$507.60 PER CASE**

## 2019 NUITS-SAINT-GEORGES 1<sup>ER</sup> CRU "LES PRULIERS" DOMAINE LUCIEN BOILLOT & FILS

In a remarkable act of virtue and solidarity, Nuits-Saint-Georges declined to put forward any of their vineyards for consideration of *grand cru* status when the classification was made in 1936. The idea was to step aside and let the smaller, more struggling villages of Chambolle, Morey, and Gevrey take advantage of the new classification to get on the map, so to speak. If Nuits had chosen a more self-centered approach,

Les Pruliers—with its mineral-rich, wind-swept, mid-slope characteristics—would have been a shoo-in for the top tier. Today, Boillot's Les Pruliers, eked out of vines now well over one hundred years old, would most certainly be considered one of the grandest of those *grands crus*. With its floral intensity and dense yet delicate layers of dark fruit, *grand cru* or not, this is Boillot at his best.



**\$158.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$1,706.40 PER CASE**

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# CHÂTEAU THIVIN

by Jane Augustine, KLWM NEW YORK

THE FIRST TIME I had lunch with the lovely Geoffray family, overlooking the Côte de Brouilly from their canopied terrace on Mont Brouilly, they served a range of Lyonnaise “salads” and other nose-to-tail specialties. Back then I was still developing a strong enough stomach to survive living in Burgundy, but I dove in to this generous meal with curiosity and a touch of naïveté: I decorated my plate with *salade de museau* (thinly sliced pig snout), *fromage de tête* (a cold, gelatinous terrine), and a medallion of *andouillette* (tripe sausage). I will be honest. The setting was quaint, but the flavors were not! I’ve never been

so grateful to have a chilled glass of delicious, cleansing, fruity Brouilly within reach—the wine is quaffable for a reason. Gamay eagerly complements the coarse fare of the region. But the beauty of Château Thivin’s Beaujolais is that they’re versatile, a match for the boldest of flavors but also for the more subtle. How do they manage?

The Geoffrays treat all of their parcels like *premiers crus*, interested in the specificity of each. Every wine speaks of a different-colored stone found in its vineyard: pink granite in Brouilly, a blue and veiny diorite in Côte de Brouilly, and yellow limestone in their Beaujolais *blanc*. Organic viticulture and biodiversity are key elements to keeping their vineyards healthy. Sheep roam about, while birds nest in the



Sabodet lyonnais at Château Thivin © Jimmy Hayes

vines. In the cellar, they privilege whole-cluster, low-intervention methods during fermentation to capture pure fruit aromas and flavors.

Readers of our newsletter already know about the mythical experience of lunch at Château Thivin. To me, it is memorable not because I have a lust for daring butcher’s salads, trotters, and snouts, but because the meal is rooted in tradition, which is how every aspect of a visit to Château Thivin feels.

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## 2022 BEAUJOLAIS *BLANC* “CLOS DE ROCHEBONNE”

Thivin's Beaujolais *blanc* comes from a parcel about thirty minutes south of their property in Odenas, where the soil has an abundance of *pierre dorée*, a golden limestone that reflects a toasty hue off the local homes that are built from it. Radiant at magic hour, the village and surrounding cliffs glow, just like the wine that Thivin draws from this stony outpost. Rochebonne offers Chardonnay fruit that's both racy and sun-kissed. Different from the whites of neighboring Mâcon, this *blanc* is firm but also a touch fleshy.

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

## 2022 BROUILLY “REVERDON”

As the largest *cru* in Beaujolais, Brouilly is home to a range of soil types depending on parcel location. Reverdon, which faces Mont Brouilly, is a particularly sandy vineyard with solid pink granite to anchor its vines—a dream for older roots to dig deep. This bottling is classic Brouilly, balanced and old-school, and showcases the beauty of Gamay grown in its southernmost *cru*, on a south-facing slope.

**\$32.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$345.60** PER CASE

## 2022 CÔTE DE BROUILLY

The typicity of the Côte de Brouilly shines in this peppery, spicy, and angular *cuvée* from Thivin. Our signature bottling blends a selection from seven parcels, vinified separately, and bottled especially to exemplify the complexity of this *cru*. Not your basic Beaujolais, it showcases pedigreed and assertive fruit that is strikingly substantial for Gamay, with a flinty core from the famous *pierre bleu* soils. It delivers pleasure and class in stride.

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

## 2022 CÔTE DE BROUILLY “CUVÉE ZACCHARIE”

The most special of the family's Côte de Brouilly bottlings, this *cuvée* is made from ancient vines (some up to one hundred years old) from their most prized parcels, La Chapelle and Godefroy. Raised in barrel as their ancestor Zaccharie Geoffroy would have done, it then undergoes a further barrel selection before blending. Symbolically, it's raised in the oldest part of the cellar: the dungeon-like underbelly of the château that's draped in cobwebs and where unlabeled bottles of mysterious vintages live quietly, undisturbed. This is a true homage *cuvée*, with an old-fashioned soul and vibrant energy.

**\$69.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$745.20** PER CASE

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# TUSCAN REDS

by Tom Wolf

## 2019 CHIANTI CLASSICO • CASTAGNOLI

Castagnoli sits at the top of a hill looking down on row upon row of terraced Sangiovese vines, forests, and rolling hills as far as the eye can see. Beneath your feet, you'll find a special, highly decomposed stone, known locally as *galestro*, which imparts an unusually refined, high-toned, and mineral character to the wines. There is so much to love about this small estate halfway between Florence and Siena, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a more elegant introduction to Chianti Classico.

**\$31.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$334.80** PER CASE

## 2018 CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA VILLA DI GEGGIANO

Aged for roughly a year longer than most Chianti Classico, this Riserva from the iconic Villa di Geggiano shows impressive finesse and luminous freshness, along with density and structure. While many Classicos make beautiful pairings for vegetarian dishes like a creamy pasta filled with wild mushrooms, this bottling merits being opened the next time you prepare your favorite cut of beef.

**\$54.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$583.20** PER CASE

## 2018 BRUNELLO DI MONTALCINO • SESTI

When Giuseppe and Sarah Sesti moved to Tuscany in the 1970s, they settled not in Florence or Siena, but among the abandoned ruins of the medieval Castello di Argiano outside of sleepy Montalcino at the region's southern end. In the half-century since, they have restored the castle and overgrown land, reviving this magnificent estate in all its glory and turning it into one of the most respected sources of Brunello di Montalcino.

It might be hard to understand how this stunning hillside castle and the surrounding woodland could have fallen into such neglect, but its prior abandonment turned out to be a blessing in disguise: the slopes Giuseppe and Sarah eventually planted to vines were home to a relatively untouched and thriving ecosystem, rich with native plant and animal life. And fortunately for the health of the soil and ecosystem, they were exactly the right people to take over this corner of paradise. Giuseppe's background as an astronomer gave him a naturalist bent and a healthy skepticism of chemical treatment in the vines. It also

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allowed him to apply his knowledge of the moon's influence on living things to his vineyard management and practices in the cellar—a methodology that is increasingly common today. This 2018 Brunello di Montalcino stands as a gorgeous testament to the Sesti family's half-century of stewardship of this land. Ample, deep, and succulent, this enthralling Brunello is already highly rewarding.

**\$120.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$1,296.00 PER CASE**



*The newly restored Castello di Argiano towers over  
Sesti's Sangiovese vines*

© Gail Skoff

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**I**N THE BEAUJOLAIS REGION, down-home country fun delivers a proverbial blow to the pomp and vanity commonly associated with the world of fine wine. Fueled by free-flowing Gamay, the spirit is unpretentious, even at times a bit raunchy. But at Château Thivin (p. 8), the property, the people, and the wines display striking refinement without sacrificing any of the Beaujolais' trademark hedonism. It is truly the best of both worlds: wine that makes you feel like a dignified savant as you slug back cool, juicy glasses of pure pleasure. That's something I can get behind every time I pull a cork.

—Anthony Lynch

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