

# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

AUGUST 2018



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TOP VALUES: FRANCE AND ITALY  
WHEN VERMENTINU MET BIANCO GENTILE  
NORTHERN RHÔNES AND SOUTHERN ROSÉS

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# TOP VALUES

## FRANCE AND ITALY

*by the Retail Staff*

### 2017 BARDOLINO “LE FONTANE” CORTE GARDONI

Bright fresh berry fruit with a nice crunchy nip of acidity and a long, delicious finish make this bottling the perfect summer-weight red. Pair it with lighter dishes and salads or perhaps a porchetta sandwich with a side salad of arugula, tomatoes, and hazelnuts. Give it a slight chill and you’ll instantly be transported to the lake country of northern Italy. —*Michael Butler*

**\$14.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$151.20** PER CASE

### 2017 VINO BIANCO • TINTERO

Pure, unadulterated sunshine in a bottle, this blend of Favorita (controversially either Vermentino or not, depending on the most recent DNA mapping), Arneis, and Moscato synergistically creates arguably the most easy-drinking white wine we import. It may be all things to all people: dry, yet with a succulent summer orchard fruitiness; smooth and creamy, yet bouncing with a sprightly *pétillance*; aromatically complex and thought-provoking, yet entirely gulpable. Soak it in! —*Jennifer Oakes*

**\$8.95** PER BOTTLE

**\$96.66** PER CASE

### 2016 CAHORS • CLOS LA COUTALE

It’s no coincidence that the dusty-tanned Malbec grape is king in Argentina, the land of great swaths of cattle herds, because it so aptly pairs with beef. In Clos La Coutale’s Cahors from France’s southwest, however, the deep and inky Malbec is blended with supple and juicy berry-fruited Merlot, giving us a versatile and food-friendly red. What better to pair with the smoky bounty from your summertime grill? But just to be a contrarian, have it with a portobello burger—I’ve no bone to pick with that. —*Jennifer Oakes*

**\$16.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$172.80** PER CASE



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## 2016 PINOT NOIR • KUENTZ-BAS

Looking for a stunning Pinot Noir without paying steep Burgundy prices? The search ends here! In Alsace, Pinot Noir not only grows but thrives, and yet it has long flown under the radar. The Pinot Noir from Kuentz-Bas is an accessible, versatile red. Exploding with fresh blackberry and gently peppery, this is a great companion for breezy summer nights. —*Maeve Decouvelaere*

**\$19.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$215.46** PER CASE

## 2017 BORDEAUX BLANC • CHÂTEAU DUCASSE

When it's just too hot and you simply need a chilled bottle of white wine, stick with this tried-and-true classic. Zesty and refreshing, with enough substance to pair with grilled treats or picnic fare, one bottle won't last long. Hammock and a good page-turner recommended. —*Maeve Decouvelaere*

**\$17.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$183.60** PER CASE

## 2017 VIN DE SAVOIE "LES ABYMES" A. & M. QUENARD

Imagine yourself sitting beside a mountain stream, gazing upon the beauty of the French Alps, with the ultimate picnic wine. As you pour yourself another glass, you are struck by the delicacy and crispness of this refreshing white. Les Abymes is the *cru* and Jacquère is the grape. You've just found a new everyday white—at only 11% alcohol—well within your budget. —*Steve Waters*

**\$17.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$183.60** PER CASE

## 2016 LANGUEDOC ROUGE SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH

Vigneron Jean-Claude Zabalía has a long history of winemaking for the KLWM portfolio. Now he has collaborated with us again and created a red wine of such quality and value, it's impossible to beat. A blend of mostly Grenache with Syrah, Carignan, and Cinsault, this substantial red is simply delicious—black cherry fruit gives way to a touch of white pepper and rosemary. You'll be hard-pressed to find a weeknight meal that this wine doesn't pair with. —*Steve Waters*

**\$12.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$129.60** PER CASE

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# WHEN VERMENTINU MET BIANCO GENTILE

by *Chris Santini*

**M**UCH HAS BEEN SAID about how a small group of dedicated vignerons saved Bianco Gentile from extinction. What hasn't been discussed much is that, while we know the variety is native Corsican and was once widely planted, we really don't know how it was used and what kind of wine it made. Over the last decade or two, growers have been getting reacquainted with this long-lost friend, figuring out its strengths and weaknesses and how to tease out its greatness. Vermentinu, by contrast, has been around uninterrupted in the Mediterranean just about as long as the wheel. Its charms—the saltiness, the verve, the island essence—have been known to all for ages. Bianco Gentile has been on a learning curve, and in wine, that process can take years (generations, even), so we are watching it unfold as we speak. There's only one harvest a year, a single chance to see, taste, and experiment each cycle. Part of that learning process concerns the interaction of grapes with each other, the art of blending so that the diversity makes a more complete whole. A key to understanding Bianco Gentile's past may be hidden here in this blend. Kermit noticed early on Bianco Gentile's tendency to veer toward the plump, round, rich side of the spectrum. So he and Antoine Arena decided to blend together a tank of Vermentinu and a tank of Bianco Gentile. Half and half, as one isn't better than the other, they're simply so different. Like a great bassist or a great guitarist, or a world-class tenor compared to a soprano. Neither is better per se, but the two performing together perhaps provides the richest experience. The two grapes work so well together we have to wonder if this was the way things were done back in the day.

Given Antoine's enthusiasm, we may well see a lot more of this blending in the future. Notice the new label, too, which is fittingly inspired by a label Antoine's father once used. To show his appreciation of Kermit for encouraging the blend, Arena has named it "Cuvée Kermit Lynch" and given us full exclusivity on the wine. The only place you can try it is here—or maybe at the domaine, if you have the good fortune to go there, and if they haven't drunk the last of their personal stock already.



**2013 VIN DE FRANCE BLANC**

**"CUVÉE KERMIT LYNCH" • ANTOINE ARENA**

**\$49.00 PER BOTTLE**

**\$529.20 PER CASE**

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# BANDOL

by Dixon Brooke

## 2017 BANDOL BLANC • TERREBRUNE

I think my best recent Bandol *blanc* story is the one Kermit shared with me last December about a bottle of 1952 Sanary Blanc (AOC Bandol) he enjoyed in Provence along with his son, Anthony, Jean-Marie Peyraud, and Alain Pascal. He wrote me immediately to share the incredible tale of this sublime wine without a hint of oxidation. I can't promise you that this bottle from Reynald Delille will turn into the same magical, timeless elixir, but it has the highest probability of any wine being made in Bandol today. Delille's incredible *terroir* of Trias limestone in view of the Mediterranean produces a white that is built to provide pleasure over many years. Saline, herbal, with mirabelle yellow plum, it develops additional nuance and complexity as the years roll by. I have yet to taste a tired bottle from my ten-year vertical.

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

## 2017 BANDOL ROSÉ • LA TOUR DU BON

Agnès Henry of La Tour du Bon in Le Castellet has crafted the most delicate and ethereal of all our Bandol rosés this year. Her vines sit on an exposed hillside of pure limestone in the aptly named *lieu-dit* of Le Brûlat, and they tend to suffer a bit and produce small, concentrated berries. She therefore harvests some of her Mourvèdre early and blends with a healthy portion of the light-bodied Cinsault to give a floral, elegant, pale-hued rosé—a quintessential Provençal treat in the heat of summer. Serve well chilled, and plan for an extra bottle!

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

## 2016 BANDOL ROUGE • GROS 'NORÉ

A visit with Alain Pascal in La Cadière d'Azur in June confirmed that his vintage 2016 *rouge* is one that will grace my California table often. Most likely as Jim Harrison might have enjoyed it, with copious quantities of crushed garlic and red meat (wild game, if I can get my hands on some—my southern roots are distant out here in California—I need to find someone who will trade me hunting rights for wine!). Alain's largely whole-cluster Mourvèdre in 2016 is a dark beauty, a tapenade of black olives infused with wild southern herbs, earth, and stones, with a glorious tannin that shows no aggression.

**\$48.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$518.40** PER CASE

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# NORTHERN RHÔNE

by Anthony Lynch

## 2016 CONDRIEU • LIONEL FAURY

Being a wine importer and not a florist, I will abstain from attempting to describe the mesmerizing perfume of this Condrieu. I can, however, tell you that this Viognier soars from the glass with decadence; it is flashy and palate-coating, yet utterly sophisticated. Exotic—luxurious, even—it is distinguished further by its finely nuanced aroma and total delicacy of flavor. This is certainly a wine for thinkers—thinkers who don't mind a bit of carnal pleasure every now and then.



**\$59.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$637.20** PER CASE

## 2016 COLLINES RHODANIENNES SYRAH “L'ART ZÉLÉ” • LIONEL FAURY

The Syrah vineyard in question lies a mere fifty yards from the periphery of the Côte-Rôtie AOC, and it enjoys the same mica-schist soils that are typical of this noble appellation. Furthermore, the fruit is treated in nearly identical fashion as the domaine's hypnotizing Côte-Rôtie bottlings, with a good portion of whole clusters used, aging in neutral *demi-muids*, and bottling without filtration. The main difference is the younger vines—barely of legal voting age—and the shorter maceration and emphasize fruit. The Côte-Rôtie-like nose has crunchy blackcurrant and blackberry plus a sprinkle of coarsely cracked pepper, while medium tannins and medium price tag make this Syrah all the more easy to appreciate.



**\$33.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$356.40** PER CASE

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## 2016 HERMITAGE ROUGE “LA PIERRELLE” BARRUOL / LYNCH

I am tempted to proclaim that this Hermitage tastes like those old-school classics made *back in the day*, but the fact is, I wasn't even alive then, much less tasting and judging wines. My assessment of this bottle is therefore limited to my understanding of traditional production methods in the northern Rhône and my experience tasting wines made via such methods. Barruol's La Pierrelle checks all the boxes: the old clone of Syrah (*Sérine*) in a steep, rocky site; natural vinification with stems; *élevage* in used barrels; unfiltered bottling. Having had the good fortune to try some mature Hermitages from storied growers, I can nonetheless predict that this one will age similarly—majestically bold and yet somehow ethereal, developing savory, smoky, meaty, and floral nuances over decades in bottle.

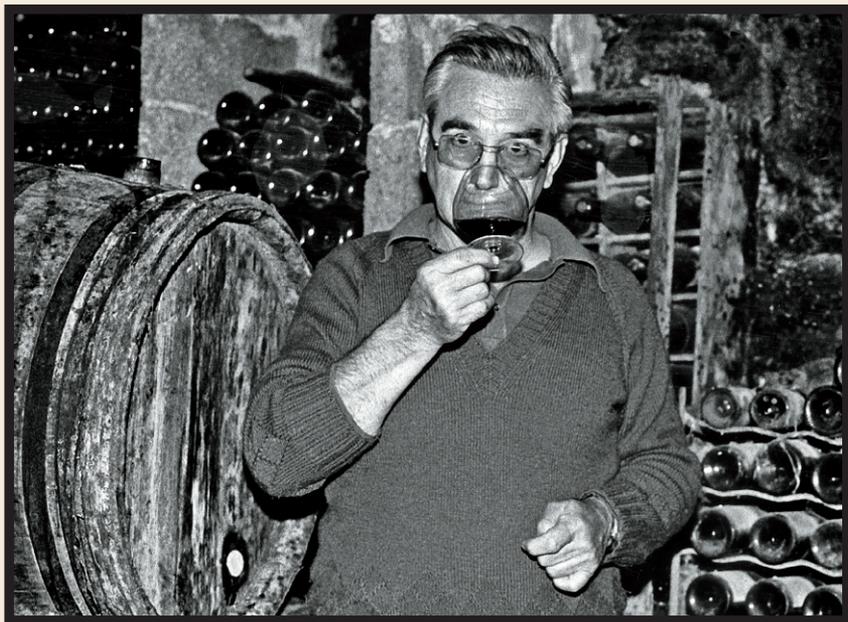
**\$80.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$864.00** PER CASE



*Louis Barruol's cellar*

© Gail Skoff



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## AUGUSTE CLAPE

1925–2018

**E**VEN WHEN AUGUSTE CLAPE appeared in newspapers and magazines and his reputation spread worldwide, it did not change him, it did not go to his head, and he never tooted his own horn. How I loved Auguste's humility. He wanted to make something good, something fine, something that gave people pleasure. That's all, and that's a lot.

His humility and honesty made tasting with him a treat. His ego never got in the way—he could be severe about one of his cuvées and so could I as we searched to define the nuances of a successful wine.

Those of you who cellared and enjoyed drinking his Cornas might also enjoy knowing that success did not alter his lifestyle. He never changed or remodeled his modest home, never judged by social status. As much as we saw each other over almost half a century, Auguste and I never wine and dined and lived it up together. Unusual. We were happy in the winery under his home, nose to glass, tasting and spitting, exploring what was in our glasses. In *Vino Veritas*. In Auguste Clape *Veritas*.

The good news for fans? Both Auguste's son and grandson have for years worked alongside him. His skills will continue to be found in bottle.

—Kermit Lynch

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# BOXLER

## ALSATIAN TRADITION

by Anthony Lynch

### 2016 CHASSELAS

The Chasselas grape—a specialty of Switzerland, where it represents the most commonly planted white variety and is responsible for some truly spectacular wines—also has a small Alsatian stronghold, with roughly one hundred hectares to its name. *Chez Boxler*, it is fortunate enough to enjoy a privileged position on the granite slopes of Niedermorschwihr. Here, it becomes the reincarnation of a bubbling mountain spring, zipping across the palate with a refreshing tingle of spritz. Alsatian Chasselas—it’s shockingly thirst-quenching!

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

### 2016 SYLVANER

The recycling bin outside the average Alsatian household likely contains more empty bottles of Sylvaner than of “noble” Riesling, Pinot Gris, Muscat, and Gewurztraminer combined. It comes as no surprise: with unrivaled versatility at table and guaranteed mouthwatering abilities, the grape brings something new and fresh to the table. André Ostertag’s fine old-vine rendition, for example, provides utter satisfaction vintage after vintage, and Sylvaner has even achieved *grand cru* recognition in the Zotzenberg vineyard, a site more than capable of yielding long-lived whites that bear a rich complexity. Jean Boxler is another accomplished ambassador of the variety, and the remarkable finesse of his sleek, stony, apple blossom-scented 2016 suggests that Sylvaner possesses some noble DNA of its own.

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

### 2016 GEWURZTRAMINER

More floral than spicy in nature, Boxler’s Gewurztraminer politely invites you in with its luscious perfume. The wine dances across the palate, delivering succulent flavors of rose petal, tea, apricot, and dripping honeycomb in ravishing fashion. Its classy finish brilliantly balances juicy glycerin with a vibrant energy. This is not a dry wine, but that makes it in no way less enjoyable.

**\$35.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$378.00** PER CASE

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# TRE NEBBIOLI

by Dustin Soiseth

## 2013 BAROLO “GIANETTO” • GUIDO PORRO

Tradition dictates that Nebbiolo isn't harvested until it has been kissed by the first fogs of autumn, a sign that the long growing season it needs to ripen fully is finally coming to an end. As a fourth-generation Barolista, Guido Porro is well versed in tradition, and it guides his hand in the vineyard and the cellar. This Barolo comes from the Gianetto *cru* in Serralunga d'Alba with a prime southeastern exposure to catch the morning sun. The Barolos of Serralunga are renowned for their power and longevity, and while Porro's Gianetto is not the unyielding, tannic beast of old, it will certainly benefit from a few years in your cellar.

**\$47.00 PER BOTTLE**      **\$507.60 PER CASE**

## 2013 BRAMATERRA • MATTEO BALDIN

Nebbiolo is most closely associated with the Langhe, and for good reason. But for lovers of this elusive grape, a side trip into Alto Piemonte is illuminating. This once-thriving wine region was decimated by the one-two punch of phylloxera and economic migration, and by the middle of the twentieth century more than thirty thousand hectares of vineyards had been abandoned. Now, intrepid winemakers have returned to Alto Piemonte and are exploring the potential of Nebbiolo's other *terroir*. In the Bramaterra DOC, Matteo Baldin's traditional *rosso* blends Nebbiolo with Croatina and Vespolina, which add a bit of fruit and spice to Nebbiolo's lean frame.

**\$35.00 PER BOTTLE**      **\$378.00 PER CASE**

## 2012 LABORO DISOBEDIENT A. & G. FANTINO

The Fantino brothers, Alessandro and Gian Natale, work their magic with grapes from the Dardi section of the famous Bussia *cru* in Monforte d'Alba. Their old vines, planted in the 1940s, are some of the oldest in the region and produce the perfect raw material to showcase power and longevity, along with subtle hints of leather, iron, tar, and (most famously) roses, for which Nebbiolo is renowned. A Barolo Riserva in all but name, the Laboro Disobedient is fermented and aged entirely in older barrels, a throwback to the legendary Barolos of old.

**\$60.00 PER BOTTLE**      **\$648.00 PER CASE**

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# SOUTHERN ROSÉS

by Emily Spillmann

## 2017 LANGUEDOC ROSÉ SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH

Last summer, when Kermit and Anthony got together with Jean-Claude Zabalia and his son Hugo to work out the 2016 Languedoc *rouge* blend, the ever-creative Zabalias had a new idea up their sleeves. In addition to the red, they proposed a rosé, made from Cinsault, Grenache, and Syrah grapes grown on mineral-rich schist. The result is a light, refreshing thirst quencher for those who like their rosés more wet stone than fruit forward. For an easy summertime pairing, Hugo suggests roasted eggplant. Baste eggplant halves with olive oil and garlic, top with plenty of Parmesan, and grill alongside the meat of your choice.

**\$14.95** PER BOTTLE      **\$161.46** PER CASE

## 2017 “AU PETIT BONHEUR” ROSÉ LES PALLIÈRES

A word from Daniel Brunier about the “little joy” of a rosé he makes with Kermit:

When we decided to create a rosé at Pallières, we had never done it before. One thing was certain: we did not want to make something that resembled all the *other* rosés: too technical, lacking soul and personality. The idea was to simply create a rosé we liked, avoiding certain pitfalls one encounters with “professional” rosés. . . . We had to go against the current without knowing where that would lead us. . . . “*Au petit bonheur la chance*,” as we say in France [meaning, “We’ll see where luck takes us”]. That’s the name we gave our “experiment,” and for those who don’t understand the significance, it’s beautiful nonetheless!

**\$25.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$270.00** PER CASE

## 2017 CORSE FIGARI ROSÉ • CLOS CANARELLI

I am writing these lines today because somewhere, somehow, a few bottles of the most coveted rosé in Corsica are left for the drinking. They’re not in Corsica, folks. Get yourselves over to the shop before the Corsican locals arrive to reclaim the fruit of their vines: a biodynamic, orange-zesty, multifaceted masterpiece from the most ancient growing region on the island.

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

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*Whenever life begins to crush me I know  
I can rely on Bandol, garlic, and Mozart.*

—JIM HARRISON, DECEMBER 1995 NEWSLETTER

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