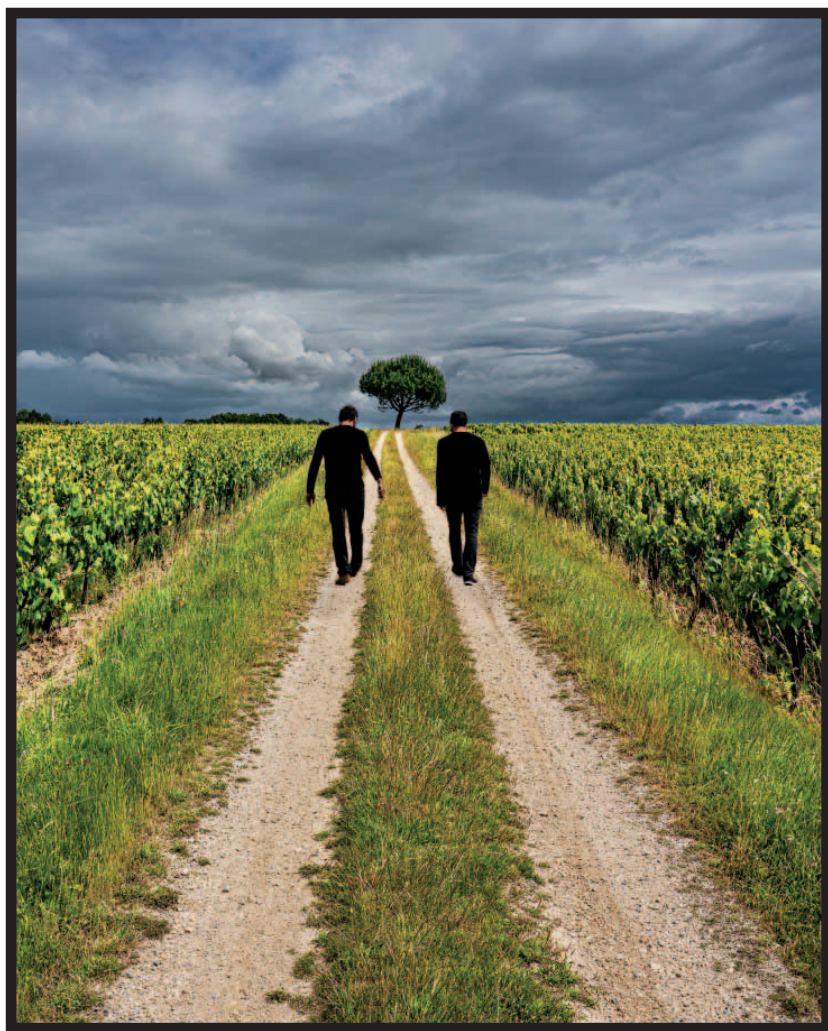


# KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

SEPTEMBER 2019



*Touring Muscadet vineyards with Eric Chevalier*

© Gail Skoff

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A TOUR OF SICILY ■ BURGUNDY SAMPLER  
WHAT'S IN A NAME? ■ LE VIN EN ROSE

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# ANNE-MARIE AND JEAN-MARC VINCENT

## SAMPLER

by Tom Wolf

IF YOU SPENT A DAY OR TWO in the Côte de Beaune, you would probably start in Meursault and the Montrachets—Chassagne and Puligny—and then turn north to hit Volnay and Pommard. But if you headed back to Beaune for dinner without making it to Santenay, just south of Chassagne-Montrachet, near the Côte de Beaune’s southern tip, your tour of the Côte would be incomplete. This small, quintessentially Burgundian village may not be home to the same number of titans who work in each of the exalted appellations above, but at least one couple there is doing a staggeringly good job of showing that Santenay can go toe to toe with many of the more prestigious sites to the north.

Anne-Marie and Jean-Marc Vincent inherited their vines from Jean-Marc’s grandfather in 1997 and excelled so quickly that Kermit first imported their wines just a few years later, with the 2000 Santenay *rouge premier cru* Les Gravières. In the June 2002 brochure, he noted it as “razzle dazzle with class,” which continues to describe the Vincents’ wines well. Nearly twenty years later, I would

add: taut, pure, and precise right out of the gate, with fifteen to twenty years of great aging potential.

The Vincents, who farm their six-hectare domaine organically and age their wines in a small, ancient *cave* beneath their home, have always been traditionalists. That’s not to say, however, that they have not refined their techniques somewhat in the nearly twenty years we have imported their wines. Over the last five years, in particular, Jean-Marc and Anne-Marie have decreased the amount of



© Gail Skoff

Kermit with Anne-Marie and Jean-Marc Vincent

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new oak they use to 10 percent for the whites and 25 percent for the reds. In tandem with this transition, they have minimized how much sulfur they use, which has led, Jean-Marc says, to wines that are even fresher and more charming and transparent with respect to their *terroirs*. The wines have always been beautiful: a few weeks ago, I opened a stately 2009 Gravières rouge, for example. But they have never been better than they are now, and that is saying a lot.

As deep as their Santenay lineup is in both red and white, we couldn't resist including their *premier cru* Montagny in this collection. It is the exclamation point—the mic drop—on our case that Jean-Marc and Anne-Marie Vincent weave the most beautiful tapestries from the threads of Burgundy's underdog appellations.

PER BOTTLE

2016 MONTAGNY 1ER CRU . . . . . \$46.00

*Lean and chiseled, with notes of citrus, apple, and sea spray, this is the Vincents' most charming wine in either color right now. Think of it as a southern Chablis—perfect alongside fresh seafood.*

2016 SANTENAY BLANC 1ER CRU "LE BEAUREPAIRE" . . . . . 68.00

*Both this Beaurepaire and the Gravières blanc are also chiseled, but they have a little more weight, grip, and aging potential than the Montagny.*

2016 SANTENAY BLANC 1ER CRU "LES GRAVIÈRES" . . . . . 68.00

*Whereas the Beaurepaire blanc is defined by mouthwatering acidity—think notes of green apple and citrus—this Gravières, as its name suggests, is stonier.*

2016 SANTENAY ROUGE 1ER CRU "LE PASSETEMPS" . . . . . 67.00

*Earthy, with pretty notes of red and black fruit, this is possibly the most complete of the Vincents' reds right now. It is reserved, but shows total class.*

2016 SANTENAY ROUGE 1ER CRU "LE BEAUREPAIRE" . . . . . 67.00

*More fragrant on the nose than the coyer Passetemps, this beautiful Beaurepaire is firmer on the palate at the moment. It is begging to be cellared for a few more years, and further down the road it will reward you even more.*

2016 SANTENAY ROUGE 1ER CRU "LES GRAVIÈRES" . . . . . 67.00

*Exhibiting more notes of cocoa and espresso beans than the Passetemps but with the same bright red and black fruit, this gorgeous Gravières rouge showcases the prettiest harmony between bass and tenor. Exquisite now, it will only improve in your cellar over fifteen to twenty years.*

Normally \$383.00

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$287**  
(a 25% discount)

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# WHAT'S IN A NAME: CHARMES

by *Dustin Soiseth*

A FEW VINEYARDS IN BURGUNDY are named Charmes. The Charmes-Chambertin grand cru and Meursault-Charmes premier cru are probably the best-known, and there's a Charmes vineyard in Chambolle-Musigny and another in Puligny-Montrachet. *Charmes* translates to—you guessed it—"charms," and wines from these sites have beguiled enough drinkers that at some point the characteristic was enshrined in the vineyard name. Down in Beaujolais, the Charmes vineyard in the *cru* of Morgon is one of the highest sites in the appellation, topping out at about 1,300 feet. The microclimate there is slightly cooler than most of Morgon, and as a result the wines tend to be brighter, higher-toned, and a bit leaner than those from lower vineyards.

We have two Morgon Charmes in our portfolio. Quentin Harel is a young vintner with a natural bent who has recently assumed control of the domaine that has been in his family since the eighteenth century. Jean Foillard is a Beaujolais legend who, together with his compatriots in the Gang of Four, helped redefine Beaujolais a generation ago. While their Charmes have similar vinifications—whole-cluster fermentation, *élevage* in neutral barrels, sulfur dioxide only at bottling—and express the qualities of this higher-elevation vineyard, they also highlight the stylistic differences between these two producers.

## 2018 MORGON "LES CHARMES" QUENTIN HAREL

Deliciously earthy nose, like fresh-turned garden soil, that extends through the finish. Harel's Charmes has tannic grip, but those tannins melt away when paired with a meal. The wine's plainspoken, humble, rustic quality is immensely appealing and refreshing.

**\$25.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$270.00** PER CASE

## 2017 MORGON "EPONYM" • JEAN FOILLARD

Definitely a richer expression of Charmes, with a darker, more plummy quality; fruit at the peak of ripeness. There's earthiness here, but with a plushness of texture I always associate with Foillard.

**\$48.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$518.40** PER CASE



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# LE VIN EN ROSE

by Jane Berg

## 2018 VIN DE FRANCE ROSÉ “AU PETIT BONHEUR” • LES PALLIÈRES

If you're feeling *résistant* to any policy makers these days, stock up on the sandy blond Au Petit Bonheur from Les Pallières. The INAO, the certifying body for France's winemaking regions, believes that Gigondas's eponymous rosé, despite being made naturally from organic grapes, may not identify as such if it does not look pink enough. Vexed by this rule, Kermit and the Bruniers decided to part ways with the Gigondas AOP and make their rosé as Mother Nature intended, in a *vin gris* style. Equal parts Clairette, Grenache, and Cinsault, this bottling is salty, discreet, and full of brambly fruit and soft citrus notes. Vive le freedom of le Vin de France.

**\$26.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$280.80** PER CASE

## 2018 BANDOL • DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE

Selecting a bottle of Bandol rosé from one of our four growers—Terrebrune, Gros 'Noré, La Tour du Bon, and Tempier—is akin to choosing a Morgon to drink from the Gang of Four. While each will satisfy your hankering for a Provençal excursion, no two will take you on the same journey. Reynald Delille's distinctly mineral rosé, from the iron-rich, terra-cotta soils of Ollioules, is one of the most vinous *vins rosés* we import, evoking the serious focus and steady hand of the winemaker himself.

**\$36.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$388.80** PER CASE

## 2018 TAVEL • CHÂTEAU DE TRINQUEVEDEL

The singular Tavel AOP stands out not just for its production of bright red rosé but also because it happens to be the only appellation in France from which *blanc* and *rouge* are excluded. For winemakers Guillaume and Céline Demoulin, this means all their best plots from the hilltops of the Montagne Noire are destined for one heady blend of Grenache, Clairette, Cinsault, Syrah, and Mourvèdre. This dark, autumnal rosé is a beacon of tradition in a sea of paler styles. Its bold, yet versatile personality can carry a meal from the heartiest apéritif of rich rillettes or briny black tapenade all the way through meatier courses like crispy whole fish or garlicky spring lamb.

**\$20.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$216.00** PER CASE

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*One of the many landscapes of Sicily*

© Gail Skoff

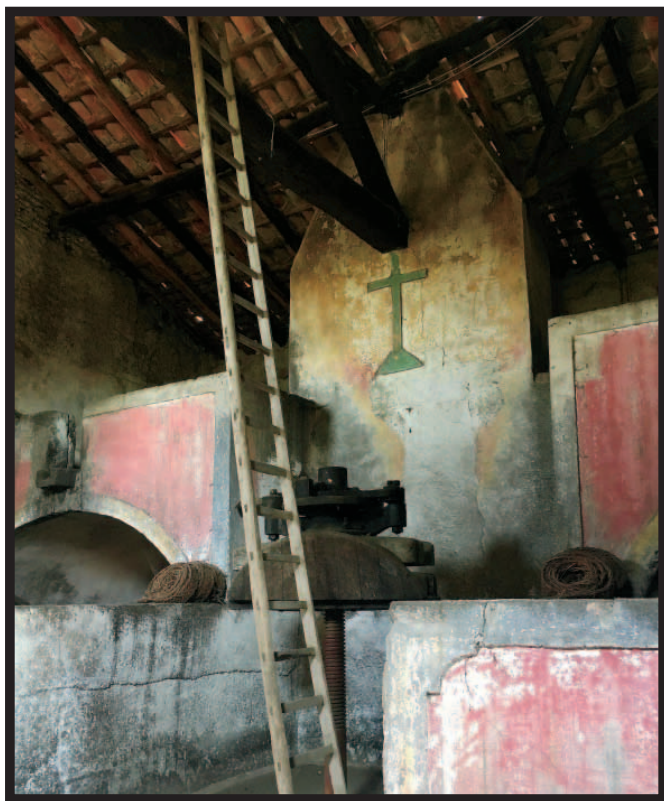
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# A TOUR OF SICILY

by Anthony Lynch

THERE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL about visiting our growers in Sicily—something different in the air that makes this region unlike any other. Perhaps it has to do with the rustic, arid landscape, which gives traveling the island the feel of an adventure across the Wild Wild West. Or perhaps it is Sicily's many contrasts, which are both fascinating and disorienting, that make it such a stimulating place visually, intellectually, and emotionally: picture snowcapped Etna, majestically rising above all, with the inviting Mediterranean glimmering just below. Imagine a land of unparalleled cultural richness, yet plagued by poverty and unemployment. Envision sublime natural beauty coexisting with copious trash and pollution. Sicily is an island, of course, but it feels like its own continent, or even its own planet at times.

It may seem like an exaggeration to say that all this can be found in a glass of wine, and yet it is perhaps not such a far-fetched notion after all. Without spending weeks, months, or years traveling Sicily, studying its every nuance, is there any better way than pulling some corks to understand its soil, its people, its traditions, its soul?



*An abandoned palmento on Etna, formerly used for winemaking*

We begin this colorful and flavorsome journey in the south, among the bushy vines of Frappato and Nero d'Avola (here called Calabrese) drawing vigor from the dusty clay soils of the Cerasuolo di Vittoria appellation. The Portelli family once had little farmhouses, or *palmenti*, scattered throughout these parcels before consolidating winemaking to a central facility in town. Located in an industrial area on the outskirts of Vittoria, the Portelli *cantina* is by no means noteworthy, but its tanks house brightly flavored elixirs of the utmost purity and freshness. **Calabrese** in their hands is not an inky, alcoholic bruiser, but rather a thing of ravishing delicacy, defined by mouthwatering black cherry fruit and lively acidity, that would make any red sauce blush. When Calabrese combines with Frappato, **Cerasuolo** is born, its vibrant perfume of violets and freshly pressed berries suggesting that beauty can be found in the most unlikely places.



**2017 VITTORIA CALABRESE • PORTELLI**

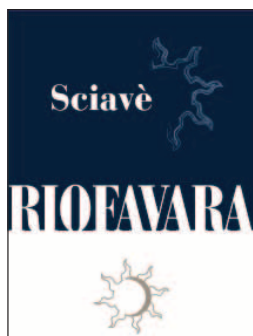
**\$24.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$259.20** PER CASE

**2016 CERASUOLO DI VITTORIA • PORTELLI**

**\$26.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$280.80** PER CASE



To the east, just outside the Baroque stronghold of Ispica, Massimo Padova spearheads an organic farming revolution he started in the 1990s at his estate, Riofava. Near its supposed birthplace, Nero d'Avola takes on a notably different character. The chalky white soil, rich in calcium, seems to bestow added backbone to the wine. With power and grace, his smoky **Sciavè** bottling has the depth of flavor to complement a hearty roast or grilled summer vegetables. But here on the coast, the Mediterranean's bounty of seafood is within arm's reach. A tuna *crudo*, or even just a twilight *aperitivo*, calls for a cold glass of **Marzaiolo**, Massimo's zesty, herbal, saline blend of dry Moscato, Grecanico, and Inzolia.

**2014 ELORO NERO D'AVOLA "SCIAVÈ" • RIOFAVARA**

**\$35.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$378.00** PER CASE

**2018 TERRE SICILIANE BIANCO "MARZAIOLO" • RIOFAVARA**

**\$19.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$205.20** PER CASE





*The Cattedrale di Noto, southern Sicily*

© Gail Skoff

Traveling up the coast, we arrive at Mount Etna, its imposing peak spewing a perpetual steamy breath of volcanic exhaust. High on the mountain’s northern face lies Masseria del Pino, a utopian enclave founded by a couple fed up with city life, inspired by the simple ways of times past. Their *palmento* has been re-stored to full functionality, so when the fruit of 120-year-old Nerello vines arrives from the surrounding vineyard, it is foot-tread in lava-stone vats, fermented spontaneously, then pressed off into neutral barrels for over a year of undisturbed refinement. The outcome, **I Nove Fratelli**, is a luscious, concentrated, sweet-fruited nod to the Etna of yesteryear, when artisans worked their vines and made wine entirely by hand—a relic of the past, perhaps, but one that shimmers with life and force in the glass.

**2017 ETNA ROSSO “I NOVE FRATELLI” • MASSERIA DEL PINO**

**\$55.00 PER BOTTLE      \$594.00 PER CASE**

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Not too far away, Etna natives Carmelo Vecchio and Rosa La Guzza of Vigneti Vecchio tend little gardens of ancient vines, crafting tiny quantities of aromatic gems in their cramped Solicchiata basement. The **Crasà Contrada**, at 800 meters elevation, produces their most profound red, made from Nerello Mascalese co-planted with a smattering of other indigenous red and white grapes. This old-fashioned field blend recalls smoky incense, white pepper, and brandied cherries, while its tightly knit tannic structure promises great cellaring potential.

**2017 ETNA ROSSO “CRASÀ CONTRADA” • VIGNETI VECCHIO**

**\$58.00 PER BOTTLE      \$626.40 PER CASE**



*Etna’s steamy breath*

© Dixon Brooke

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— VALUE OF THE MONTH —

## 2017 MONFERRATO ROSSO TENUTA LA PERGOLA

by Dixon Brooke

ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS of my winter every year is visiting Alessandra Bodda and her family in the Monferrato region of Piedmont. Their vineyards are in a hamlet of the town of Cisterna d'Asti, a typical Monferratese fortified hilltop town, with its tall brick campanile built for keeping watch over the surrounding countryside. The Bodda family farms all of the local grapes of the area on their steep vineyards of limestone marl: Arneis, Barbera, Freisa, Bonarda, Croatina, Dolcetto, and Brachetto.

When I arrive in February, each of the grape varieties is separated into stainless-steel tanks, post-fermentation. All of the Bodda family's wines are honest, forthright expressions of the grape and place that they come from and their winemaking is truly minimalist, so the building blocks are raw and uncut.

We start the tasting by sampling each tank individually so that I can decide which to prioritize for our blend. Every year the blend of grapes and the proportion of each changes, often dramatically. The second step is to begin sampling various blends of the selected components, striving for harmony and a consistency of style with previous vintages, all while respecting the unique character of the current vintage. My goal with the blend is always to have floral aromatics that pop, medium body that is not too ripe or alcoholic, sufficient acidity (never a problem with their Barbera!), juiciness, enough structure to stand up to a real ragù, and tannins with no rough edges.

I am honored that the family gives us access to the treasures of their *cantina* and grants us the opportunity to make this custom blend. Over the years, it has been gratifying to observe the evolution of Alessandra's son Emanuele, from his sitting at the table with us for five minutes to say hello and sample one or two wines to managing the tasting and participating throughout. Her younger son, Moreno, and daughter, Martina, have begun to join us in recent years as well. Martina has taken the place of her adorable, lively grandmother, who passed a few years ago, as the chef for our all-important post-tasting lunch.

This annual voyage allows us to bring you the best expression of this family's work, which we bottle without fining or filtration so that you can enjoy the authentic taste of northern Italian countryside.



**\$14.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$151.20** PER CASE

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# CORSICA

by *Chris Santini*

## 2018 PATRIMONIO ROSÉ “CRU DES AGRIATE” DOMAINE GIACOMETTI

Three generations ago, when Laurent Giacometti purchased a derelict, sprawling vineyard and estate in the middle of the Désert des Agriates, the previous owner handed him the keys and dryly told him, “Welcome to the village where it’s always raining somewhere else.” For centuries, agricultural plans and projects have failed spectacularly in this aptly named desert, and the Giacomettis struggled for many years as well. It took more than three decades of organic farming and persistence for their vines to learn to go deep, away from the parched and sea-salt-crustured surface. This rustic, pomegranate-tinged year-round rosé is for the table, not the pool.

**\$22.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$237.60** PER CASE

## 2018 CORSE FIGARI *BLANC* • CLOS CANARELLI

Vanilla may be a cringe-worthy word in the wine trade these days, bringing up bad memories from a bygone era when terms such as tar, tannin, chocolate, vanilla, oak, and bomb were often used together to sell over-the-top concoctions. But what about real-deal vanilla? I’m talking cured Madagascar bourbon seed, lightly crushed, delicate and discreet. Add some white flowers, soft white fruit, a lightly bitter finish . . . and *voilà!* You’ve got classic Canarelli.

**\$54.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$583.20** PER CASE

## 2017 CUVÉE COLLECTION *ROUGE* “MINISTRE IMPÉRIAL” • COMTE ABBATUCCI

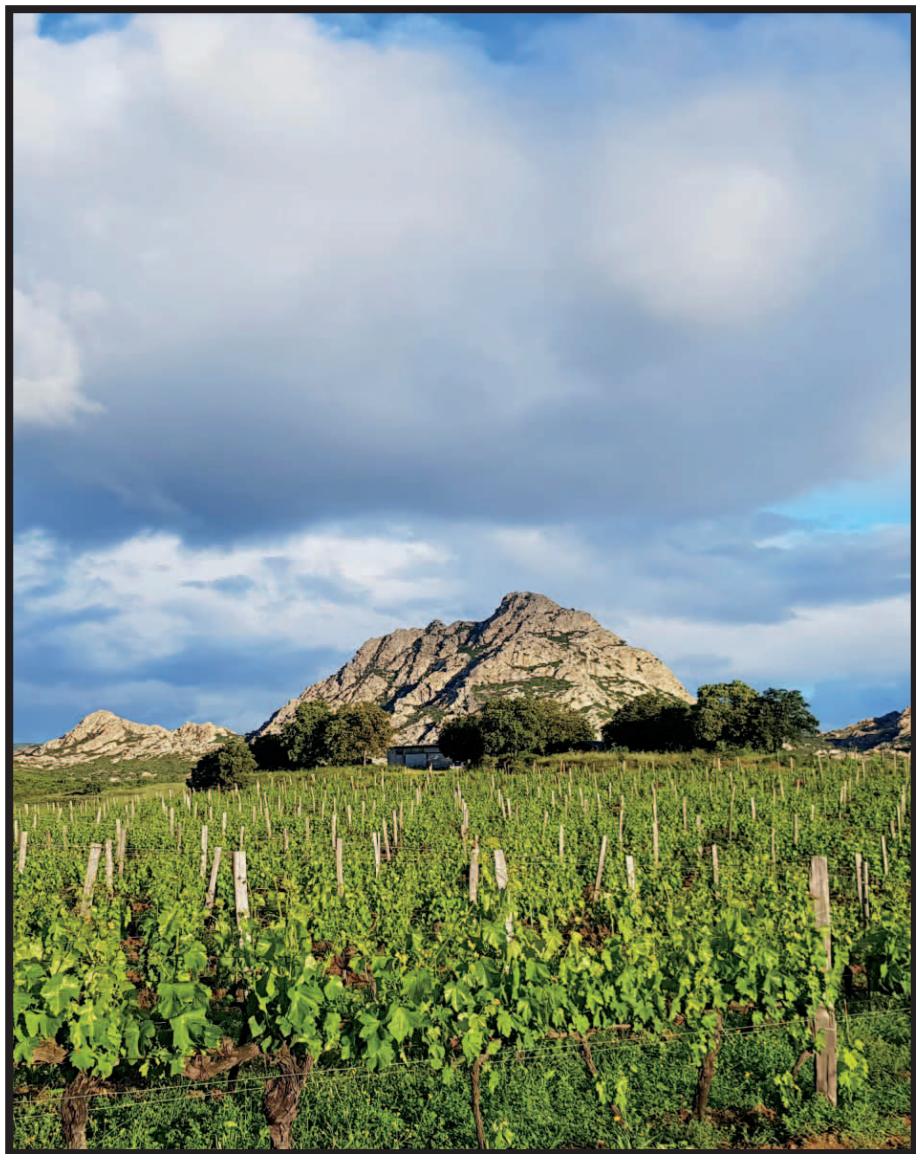
On my first visit to Abbatucci, instead of a glass and a taste, I was treated to a stack of papers, each one covered in a swirl of crystals. This crystallization is a decades-old biodynamic technique of heating a few drops of wine with copper sulfate on a special paper, which then “reads” the energy and intensity of each wine. It was (and still is) a bit Greek to me, but I can tell you that the Ministre crystals were off the chart, and Abbatucci was beaming with pride. All you’ll need, though, to feel this unbridled energy in the wine, is a corkscrew.

**\$98.00** PER BOTTLE

**\$1,058.40** PER CASE







*The Désert des Agriates*

© Domaine Giacometti

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# MELON, CHENIN, SAUVIGNON

by Anthony Lynch

## 2018 MUSCADET CÔTES DE GRAND LIEU SUR LIE “CLOS DE LA BUTTE” • ERIC CHEVALIER

Can any grape variety translate a salty ocean breeze quite like Melon de Bourgogne? At Eric Chevalier's domaine, less than twenty miles from the Atlantic coast, the vineyards lie in the direct path of incessant onshore winds. And yet the first impression in his 2018 Muscadet is a lovely whisper of florality, perhaps the aromatic footprint of organically farmed old vines with no added yeast and a modest use of sulfur. When the flowers subside, the salt kicks in, leaving your palate both charmed and salivating for more.

**\$16.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$172.80** PER CASE

## 2018 VOUVRAY “LES FONDRAUX” CHAMPALOU

Crafting impeccably balanced, off-dry wines like this is no simple task, but the Champalou Fondraux rolls over the tongue so fluidly that you might be tempted to think the berries tasted just like this when they were picked off the vine. It comes down to masterful winemaking, in which precision and savoir faire replace the need for technological intervention to create a velvety, suave Vouvray that oozes class. The contrast of ripe, succulent Chenin Blanc fruit with a spike of flinty minerality is like licking honey off an arrowhead.

**\$26.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$280.80** PER CASE

## 2018 CHEVERNY • DOMAINE DU SALVARD

After losing half their 2017 crop to frost, Thierry and Emmanuel Delaille of Domaine du Salvard received a sort of divine compensation in 2018. At last, an abundant harvest endowed with excellent ripeness and superb balance! True bon vivants, the brothers seemed *especially* jovial when we sampled the 2018s in June. Beaming with joy and always quick to pun, they poured me a lineup of wines boasting a comparable liveliness, verve, and lighthearted disposition. Their Cheverny, a festive mélange of frisky Sauvignon with an enriching splash of Chardonnay, remains one of the most quaffable whites we import. Exotic and citrusy with a trademark zingy finish, this wine simply goes down way too easy. Lucky for us, there is twice as much as last year!

**\$18.00** PER BOTTLE      **\$194.40** PER CASE

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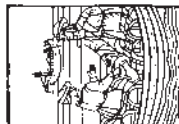
*Emmanuel and Thierry Delaillie of Domaine du Salvard*

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“IN THE STORY OF WINE, there is nothing more intriguing than trying to imagine the mentality of the ancient French vigneron. What a colossal oeuvre was created! It was a different mentality, certainly, guided by experience, taste, and instinct. The taste of the grape told them when to harvest. The taste of the wine told them when to bottle, what sort of oak to employ, the appropriate barrel size, how to prune the different grape varieties, and on and on and on. . . . They seem to have been instinctively directed toward quality.”

—KERMIT LYNCH, ADVENTURES ON THE WINE ROUTE

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