

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

AUGUST 2019



Olive tree in Puglia

© Gail Skoff

OLIVE OIL NEW ARRIVALS
VALUE OF THE MONTH ■ GUILLEMOT DÉJÀ VU
THREE COLORS OF PROVENCE

— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

BEHIND THE SCENES

by Anthony Lynch

FINDING GOOD VALUE WINES is not easy—or rather, *producing* them is not easy. Cheap plonk, the result of intensive farming typically done with little respect for the land or the nuances of taste, can be found by the ocean-full, but coming across that elusive, well-priced bottle that brings us back for a second and third sip is another story altogether. Beyond production costs for the juice itself, one must factor in to the final price glass bottles, corks, capsules, labels, import tariffs, and, of course, refrigerated trans-Atlantic shipping. Given all the players involved, each one logically demanding a piece of the pie, it is a miracle our shop is home to any bottles under \$15.

We have occasionally sought out custom bottlings of delicious, easy-drinking wines from co-ops, where we can taste a wide array of base wines from which to choose and blend to our desired specifications. We always aim to foster long-term relationships with the winemakers in order to ensure access to the best fruit, while preserving a *goût de terroir* through the low-intervention methodology we value in all our domaine-bottled wines.

Our Languedoc *rouge* is made possible thanks to longtime partner Jean-Claude Zabalia, who since selling his own domaine has become vice president of the emergent Languedoc-Cabrières AOC and works closely with Cabrières's small co-op. Each year, Jean-Claude speaks with the local growers and visits their vineyards with this very cuvée in mind. Always present through harvest and vinification, he then selects the best lots for us to work with based on what he thinks our clients will appreciate—after collaborating for more than twenty-five years, Jean-Claude has a pretty good idea of what we like. Crucially, he negotiates a great price with the co-op, so the bottle arrives on your table at a bargain cost.

The 2017 blend we selected is full of the dark, brambly wild fruit, laced with spice and hints of dried herbs, that is typical of Languedoc reds. It boasts a lively mineral freshness thanks to the stunning schist *terroir* of Cabrières, surrounded by scrubby thyme and juniper on high-elevation hillsides. With all that goes into producing each bottle, this is indisputably among the finest values in our portfolio. A complete wine with juicy fruit, gulpability, and a sense of place, all for just twelve buckeroos: I dare you to find a better deal!

2017 LANGUEDOC ROUGE
SELECTED BY KERMIT LYNCH

\$12.00 PER BOTTLE

\$129.60 PER CASE

DOMAINE GUILLEMOT DÉJÀ VU

by Jane Berg

BEAMING WITH ENTHUSIASM, *chef de cave* Vincent Guillemot shared that his grandfather Pierre considers the 2017 vintage a dead ringer for his first-ever produced—the celebrated 1947. I wondered how seventy years later he could recall anything with such precision, but a realization struck me: as with any *first*, how could he forget? If you never get to try a bottle of that mythical vintage, the 2017s may be the next best thing.

2017 BOURGOGNE ROUGE

There's no secret recipe for making a great regional wine, but the Guillemots swear by blending Savigny *vieilles vignes* from Les Planchots de la Champagne along the Rhoin River with fruit from neighboring Chorey-lès-Beaune. The declassified berries add a touch of cinnamon and warming kirsch notes for an extra boost of local character and typicity. It's as pretty a Pinot you'll find in both style and price.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE

\$313.20 PER CASE

2017 SAVIGNY AUX SERPENTIÈRES 1ER CRU

With an irresistible perfume of peony and plum, Guillemot's flagship Aux Serpentières effortlessly supports their point of view that beauty must be favored over brawn. When tasting at the estate, Vincent will likely pour you an older vintage of this cuvée from an unmarked bottle, and though I can't predict the year he'll draw, I suggest guessing a decade or two older than your first impression. This *premier cru* is a fountain of youth and, though delicate, is quite deceptively built to last.

\$55.00 PER BOTTLE

\$594.00 PER CASE

2017 CORTON GRAND CRU "LE ROGNET ET CORTON"

In the 1930s, Le Rognet et Corton was the first *climat* granted *grand cru* status on the Ladoix side of Corton's slopes—no small feat, since the vignerons on the other side of the landmark hill in Aloxe were staunchly opposed to this upgrade. Sprouting from iron-rich red clay soils, and bathed in sunlight, Le Rognet et Corton is now considered one of the best sites in the village. One taste of Guillemot's bottling would embarrass any *aloxois* who made a stink.

\$120.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,296.00 PER CASE



SORRY, SANCERRE, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY ONE

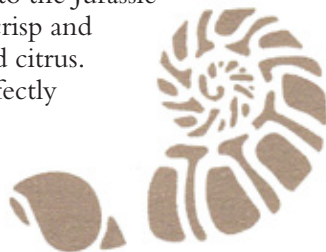
by Tom Wolf

2018 REUILLY BLANC "LES FOSSILES" DOMAINE DE REUILLY

Reuilly might not be as fun or easy to say as Sancerre—the renowned Loire Valley appellation an hour east—but the white wines that come from this small AOC can be every bit as beautiful and pleasurable to drink. In many ways, the two appellations are not that different. To start, the white wines are both 100% Sauvignon Blanc. And, like in Chablis, both appellations have a substantial amount of Kimmeridgian limestone or marl in their soils. Despite its under-the-radar status, Reuilly is also endowed with a notable amount of ancient marine deposits. Unlike most of us, Denis Jamain of Domaine de Reuilly can walk out into his organically and biodynamically farmed vineyards and pick up pieces of fossilized seashells dating back 150 million years to the Jurassic period, inspiring this cuvée's name. Les Fossiles is crisp and mineral, with notes of chamomile, green apple, and citrus. A wine doesn't need to come from seashells to perfectly complement shellfish, but this gorgeous *blanc*—like your favorite Chablis—proves that it certainly doesn't hurt.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE

\$270.00 PER CASE



2016 ALTO ADIGE SAUVIGNON "VOGLAR" • PETER DIPOLI

What do you get when you plant Sauvignon Blanc on the steep, high-altitude slopes near Bolzano in Alto Adige, the German-speaking slice of northern Italy also known as Südtirol? Whereas most Sauvignons that come from the various appellations within the Loire Valley bear some resemblance to each other, Peter Dipoli's Voglar tastes, at most, like a third cousin, twice removed. It is unlike any Sauvignon Blanc you have had—unless you have tried this cuvée before. Even then, the 2016 Voglar is leaner, more chiseled than previous years. Evoking pine resin, citrus, white flowers, herbs, and stones, this bottling is a contender for "the most irresistibly intriguing wine you will taste all year." Voglar is perennially one of Italy's best whites, and our staff *just might* rank it as our favorite Sauvignon Blanc in the shop.

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE

\$388.80 PER CASE

TRE NEBBIOLI

by Clark Z. Terry

2017 LANGHE NEBBIOLO • TINTERO



We have a \$12 Languedoc red on page 2 for you this month, and here is its Italian counterpart. I am bowled over by the eucalyptus and mint aromatics, black cherry fruit, and dusting of tannins. If you have a tasting group, grab a few Nebbiolos of varying pedigree and toss this bottle into the mix—it might just be the wine of the night (and that will be before revealing the retail price).

\$12.00 PER BOTTLE

\$129.60 PER CASE

2014 BRAMATERRA • MATTEO BALDIN

You're not alone if you don't recognize the Bramaterra name. Calling its location "off the beaten path" is an understatement—it's more than seventy miles north of Alba, in the foothills of the Alps. The Alps assert a prominent influence on this corner of Piedmont, providing cooling mountain winds, but what most sets Bramaterra apart from Barolo or Barbaresco is that, traditionally, small amounts of Croatina and Vespolina are blended to soften the tannic tendencies of the predominant Nebbiolo. Matteo Baldin's goal is to make that traditional style, which to him means crafting a wine with elegance. That's what we have in his 2014 vintage. It offers a tight-knit focus, good acidity, and enough tannin, with rose-petal aromas. Decant for an hour or two, keep the wine slightly cool, and you'll have a transcendent pairing with any hearty meat you throw on the grill.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE

\$378.00 PER CASE

2013 BAROLO BUSSIA RISERVA "CASCINA DARDI" • A. & G. FANTINO

It seems the Fantino brothers can do no wrong—they've created another masterpiece with this Riserva. Aged for five years in large *botti*, the 2013 is simply gorgeous. It strikes that perfect balance of tasting great now but still having the structure to age. I recommend that you pick up six to twelve bottles, treat yourself to a few now, and enjoy the others as they develop over the next ten years.

\$67.00 PER BOTTLE

\$723.60 PER CASE



THREE COLORS OF PROVENCE

by Anthony Lynch

2018 BANDOL ROSÉ DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON

Pour yourself a glass of vigneronne Agnès Henry's rosé to experience the delicate side of Bandol—a delightful contrast to the more structured, powerful rosés from the likes of Tempier or Gros 'Noré. Gentle and full of charm, it offers notes of clementine, white peach, and lavender. Perfect with a grapefruit and chicory salad, it works equally well with my favorite summer dish, sliced heirloom tomatoes topped with buffalo mozzarella and abundant sweet basil. If you manage not to drink it all in one sitting, it gets better on day two.



\$34.00 PER BOTTLE

\$367.20 PER CASE

2012 ALPILLES BLANC “DOLIA” DOMAINE HAUVETTE

Dominique Hauvette is a rare breed: intensely stern, unyielding in her convictions, and at times cynical, she is not the jolly Provençal character we are accustomed to from Occitan folklore. Her wines, in turn, are made via singular methods, without artifice, and cannot be compared to anything else in the region—or, for that matter, anywhere in France. To better understand this talented renegade, who has farmed the limestone-heavy soils near Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, in the shadow of the Alpilles mountain range, since the early 1980s, sample a bottle of this mind-bending white. A blend of Marsanne, Clairette, and Roussanne raised in concrete eggs, Dolia will take your nose and palate for a ride. Smoke, wild-flower honey, gunflint, and quince feature in this fleshy, sturdy masterpiece. The finish, reminiscent of pure stone, is as decisively firm as Dominique herself, but fear not—both are quite lovable once you get to know them.



\$57.00 PER BOTTLE

\$615.60 PER CASE



2015 BANDOL ROUGE DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE

Tasting in Terrebrune's cellar last fall, it became apparent that 2015 stands among the great vintages the domaine has produced as of yet, in the same family as 2001, 2005, and 2009. And while logic suggests we should hold off on drinking the 2015s—after all, Terrebrune's Bandols tend to take their time to fully open up, and this edition's raw power promises a long life ahead—*it's just so darn good right now!* With its deep, opulent Mourvèdre fruit and hint of game on the nose, ample flesh and earthy nuances framed by bright acidity, and solid backbone of chewy tannins, this grandiose effort is hard to resist. Put some bottles in your cellar for later, a few more for *way* later, but definitely don't miss out as it confidently struts its way through youth.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE

\$486.00 PER CASE



BARRUOL / LYNCH

by Chris Santini

KERMIT IS CRAZY,” says Louis Barruol, with a smile and an approving wink, as he taps his wine thief into a fresh barrel of Crozes Hermitage. “We used to make two, maybe three cuvées together from the northern Rhône each year . . . and now . . . eleven!” For a brief moment, I see his mind flare up with thoughts of what eleven different cuvées really means: different bottlings, different stocks to manage, different labels, and different orders not to mix up. He then pulls out some purple, vibrant juice from the barrel and lets it into our glasses. We give it a whirl, and with Louis now reassured that it’s all worth it, he concedes, “Crazy is good!”

After more than a decade of collaborating and poking around Crozes Hermitage, Hermitage, and Côte Rôtie, Louis and Kermit have come up with a panoply of different batches from great and famous *terroirs* as well as obscure and unknown parcels. Finished wines from each parcel are tasted and scrutinized. Some are kept pure, like the single-vineyard



Hermitage Pierrelle, and other lots are blended, such as the Crozes Hermitage Tiercerolles (five parcels) and the Côte Rôtie Les Roses (two parcels). The blending is simply a question of balance and harmony, tweaking notes of smoked ham, white pepper, and blackberry from the Crozes, while emphasizing the classic and unique violet, graphite, and licorice notes of the Côte Rôtie. The secret to the Marsanne

from the Pierrelle parcel on the hill of Hermitage is picking early to ensure tension, expression, and salinity, while retaining the long and lingering bitter notes. It’s not every day you get to wrap your hands around an Hermitage *blanc*, folks. Dig in while you can.

2017 CROZES HERMITAGE “TIERCEROLLES”

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE

\$388.80 PER CASE

2017 HERMITAGE BLANC “LA PIERRELLE”

\$92.00 PER BOTTLE

\$993.60 PER CASE

2017 CÔTE RÔTIE “LES ROSES”

\$88.00 PER BOTTLE

\$950.40 PER CASE

TUSCAN SANGIOVESE

by Anthony Lynch

2018 TOSCANA ROSATO • SESTI

Here is a rare rosé from the land of great reds, from Sangiovese planted within the eminent Brunello di Montalcino appellation. Rarer yet, it is fermented with natural yeasts and completes its malolactic fermentation—that means no inoculation, low sulfur, and no sterile filtration. The result: a refreshing, mouth-filling *rosato* better suited to fine dining than poolside quaffing. The best pairing I know of, served on the Sestis’ shaded terrace on a warm summer evening, involved ultra-thin slices of beef *carpaccio*, shaved *parmigiano*, cracked pepper, a drizzle of Sesti olive oil (available in the shop), and an invigorating squeeze of lemon.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE

\$270.00 PER CASE

2016 CHIANTI CLASSICO • VILLA DI GEGGIANO

There are two contrasting faces to Geggiano. On the one hand, you have the splendid villa, an aristocratic mansion filled with gorgeous frescoes and luxurious eighteenth-century furniture, its impeccably curated gardens as classy as the magnificent interior. Conversely, below the villa lies the rustic cellar, a dimly lit cave full of cobwebs and the dank smell of damp earth.

Two brothers run the place: Andrea, the salesman, is well-groomed and suavely dressed, often donning a jacket from a stylish Italian designer. In comparison, Alessandro, the winemaker, sports a big, unkempt beard and is missing a finger; the ones he does have are thick, rugged, and calloused.

And the wine? Both faces are found in Geggiano’s 2016. Elegant yet rustic, it boasts lovely, deep, seductive fruit with a tannic kick and lingering flavors of the Tuscan countryside.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE

2015 CHIANTI CLASSICO RISERVA “TERRAZZE” • CASTAGNOLI

Put this Chianti in your cellar alongside your favorite Bandols, Barolos, and Cornas. In a perfectly ripe vintage, the wine retains nuanced, exotic aromatics and lively acidity thanks to the vines’ elevation high on steep slopes strewn with flaky blue *galestro*, one of Sangiovese’s favorite soils. Exuberant and fine-grained, this Chianti will impress right away but will truly reward patience as fruit, tannin, and acid meld into an old-school Tuscan classic.

\$43.00 PER BOTTLE

\$464.40 PER CASE

ALSATIAN HEIGHTS

by *Dustin Soiseth*

RED WINES from higher-altitude regions or vineyards are often described as “mountain wines.” The term usually implies marked structure and acidity, leanness and struggle, and conjures up images of a grizzled alpinist. You don’t hear the label applied to white wines as much, but Alsatian whites deserve it. The region’s best vineyard sites—some famously steep and treacherous to work—are situated on the eastern flank of the Vosges mountains as they descend to the Rhine plain and the German border. Having just returned from a family trip to Yosemite, I probably had mountains on my mind, but as I tasted through these wines with colleagues, my head swam with alpine imagery.

2016 RIESLING • KUENTZ-BAS

Like all the Rieslings here, the Kuentz-Bas is dry with the classic hint of petrol on the nose. Tart green apple makes an appearance, and a bit of pear. Firm on the palate, it offers substance that belies the eminently affordable price. It’s your perfect reference point for Alsatian Riesling.

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE

\$161.46 PER CASE

2017 RIESLING “FRONHOLZ” DOMAINE OSTERTAG

Perched on a hillside near the village of Epfig, the Fronholz vineyard is known for producing craggy, mineral-driven Rieslings with bracing acidity. The Ostertag family farms their parcels biodynamically, and the Fronholz’s vibrant mix of fruit and earth, flesh and structure, is their hallmark.

\$50.00 PER BOTTLE

\$540.00 PER CASE



2016 RIESLING RÉSERVE ALBERT BOXLER

Have you ever seen a picture of Denali in Alaska? The highest peak in North America, it’s breathtakingly massive. Boxler’s 2016 Riesling Réserve, sourced from younger vines in *grand cru* vineyards, struck me as similarly massive—not in a heavy sense, though, but as more expansive. The smallest sip seems to fill your mouth, and the aromas permeate every available bit of headspace. It is creamy and rich, with honey and stone fruit notes. Incredibly fine.

\$60.00 PER BOTTLE

\$648.00 PER CASE



Looking across Katzenthal to the Wineck Schlossberg vineyard

© Dixon Brooke

2017 RIESLING GRAND CRU “WINECK SCHLOSSBERG” • MEYER-FONNÉ

If the Boxler Réserve is an imposing massif, Meyer-Fonné’s Wineck Schlossberg is a vertiginous peak, rising Matterhorn-like, above the surrounding terrain. The most age-worthy of this group of Rieslings, it will need a bit of time to open up. Right now, the summit is obscured by clouds.

\$51.00 PER BOTTLE

\$550.80 PER CASE

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