

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

OCTOBER 2019



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POUR LULU ■ AUTUMN TASTING
A DYNAMIC TRAVELING TRIO ■ CRISP VALUE WHITES



AUTUMN TASTING BY THE LAKE

WITH VIGNERONS

ANGÉLINE TEMPLIER

of J. LASSALLE

DANIEL BRUNIER *of*

DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

PIERRE DE BENOIST *of*

DOMAINE DE VILLAINÉ

THIS YEAR'S EVENT will be a special one, with vigneron from three legendary domaines. Join us for an evening by the lake at the historic and beautiful Bellevue Club. We'll taste portfolio classics from France and Italy, new arrivals, and a few very special selections. We'll also enjoy live music and charcuterie, cheeses, and seasonal salads prepared by Kirstin Jackson.

Friday, November 1, 2019 • 6:30–8:30 P.M.

BELLEVUE CLUB

525 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, California 94610

\$55 | \$40 for Wine Club Members

Limited space available.

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

A DYNAMIC TRAVELING TRIO

by Jane Berg

ONCE A YEAR, three friends and vigneronns—Angéline Templier of J. Lassalle, Pierre de Benoist of Domaine de Villaine, and Daniel Brunier of Domaine du Vieux Télégraphe—travel the country visiting distributors, restaurants, and retailers. Catch them in Oakland on November 1.

NV BRUT “CACHET OR” • J. LASSALLE

A bottle of grower Champagne is an obvious choice to celebrate life’s finer occasions, but for a subversive twist, I like to pair Lassalle’s scintillating Cachet Or with low-key, homestyle fare, like toasty sourdough and gruyère grilled cheese, or creamy mac and cheese topped with a crackle of black pepper. Its palate-cleansing acidity and racy *bulles* slice through the buttery richness of classic comfort foods while bringing them to life. At this price, why not ornament the ordinary?

\$39.00 PER BOTTLE \$421.20 PER CASE

2017 BOUZERON • DOMAINE DE VILLAINÉ

For Domaine de Villaine, the 2017 vintage marks twenty years of life as a village-level Bouzeron AOC instead of a regional Bourgogne Aligoté, due, in large part, to the conviction of Pierre de Benoist and his *oncle*, Aubert de Villaine. As climate change sets in on Burgundy, Pierre is doing his part to ensure a bright future for his beloved Bouzeron. In addition to working organically and biodynamically, he created an Aligoté nursery to preserve the most well-adapted, genetically diverse, ancient clones. A deep and spiritual thinker, Pierre tends to evoke the celestial when describing his wines, and indeed there is something otherworldly about the vibrant and crystalline 2017 vintage.

\$40.00 PER BOTTLE \$432.00 PER CASE

2016 CHÂTEAUNEUF-DU-PAPE “TÉLÉGRAMME” DOMAINE DU VIEUX TÉLÉGRAPHE

Just one glass of the Brunier family’s Télégramme will wash away any notions you may have of the seemingly members-only Châteauneuf-du-Pape appellation. Youthful Grenache from iconic *lieux-dits* like La Crau and Pignan take center stage in this cuvée. If you don’t own a cellar, or a decanter, or subscribe to vintage reviews, know you are welcome in the Télégramme club, where all you need for access is a wine key, a glass, and a tasty dish to share with others.

\$48.00 PER BOTTLE \$518.40 PER CASE

INDIGENOUS WHITE GRAPES OF FRIULI

by Anthony Lynch

2018 COLLI ORIENTALI RIBOLLA GIALLA LA VIARTE

La Viarte's organically farmed terraced hillside vineyards give rise to Friulan wines of pristine freshness and clear-cut varietal typicity. For anybody curious to experience Ribolla Gialla, this is what the grape is all about: delicate floral aromas enlivened by lemony accents and a hint of almond, low alcohol with a nimble presence on the palate, and a dry finish crisp enough to alleviate the deepest of thirsts. The perfect white to kick off virtually any meal, it tastes even more perfect next to a plate of thinly sliced prosciutto.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE \$270.00 PER CASE

2018 VENEZIA GIULIA MALVASIA "CHIOMA INTEGRALE" • VIGNAI DA DULINE

There are too many Malvasias in this world to count. From central Italy's Malvasia di Candia, to Sicily's Malvasia delle Lipari, to Sardinia's Malvasia di Bosa, to Portugal's Malvasia de Colares, the name recurs consistently across the Mediterranean and beyond. Thought to be of Greek origin, it comprehends a large family of white grapes to which the aforementioned examples may or may not belong. To complicate matters, Corsica's Malvasia is simply a local name for Vermentino, and in Savoie they have taken to calling Pinot Gris by the name "Malvoisie." There is even a red grape, Malvasia Nera, found in certain pockets of Italy. Enough already!

Malvasia Istriana, native to Croatia and Friuli, is perhaps the most compelling rendition I have tasted to date. It yields this zesty, herbal white with a fascinating nose of white pepper, lavender, and pine resin. A textural wine—at once silky and faintly bitter—it presents a lithe structure and salty, mouthwatering finale. If there is one Malvasia to remember, let it be this one.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE \$486.00 PER CASE



2016 VENEZIA GIULIA VITOVSKA • KANTE

After a lengthy barrel tasting in the depths of Edi Kante's chilly, cavernous limestone cellar, we typically climb a seemingly endless spiral staircase back to the ground floor and settle at the table, tantalized by the scent of ultra-fresh seafood wafting out from behind the closed kitchen door. Signora Kante soon emerges, platter in hand, and so begins our tasting of the bottled wines, accompanied by Friuli's finest Adriatic specialties in their most elemental form. While any Kante white is at home alongside steamed langoustines, salt-baked *branzino*, or gently crisped *frittura di pesce*, Edi's Vitovska is perhaps the best match for his wife's simple, purist approach to preparing fish. Balancing brightness with creaminess, this native white of the Carso region is clean and saline with subtle aromatics, providing the perfect canvas for the exquisite flavors of delicate and refined seafood preparations.

\$35.00 PER BOTTLE

\$378.00 PER CASE



© Anthony Lynch



POUR LULU

by Kermit Lynch,
from Provence

DECEMBER 11, 2017, Lulu turned 100. Our Lulu is Lulu Peyraud, who, with her husband, Lucien, founded Domaine Tempier, and I'm glad they did, in hundreds of ways.

More recently, I drove over to Domaine Tempier to have an apéritif with Lulu. One of her daughters, Laurence, invited me into the salon, and there was my old pal, now 101, shrinking into her chair. My heart was turning somersaults—she looked up at me with a black eye, five stitches above the socket, and one arm in a sling. I clumsily mumbled something and Lulu laughed.

“Sit down,” she said, gesturing to the chair across from her. The small wood table had a platter of melon and saucisson, and a bottle of guess what. Laurence poured the red and Lulu raised her glass to me. She asked, “Did I ever tell you the one about the old widow who advertises for a new husband?”

Sorry, folks, but her joke is not for publication in a wine brochure. Even mine! But I am just about finished writing a wine and food novel (or divertimento, as I like to call it), and I promise I'll find a way to include Lulu's joke.

Yes, Lulu had taken a tumble there at home. When she finished laughing with me at her joke, she said that laughter is an important aid as she copes with old age. It keeps her positive. What a gal! What an inspiration!

By the way, the swing on the label shows Lulu's favorite exercise machine.

Her family and friends saluted her one-hundredth birthday in a lot of ways—dinners, parties, and receptions. Now, here comes a salute we can all enjoy—Domaine Tempier's 2017 *classique* dedicated to her on the label. Uncork one and raise your glass to a wonderful woman who changed my life and a lot of people's lives for the better.



2017 BANDOL ROUGE “POUR LULU” DOMAINE TEMPIER

\$60.00 PER BOTTLE

\$648.00 PER CASE



"I drink Champagne because it makes me laugh."

© Gail Skoff

THREE VINTAGES OF BAROLO

by Tom Wolf

2015 BAROLO “VIGNA GIANETTO”

GUIDO PORRO

Tasting Guido Porro’s fresh and vibrant 2015 Gianetto from Serralunga, you wouldn’t necessarily guess that this vintage in Piemonte is described primarily as “hot and dry.” Indeed, there were very warm stretches throughout the summer, including the hottest-ever July, but a wet winter and spring—which provided water reserves in the soil to last through the hot summer—combined with a relatively cool September and October to create classy, approachable wines like this one, which is already open for business.

\$51.00 PER BOTTLE **\$550.80** PER CASE

2014 BAROLO “RAVERA DI MONFORTE”

BENEVELLI PIERO

Broadly speaking, a rule of thumb in Piedmont is that a vintage that is good for wine producers isn’t great for truffle hunters, and vice versa. Vintage 2014—wet and temperate—was an excellent one for truffles in these hills, but happily, it also turned out to be an impressive year for Massimo Benevelli. Because it was a cool summer and Massimo’s parcels in Ravera face southeast instead of due south, there is a generous amount of acidity here that will play well on your table and in your cellar. Floral, with notes of cherries, leather, and orange zest, this Barolo is beautiful now and will be glorious in five to ten years.

\$56.00 PER BOTTLE **\$604.80** PER CASE

2013 BAROLO BUSSIA “CASCINA DARDI”

A. & G. FANTINO

The Fantino brothers are like baseball batters on a streak. At the moment, they seem to do no wrong and, when a pitch is thrown right down the middle of the plate, they are confidently going to crush it out of the park. The 2013 vintage was that pitch. Conditions were perfect: summer was warm, but not too hot, and the Fantinos could harvest late, allowing the Nebbiolo grapes to fully ripen. The result is a benchmark Barolo that right now shows sublime finesse and restraint, and will blossom into a truly stunning wine in your cellar.

\$57.00 PER BOTTLE **\$615.60** PER CASE

CRISP VALUE WHITES

by Anthony Lynch

2018 EDELZWICKER • MEYER-FONNÉ

If you are indecisive, on a budget, or simply don't have time to taste your way through the plethora of Alsatian whites on offer, then Edelzwicker may be the wine for you. This "noble blend" combines the region's principal grape varieties in one lip-smacking, liter-sized bottle of fun, perfectly capturing the magic of Alsace at bargain cost. Pinot Blanc, Muscat, Chasselas, Riesling, and Pinot Gris star in this white that smells like a bouquet of flowers, tastes like a basket of ripe fruit, and finishes dry as . . . something very dry.

\$19.00 PER LITER-BOTTLE **\$205.20** PER CASE

2018 SAVOIE BLANC "LES ABYMES"

A. & M. QUENARD

In the year 1248, an entire mountainside collapsed on the western end of the French Alps, burying multiple villages and all their inhabitants in the rubble. That pile of limestone now makes up the Savoie *cru* Les Abymes, a vineyard responsible for an outrageously thirst-quenching expression of the Jacquère grape. Expect a prickle of carbon dioxide, naturally left over from the fermentation process, to tickle the tongue, while an intensely cool, stony sensation on the palate mimics Alpine meltwater rushing down a steep waterfall. Now that's what I call a landslide victory!



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

2018 BORDEAUX BLANC • CHÂTEAU DUCASSE

Hervé Dubourdiou crafts one of the tastiest and most affordable Sauternes out there, which I cannot recommend more to those who enjoy the occasional sweet treat. However, given today's overwhelming tendency to favor *dry* table whites, Hervé chooses to ferment the majority of the Sémillon, Sauvignon, and Muscadelle from his Sauternes-producing vineyards to full dryness for his Bordeaux *blanc*. It exhibits an exotic, citrusy perfume hinting at something rather luscious, then zips across the palate in a refreshingly restrained, refined manner. Hervé serves it with a platter of oysters on ice, but this white is really a *passe-partout*, delightful with a range of foods or whenever the mood strikes.

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

THE MOUNTAIN REDS OF THE AOSTA VALLEY

by Dixon Brooke

THE MONTE BIANCO TUNNEL leads you into the western edge of the Valle d'Aosta by car, exiting suddenly and beautifully into the Alpine ski town of Courmayeur. The Aosta Valley, named after its principal town, cuts west to east before turning south and leading you into the Po Valley and the wines of Piedmont. The mesmerizingly rugged valley is characterized by sheer cliffs on either side—tall, majestic granite peaks more fitting for mountain goats than vines. Incredibly, a precious few hectares of terraced vines cling to the hillsides, mostly to supply the locals with their daily sustenance. The overwhelming majority of the grape farmers here take their grapes to a local cooperative, so estate-bottled wine in this neck of the woods is one of the rarest of Italian wines. Maurizio Fiorano is one of the brightest stars in the region.

2018 VALLE D'AOSTA TORRETTE CHÂTEAU FEUILLET

“Torrette” is the regional designation referring to wines made from certain villages in the Valle d'Aosta principally from the Petit Rouge grape (70% minimum). Maurizio blends in 10% of the local Mayolet grape for extra freshness and finesse. The resulting wine has a deep and dark yet blazing bright color, as if it had been made from pressed wild berries. True to the region, it has a slightly sweet and creamy edge and exuberant, piquant fruit, both peppery and floral throughout. It is an incredibly consistent wine from Maurizio: I can't remember a vintage that wasn't love at first sight, thanks to his high-altitude granite terraces facing southeast and catching the rising sun. As you might expect, the local Fontina cheese makes a sublime pairing!

\$27.00 PER BOTTLE \$291.60 PER CASE

2018 VALLE D'AOSTA CORNALIN CHÂTEAU FEUILLET

If the Torrette is the juicy, exuberant, easy-to-like introduction to the intimidating Aosta Valley, Cornalin is the slightly more complex, wily actor that doesn't reveal its secrets quite as easily or quickly. Torrette welcomes you and reels you in immediately, and Cornalin keeps you intrigued. Maurizio's 2018 is sweetly spiced and ample-bodied, with wild plums, soft tannins, and a bitter almond finish.

\$34.00 PER BOTTLE \$367.20 PER CASE

TROIS PINOTS

by Dustin Soiseth

2017 SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE “VIEILLES VIGNES” PIERRE GUILLEMOT

The reds from Guillemot have the most distinctive nose of all the red Burgundies in our portfolio. They have a bewitching *mélange* of tart raspberry, clove, nutmeg, and blood orange. The Savigny-lès-Beaune “Vieilles Vignes”—a blend of three parcels whose average vine age is half a century—is always a clear, pale cranberry in the glass, but don’t let that fool you into thinking the wine is thin. The delicate hue belies the vivid flavors contained within.

\$42.00 PER BOTTLE **\$453.60** PER CASE

2017 GEVREY-CHAMBERTIN RÉGIS BOUVIER

Artifacts and ancient burial sites found around the village of Gevrey-Chambertin suggest that the Romans were the first to plant vines on these now-famous slopes. Perhaps their martial spirits linger, imbuing Gevrey’s wines with the depth and backbone for which they are renowned. Régis blends several plots to produce his Gevrey-Chambertin, and there’s a beautiful woodsiness on the nose, almost autumnal. It’s not an oak barrel aroma, but a forest aroma. The fruit quality is darker and more earthbound, too, like eating blackberries in the shade.

\$67.00 PER BOTTLE **\$723.60** PER CASE

2017 GIVRY ROUGE 1ER CRU “CLOS DU CRAS LONG” • FRANÇOIS LUMPP

As I enjoyed a bottle of François Lumpp’s Clos du Cras Long over a couple of days, I marveled at how pleasing it is to drink. The nose is a heady mix of ripe cherry, raspberry fruit, and spicy oak. It feels decadent, even a bit naughty, like cashmere undies or putting truffles on everything. Each sip is full of flavor, delivering on the promise of the alluring nose and offering pure, effortless deliciousness. The wines from the Côte Chalonnaise appellation of Givry have long held “great value” status. François is entering “great at any price” status.

\$64.00 PER BOTTLE **\$691.20** PER CASE



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*In the Langhe,
you can't throw a hazelnut shell
without landing on something delicious.*

—MATT GOULDING,
PASTA, PANE, VINO (2018)



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