

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

OCTOBER 2017



Picnic in Versailles, 1973

© Gail Skoff

PUNTA CRENA'S HEIRLOOM GRAPES • AUTUMN TASTING IN OAKLAND • DIRECT FROM THE CELLAR

AUTUMN TASTING



Please join
Kermit Lynch
Wine Merchant
for our annual
Autumn Tasting!

Friday
October 20, 2017
6:30–8:30 P.M.
\$50

NEW VENUE
Impact Hub Oakland
2323 Broadway Avenue
Oakland

This year's event will take place at Impact Hub in vibrant uptown Oakland. Conveniently located, with plentiful transportation options and a happening restaurant scene for pre- or post-tasting dining, the new space will allow us to provide you with the best tasting experience possible. We'll enjoy portfolio classics from France and Italy, new arrivals, and a few very special selections.

To purchase tickets, or if you have any questions,
please call the store at (510) 524-1524.

LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

THE TRUFFLE OF BURGUNDY

by Dixon Brooke

2015 PULIGNY-MONTRACHET 1^{ER} CRU “LA TRUFFIÈRE” • BRUNO COLIN

The *premier cru* of La Truffière is located high on the hill above Puligny, below the Hameau de Blagny and above the *premier cru* of Les Folatières. The vineyard is split up by forest, which surely provides the origin of the name “truffle patch.” Just imagine the good fortune you would feel as you whistled your way home on a Saturday morning with a small basket full of freshly dug truffles, a late-morning truffled omelet and a glass of properly aged Puligny-Montrachet on your mind. Might the truffle spores somehow mingle with the vine roots and add the slightest truffle hint to the wine? Or perhaps the wine was simply named after the forest where those with the skill to find truffles unearthed them.

In any case, this white Burgundy, from the very fine 2015 vintage, is a beautiful rendering of this storied *cru*. It will be a great base around which to experiment in the kitchen this fall. There is nothing quite like the golden nectar of the Côte d’Or as the first nip of the season begins to be felt. This bottle is open enough to be enjoyed immediately, and includes complex stone fruit aromas, flesh, depth, and the classic chiseled back end you’d expect from well-made Puligny-Montrachet. I hope you enjoy sinking your teeth into this beauty over the coming months (and years).

\$192.00 PER BOTTLE

\$2,073.60 PER CASE

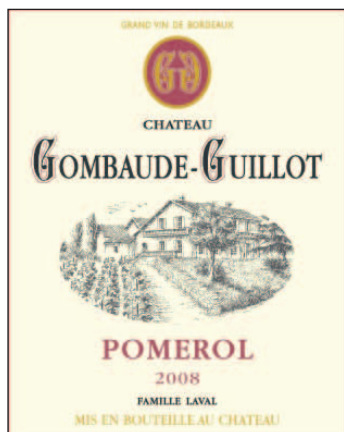


Bruno Colin

DIRECT FROM THE CELLAR

by Jennifer Oakes

2008 POMEROL CHÂTEAU COMBAUDE-GUILLOT

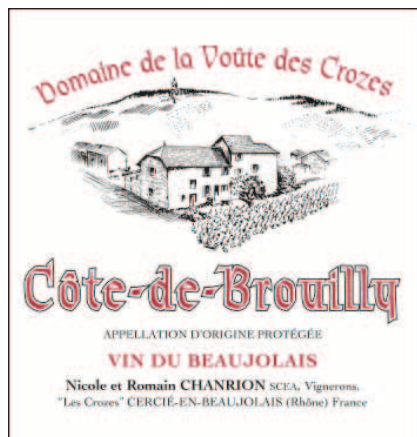


A proper cellar is a wine's home: a nurturing place of safety and comfort where it can travel through all its life stages, evolving and readying itself for your table. The Laval family has offered from their cellar this Pomerol that is but a few steps into its journey, still youthful and confident and ready to roll for the next several years. For the moment, watch how it develops in the glass, bursting with aromas of graphite, currants, plum, and pomegranate, and sporting a finely tannic backbone and lively acidity. It's just begging for roast meat, chicken, chops—and a deep thirst.

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

2007 CÔTE-DE-BROUILLY NICOLE CHANRION

Aged Beaujolais is not an oxymoron, a subtle dig like “good British food,” perpetuated by the “I don’t like Beaujolais because I’ve only had Beaujolais Nouveau” crowd. Burgundy-like in its elegance yet without the aged Burgundy price, it is dark ruby, deeply enveloping and silken-textured, and loaded with blackberries, bittersweet chocolate, cinnamon, and spice. Perfect with almost any dish and just reaching the peak of its powers, this is a hardworking wine made by a hardworking woman, with complexity and vitality that defy expectation. Gamay doubters, take note!



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

SYRAH

by *Dustin Soiseth*

THAT SYRAH IS TOUGH TO SELL is an old wine business cliché, and as with most clichés, there's some truth in it. For whatever reason, this beguiling, dark-skinned grape hasn't captivated wine drinkers the way other varieties have. I think it's because the best Syrahs somehow seem inscrutable. Instead of leaping out of the glass, they pull you in. They have interesting and unusual aromas, and are slightly off-kilter in an intriguing way, like the waltz in 5/4 time in Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*. If you happen to be a Syrah devotee, like me, you probably appreciate these qualities in your wine—and perhaps in your music as well.

Although everyone's experience is different, I'd be willing to wager that for most Syrah lovers, the seminal Syrah experience was with a bottle from the northern Rhône. It's an improbable combination of grape and place, with vineyards so steep and punishing to work that even the scions of famous domaines think twice about taking over from their hardworking parents. Louis Barruol traverses the slopes of Côte Rôtie—the northernmost appellation in the northern Rhône—for the most expressive parcels of Syrah. He vinifies each separately, and then Kermit tastes through every lot and assembles the final blends.

Farther south, at Domaine Gramenon, the terrain is a bit less forbidding and the Syrah a bit more extroverted. Proprietor Michèle Aubéry-Laurent skews natural in her farming and winemaking, and her wines are effortlessly enjoyable. Maybe you're not in the mood for Tchaikovsky and would prefer some mischievous Stravinsky instead.

2015 CÔTE RÔTIE “LA BOISSELÉE” BARRUOL / LYNCH

One for the cellar. Weighty up front, but with an unexpected delicacy on the finish. Ripe, but balanced with savory elements. This is what all the fuss is about.

\$79.00 PER BOTTLE

\$853.20 PER CASE

2016 CÔTES-DU-RHÔNE “SIERRA DU SUD” DOMAINE GRAMENON

Don't be thrown off by the appellation. This Côtes-du-Rhône is all Syrah: lots of flowers, dark berry fruit, and smoky notes for diligent sniffers to discover.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE

\$378.00 PER CASE

CORSICA

by Dixon Brooke

2016 CORSE CALVI BLANC “E PROVE” DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

The area of northwestern Corsica around the port town of Calvi is known as the “Balagne.” It is distinguished by craggy granite hillsides, olive trees, plentiful maquis, glittering turquoise waters, and, of course, great wines. Kermit likes to vacation here, which gives you a clue about the region’s idyllic qualities. Among its finest estates is the Raoust family farm, planted on a plateau among the *haute garrigue* known as “E Prove.” The Vermentino in the granite of Balagne takes on characteristics unknown elsewhere in Corsica. Out of this rugged *terroir*, *vigneronne* Camille-Anaïs coaxes its unique flavors of herbs, stones, and orchard fruits.

\$19.95 PER BOTTLE

\$215.46 PER CASE

2016 PATRIMONIO ROSÉ • YVES LECCIA

Yves truly outdid himself this time. Granted, he has an amazing *terroir*, and a whole lotta talent, though he will never make a lot of noise about it. This year his rosé was too impressive to ignore, and it has been our most popular. Not only is Patrimonio one of the most beautiful villages in France, but also it produces one of the country’s greatest wines. This is the real deal: aroma, structure, flavor, pleasure—it is all there.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE

\$302.40 PER CASE

2015 “SEMPRE CUNTENTU” DOMAINE GIACOMETTI

I am “always happy” hanging out with Simon and Sarah Giacometti. During harvest in August, I met up with them at the Arenas’ compound in downtown Patrimonio to taste all their new releases and break bread with them and the Arenas. I’ve met few people, and few wines, easier to get along with. This red is the Giacomettis’ pure Sciaccarellu cuvée from the arid granite of the Agriate where they live, west of Patrimonio along the sea. It brings a lot of voluptuousness and hedonistic pleasure to the normally reserved, fresh crunch of the Sciaccarellu grape. As the label implies, it is quite simply a feel-good wine.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE

\$302.40 PER CASE



The Cru des Agriate at Domaine Giacometti

© Dixon Brooke

HEIRLOOM GRAPES FROM PUNTA CRENA

by Anthony Lynch

THANKS TO its mountainous topography and its people's firm commitment to local tradition, Liguria has remained relatively immune to the globalization that has seen international wine styles pervade in regions like Tuscany and the Veneto. The Ruffino family, who has grown grapes on the sea-facing slopes above the resort town of Varigotti for half a millennium, epitomizes Liguria's wealth of viticultural treasures. In addition to Vermentino, Pigato, and Rossese—widespread throughout the region—they continue to grow heirloom grapes such as Lumassina and Barbarossa, and their vineyards are home to some of the last remaining plantings of Mataòssu and Crovino.

What's more, the Ruffinos are reintroducing experimental plots of Vermentino Nero and Rossese Bianco, so expect exciting novelties to come from these sunbaked Mediterranean hillsides. With a dozen children running around the winery—the oldest of whom are already fully implicated in the family business—we have no doubt Liguria's fascinating traditions will persist for many more years.

2016 PETTIROSSO ALLEGRO

This gently sparkling dry rosé is the stuff *aperitivo* dreams are made of. A blend of Rossese and Crovino, it has the bright fruit and palate-cleansing fizz to wash down deep-fried seafood, or simply to quench one's thirst on a warm afternoon.

\$20.00 PER BOTTLE

\$216.00 PER CASE

2016 MATAÒSSU “VIGNETO REINÉ”

“Mataòssu is *molto resistente*,” Paolo Ruffino told me last summer. *Resistente* in the sense that wines from this near-extinct white grape are highly resistant to oxidation—the 2011 vintage is tasting superb today, and the 1999, shockingly, shows nary a trace of evolution. Fortunately, one need not wait to enjoy the fruit of these vines planted in 1934. The new vintage is full of herbal, citrusy refreshment, offering a waxy texture and a crisp, saline finish.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE

\$302.40 PER CASE



2015 CRUVIN

Don't miss a chance to taste the world's only Crovino—other growers uprooted their vines due to the variety's low yields and tendency to drop its berries upon achieving ripeness. Those drawbacks are not enough to discourage the Ruffinos, who continue to wave the flag for this ultra-local medium-bodied red. With notes of fresh berries, pepper, and a sweet spiciness, it will wonderfully complement homemade pasta dishes or my favorite pairing, roast rabbit smothered with herbs.

\$34.00 PER BOTTLE

\$367.20 PER CASE



Punta Crena's Mataòssu vines

© Gail Skoff



Félix Meyer

MEYER-FONNÉ

AN ALSATIAN PARADIGM SHIFT

by Emily Spillmann

ALSAUCE, FOR ME, is a tough sell. The last time I visited the region was in the middle of the foggiest winter in recent history, and my view of the vineyards ended about twenty feet in front of whatever ice-cold sand-stone-and-marl-laden parcel in which I stood. I could only vaguely visualize the steep hillsides so valued for their noble Rieslings. It was hardly the ideal environment for discovering the area's charm. Add to that the fact that I'm sometimes wary of aromatic whites, having run into quite a few I'd call syrupy or unbalanced. That's why, when I say that Félix Meyer's wines blow all my coldest, foggiest memories of Alsace away, my comment should not be considered an overstatement or taken lightly. The pristine, balanced nature of these wines puts them in the realm of outstanding, although you might never know it because Félix is as humble as he is respected, quietly producing high-caliber wines at reasonable prices. So if you have ever had any preconceived notions about Alsatian wines, like I did, here are three that will dispel them immediately. Don't take my word for it!

2016 PINOT BLANC "VIEILLES VIGNES"

With a nose so perfumed you might be satisfied just to breathe it in, this Pinot Blanc is complex, rich, and structured. Alsace's "everyday white" comes alive in new ways under Félix's painstaking care, and you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone opposed to its clean, crowd-pleasing style.

\$21.00 PER BOTTLE

\$226.80 PER CASE

2016 PINOT GRIS "RÉSERVE"

Aromatically subtler than the Pinot Blanc, with an exuberant, exotic palate reminiscent of marzipan, this distinctive Pinot Gris has plenty of body.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE

\$302.40 PER CASE

2014 RIESLING GRAND CRU "WINECK-SCHLOSSBERG"

Inviting honey and apricots on the nose lead to a pure, dry palate with perfect citrusy acidity for balance. You'll detect a steely quality on the finish, and the slightest hint of the petrol often associated with Riesling. Delicious!

\$46.00 PER BOTTLE

\$496.80 PER CASE

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

by Dixon Brooke

2016 CORBIÈRES ROUGE DOMAINE DE FONTSAINTE

Around here we refer to it as the “black label” Corbières. It remains one of our all-time greatest values. Whole-cluster, old-vine Carignan vinified in cement tank brings awesome freshness and charming *rondeur* to this classic southern Mediterranean red. Boutenac, where Font Sainte is located, is the *grand cru terroir* of the appellation. Its special character has been well documented since Roman times. The Laboucarié family makes this wine so that everyone can appreciate it.

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

2014 SAINT-CHINIAN ROUGE “CAUSSE DU BOUSQUET” • MAS CHAMPART

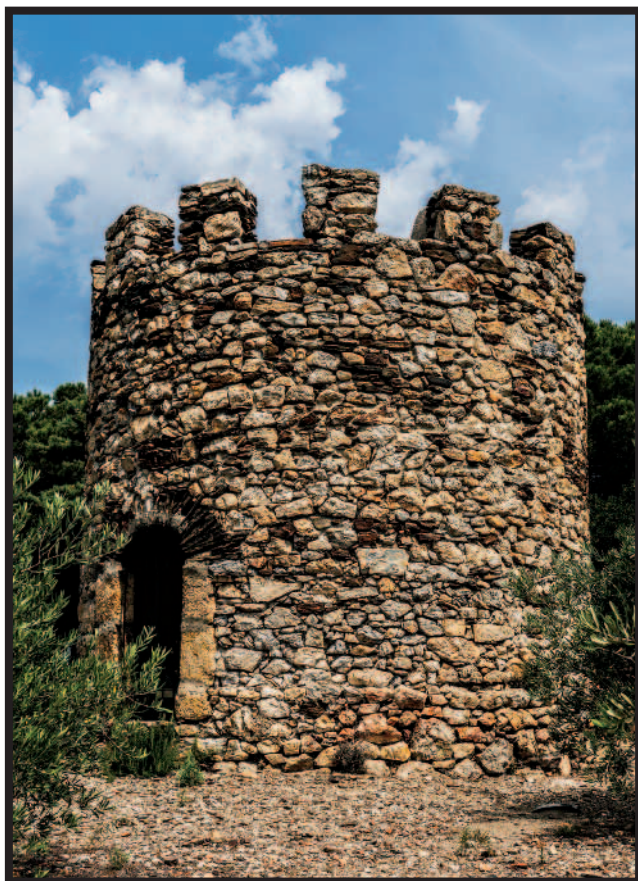
I am not sure what *Causse du Bousquet* means; it is probably part of the local dialect. I imagine it translates to “hill of bouquet,” or something to that effect, as the Champarts cultivate these vines on an arid, isolated limestone plateau covered in *garrigue*, producing a wine that is always powerfully aromatic, with an instantly recognizable floral fragrance. I am sure knowledge of this hill’s powers has been passed down by oral tradition for many, many centuries, possibly even millennia. This is as good as Syrah blends get in the south of France.

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

2014 FAUGÈRES “JADIS” DOMAINE LÉON BARRAL

Didier Barral is focused above all else on typicity. He wants his wine to taste like it came from his vineyards in the schist-ridden hills of Lentheric, and he will try anything to accomplish this goal, as long as it doesn’t involve adding man-made chemicals, pesticides, or fertilizers to his soil. The Marcel Lapiere of the south, Didier produces wine that contains nothing but the fruit harvested ripe from his old vines planted in his stony yet fertile soil. Earthy, meaty, savory, juicy, and powerful, it is a glassful of joyful, soulful goodness. Barral’s is a signature that cannot be mistaken.

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



La Tour Vieille in Collioure

© Gail Skoff

2015 COLLIOURE “PUIG AMBEILLE” DOMAINE LA TOUR VIEILLE

Speaking of schist, Collioure is one of the most difficult areas in the world to cultivate the vine. Its impossibly steep, inhospitable slopes, which plunge into the Mediterranean near Spain’s border, cannot be mechanized. Gnarled vines twist from the harsh, windswept landscape of pure bedrock. Grenache and Mourvèdre thrive with patient care, cleansed by the salty sea air. Vincent Canté is an artist from another era, eking out masterpieces from these foreboding, beautiful hills. This cuvée is a classic southern French red, with the attitude and spiciness you’d expect from a full-blooded Catalan.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE

\$313.20 PER CASE



EXCEPTIONAL 2016 BEAUJOLAIS

by *Anthony Lynch*

VINTAGE 2015 produced some exceptional wines in Beaujolais—exceptional in color, ripeness, power, and extract. The just-arrived 2016s, by contrast, more closely resemble what we are used to from the land of Gamay: bright, juicy wines with lively acidity and a perfume so irresistible it has been known to cause man to down liters of the stuff at a time, pausing only to deliver cuts of cured pork products and delectable cheese morsels to the kisser. That, if I may say so, is exceptional in its own right! Heed my warning: beware the dangers of fine Beaujolais.

2016 BEAUJOLAIS VILLAGES “CUVÉE MARYLOU” GUY BRETON

Guy “Max” Breton strives to make the kind of wines he likes to drink. His proclivity is for highly aromatic reds low in alcohol that are bottled unfiltered, with minimal sulfur. His high-altitude granitic parcels above Morgon are perfectly suited to achieve this style. Max prefers to enjoy his wines in copious quantity, in good company, and slightly chilled. We suggest you do the same—responsibly, of course.



\$24.00 PER BOTTLE

\$259.20 PER CASE

2016 MOULIN-À-VENT “VIEILLES VIGNES” DOMAINE DIOCHON

Diminished yields due to a devastating hailstorm in the spring of 2016 significantly concentrated the surviving fruit. Picture all the might of a full crop channeled into less than half the grapes—that’s a seriously boiled-down version of all the structure and minerality this wine typically delivers. It is intense, driven, and full of muscle, with an enticing aura of wild berries that provides the deliciousness we crave notwithstanding its firm spine. Drink it now and through the ’20s.

\$24.00 PER BOTTLE

\$259.20 PER CASE

2016 JULIÉNAS “BEAUVERNAY” DOMAINE CHIGNARD

Cédric Chignard’s seventy-year-old vines in the Beauvernay vineyard of Julié纳斯 enjoy excellent exposure at high elevation, constantly whipped by cool winds. The soil here is not the granite that dominates the *crus* of Beaujolais, but a hard blue stone of volcanic origin also found on the Côte de Brouilly. Cédric fermented the wine naturally, aged it in *foudres*, and bottled without filtration, so this peculiar and unique *terroir* shines through in full earnest: lean, breezy, and crunchy—quite drinkably so, I might add.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE

\$270.00 PER CASE



© Anthony Lynch

Cédric Chignard in his Beauvernay vineyard

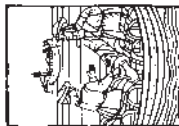
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VALUE OF THE MONTH

by Clark Z. Terry

2016 MONFERRATO ROSSO TENUTA LA PERGOLA

Now that it is officially autumn, one thing is on many people's minds: the great vacation you took a few months ago. Some of you went to Italy. For those of you who didn't (like me), just imagine you did. After leaving Turin, heading toward Cinque Terre, you stopped at a hillside village for lunch. The host-chef-owner greeted you in Italian and intuited that you were thirsty. Small glasses and a carafe of red wine came to the table without your asking. Normally you wouldn't have wine with lunch, but, heck, it was on the table. You took a sip, and it was perfect—light fruit, like crushed black cherries and pomegranates, a whiff of dried roses. And it was refreshing, way better than the glass of ice water that you weren't going to get anyway.

Pergola's Monferrato *rosso* was that wine, or at least something very close to it. Close your eyes, take a sip, and you'll be there.

\$14.00 PER BOTTLE

\$151.20 PER CASE