KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

JUNE 2014



PARIS RESTAURANTS

ROSÉ TIME ■ A PROVENÇAL GEM COMTESSE DE CHERISEY PRE-ARRIVAL

PARIS RESTAURANTS 2014

by Kermit Lynch

PATISITE LANNING A VACATION in Paris? Consider renting an apartment this time. For starters, you'll save a hell of a lot of euros every morning avoiding hotel *petits déjeuners*, which are overpriced. Gouging, that's what I call it. Plus, you can cook at home, take a break from constant restauranting, get to know a neighborhood, live in Paris like a Parisian. Check out a site like vrbo.com for rentals.

I came back with some restaurants to recommend and one to avoid. All have websites with contact info.

Often, I've found myself complaining about the difficulty of finding classic French cuisine prepared properly. *Bouillabaisse* today can mean nothing but a fish soup, *boeuf bourguignon* nothing but chunks of beef in a winey sauce, and your *coq au vin* isn't even made with a *coq*. They should call it *poulet au vin*. Believe me, folks, there was a good reason it was made with roosters. It seems like nouvelle cuisine came along and the French turned their backs on their tried-and-true masterpieces.

Go to L'Assiette in the 14th. I had a real, old-fashioned *cassoulet*, so delicious I ate too much. And they have the best *tête de veau* I've tasted in decades. I had stopped ordering it (same with *andouillettes*), but after a couple of meals at L'Assiette, I had enough confidence to give it a try. Speaking of veal, their *ris de veau* was heavenly in terms of texture and flavor. It's a funky little place; wear what you like.

Yam'Tcha in the 1st arrondissement has an adventurous chef, Adeline Grattard, and an attentive staff. Be ready for surprises, because she is inspired and does not lack imagination. Sometimes I was oohing and aahing at what was placed before me, sometimes I thought it didn't quite click, but there was always artistry at work. Don't expect *steak frites* or an à *la carte* menu. Everyone eats the same progression of several dishes, which changes daily. If you like, they will select wines or teas to accompany each plate. It is a tiny, cozy place, and somewhat expensive.

Next, how about having lunch in a butcher shop? That would be Hugo Desnoyer in the 16th, where you learn that, yes indeed, the quality of the products is everything—but let's not forget the necessity, the luxury, of having the touch of a chef who knows exactly how to get the most out of those products. This is where a grilled veal chop deserves raves, not to mention the cheeses and desserts. One day I began with the finest *pata negra* I've ever tasted. Don't order anything complex; the simpler the better at Desnoyer. Good wine is available, too, if that's your thing, but ignore the short wine list. Simply order from the bottles behind

the cash drawer. As I write, I'm still in Paris and will lunch again at Desnoyer's Wednesday, my final day here. I hope they'll still have the *fraises de bois* with whipped cream.

The last restaurant I'd recommend is named Frenchie. When the chef did a stint in London, his boss dubbed him Frenchie, because, well, he's French. Greg Marchand is his name, and he demonstrates great respect for the quality of his ingredients along with masterful creativity as he decides exactly how to prepare, season, and present them. He is not out to shock you with unlikely combinations, yet every bite is slightly different. His touch is subtle, at once rustic and refined. Flavors soar. He shows an unusual knack for preparing vegetables and for employing wine buyers who are super-talented, adventurous, and just happen to be young, Canadian, and easy on the eye.



If you are going to reserve, do it well in advance. None of the above have many tables, so landing one can be a chore. By the way, each of the four recommendations have Domaine Les Mille Vignes on their wine lists, another reason to frequent them. Or you can find Mille Vignes now at KLWM instead.



Finally, after admiring its visuals for decades whenever I walked through the arcades of the Palais Royal, I dined at Le Grand Véfour. The interior is as divine as I'd imagined based on my glimpses through the windows. Napoleon and Josephine dined there. Victor Hugo, Sartre, Chirac, etc. Why not me?

Opening the wine list, I started looking for overlooked, underpriced bottles because nothing at the grand starred restaurants is cheap. Surprise! I spotted a 1989 Château Malartic-Lagravière, a château I'd visited in the early eighties with Richard Olney. He and I lunched there and drank a glorious assortment of ancient vintages back to the 1920s.

The sommelier took my order, left for a few minutes, and then came back empty-handed. "Sir, the 1989 has not aged well. I can't recommend it."

Back to the wine list. "Let's go with the 1981 Château Haut-Bailly." Given the wine's age, the price was really attractive.

He left for a few minutes and again returned empty-handed. "The 1981, it's a weak vintage and hasn't held up well."

Hmmm. I have some 1981 Bordeaux in my own cellar that are tasting just fine. "Very well," I said, "I noticed a 1983, same château, on your list. That was a big vintage, so let's go with that one."

He left and . . . guess what! "Sir, there is only one bottle of the 1983 remaining, and its fill is down about a third of the bottle."

Mon dieu! Had I entered the twilight zone of wine? Sommelier hell? It was odd, to say the least. I quickly scanned their red Burgundies and ordered a young Ruchottes-Chambertin from a good domaine.

The sommelier returned with an actual bottle of wine! Hooray, *en route*. I had developed quite a thirst. He poured me a taste, a very warm taste. When I informed him that his Ruchottes was warm, he felt the bottle, brought an ice bucket to my table, and then put my red into the ice.

It didn't work. The wine was cooked, fruitless, and the ice bath did not revive it. The service and cuisine did nothing to redeem the situation. In fact, the cuisine seemed ridiculously maladroit. I imagined Monsieur Hulot running the kitchen.

Still, how to explain the wine service? Did they not want to sell their older bottles to an ugly American? No, a huge proportion of their clientele are Yanks like me. Why didn't they serve me a taste and let me decide if it was too old or tired or whatever? And why was the Burgundy warm? And how to explain two stars in the *Guide Michelin*? The site is gorgeous, but the ticket to enter is dear.



Place de la Concorde, Paris, France

© Gail Skoff

——PRE-ARRIVAL OFFER—

2012 COMTESSE BERNARD DE CHERISEY

by Dixon Brooke

LAURENT MARTELET, much like our hero Pierre Boillot in Gevrey-Chambertin, doesn't make a lot of noise and is quite content to quietly labor in his vines and cellar producing great wine for its sake alone. His wines sure do speak boisterously, especially with a few years of bottle age. We will throw every ounce of our weight fully behind these great white Burgundies. If you heed our advice, you will be writing us letters of thanks ten years from now when you begin uncorking these timeless classics.

Terroir note: Given the small harvest, Laurent blended two of his Puligny terroirs, La Garenne and Les



Hameau de Blagny

© Gail Skoff

Chalumeaux, into the "Terroir de Blagny" in 2012. These wines are a true, uncompromising view into the soulful depths of what has given Burgundy its reputation for white wines over such a long and storied history. There is nothing superficial here, no artifice—just severely pruned, old-vine Chardonnay planted in the limestone hills around Blagny near the top of the golden slope, nourished and aged to glorious completion in oak. Come one, come all, the Comtesse awaits.

PER BOTTLE
2012 Puligny-Montrachet <i>ier Cru</i> "Terroir de Blagny" \$76.00
2012 Puligny-Montrachet <i>ier Cru</i> "Hameau de Blagny" 76.00
2012 Puligny-Montrachet <i>ier Cru</i>
"Hameau de Blagny" <i>magnum</i> 162.00
2012 MEURSAULT-BLAGNY IER CRU "LA GENELOTTE" 76.00
2012 MEURSAULT-BLAGNY IER CRU "LA GENELOTTE" MAGNUM 162.00
2012 Blagny Rouge IER Cru "La Genelotte" 54.00
2012 BLAGNY ROUGE IER CRU "LA GENELOTTE" MAGNUM 113.00

Pre-arrival terms: Half-payment due with order; balance due upon arrival.

ROSÉ TIME

by Anthony Lynch

2013 ROSÉ DE SCIACCARELLU DOMAINE DE MARQUILIANI

"Rosé" may be an exaggeration—the color is so pale that it resembles water more than it does wine. It certainly goes down just like water, light as a feather and soft as a cloud. Anne Amalric produces only rosé and olive oil in her picturesque corner of Corsica, and we strongly encourage you to see why this beautiful Sciaccarellu is a KLWM staff favorite year in and year out. Frankly, though, we wouldn't mind if you abstained—given the tiny quantities, it would leave more of this fragrantly perfumed, delicately flavored rosé for us to enjoy. It is difficult to obtain, even in Corsica.

\$28.00 PER BOTTLE

\$302.40 PER CASE

2013 TAVEL ROSÉ CHÂTEAU DE TRINQUEVEDEL

Don't be fooled by the color: this is a manly rosé. Despite its seductive deep pink hue, it has a macho personality, boasting great power and a solid frame. While it does not lack freshness—it will easily quench your thirst or complement a salty bowl of olives—it can also stand up to more substantial foods, like a burger or grilled summer veggies. In fact, I can think of a few red wines that would be belittled by this mighty Tavel.

\$18.95 PER BOTTLE

\$204.66 PER CASE

2013 GROLLEAU ROSÉ • ÉRIC CHEVALIER

Zing! Boing! Snap! Cha-ching! This Loire Valley rosé is so lively and crisp that you may find yourself making strange noises and funny faces to describe it. It tastes like fresh watermelon juice with an added dose of friskiness, while its candy-like fruitiness and tangy acidity make for the perfect sweet-and-sour combo. On top of that, it's made from the enigmatic Grolleau grape, so look out, wine nerds. This dry rosé is—dare I say it?—absolutely perkalicious. (My dad advised me to find a better word.)

\$14.95 PER BOTTLE

\$161.46 PER CASE



ALSATIAN RIESLING

by Dixon Brooke

2011 RIESLING • KUENTZ-BAS

We take a lot of pride in being able to import wines this good (all temperature-controlled from door to door) at such competitive prices. The "Tradition" series from Kuentz-Bas is one of the most marvelous values in our portfolio. The wines are consistently outstanding, with classic varietal character. Their Riesling is always bracingly crisp and structured, part of the sought-after KB house style.



\$16.95 PER BOTTLE

\$183.06 PER CASE

2012 RIESLING "VIGNOBLE DE KATZENTHAL" MEYER-FONNÉ



From the granite slopes surrounding the Meyer family's property in Katzenthal, the Riesling "Katz," as we call it, is a beautifully linear and chiseled style of Riesling, fresh and pure. It kicks up the notions of stony flintiness a notch or two from their Réserve

bottling that is a blend of diverse *terroirs*. It also ages well, something I can attest to personally, as I am still enjoying a case of the 2005 that I purchased while living in France.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE

\$313.20 PER CASE

2011 RIESLING "HEISSENBERG" OSTERTAG

The notion of *terroir* takes on even more significance with this bottling from André Ostertag that comes from a very specific site. And what a site it is: a steep southern slope composed of pink sandstone, gneiss, and granite, Heissenberg gives a gloriously complex and full-bodied Riesling with an ample nose and lots of flesh on the palate. This is a Riesling not for your apéritif, but rather for your table.



\$43.00 PER BOTTLE

\$464.40 PER CASE

DOMAINE LES MILLE VIGNES

by Kermit Lynch

HEN I WALKED INTO Valérie Guérin's narrow, overcrowded cellar, I almost turned and ran back outside. Poor Valérie. What lousy working conditions—but when I lowered my nose into her dry white cuvée Les Nymphettes, I was reminded that you can't judge a book by its cover, or that looks aren't everything, that sort of thing, you know?

Her quantities are so miniscule, the cuvée Les Nymphettes sold out here within days of its arrival.

Her cellar is in La Palme, a village on the Med south of Narbonne on the way to Catalonia, and my visit was during her 2013 harvest—yes, the birth of an entire vintage, and Valérie was super stressed. Her eyes darted here and there defensively, wondering what the next crisis might be: leaky hose, power out, rain or hail . . . Later in the year I met her in Paris for dinner and found her eager-eyed, full of humor, ready to rock, really great company!

Both Valéries are in her wines. The stress means fierce attention to detail and impeccably vinified wines. Pour a glass and Valérie's *joie de vivre* leaps out to greet you—with class!

2010 FITOU ROUGE "CADETTE"

Imagine a blend of Vieux Télégraphe's Grenache, Tempier's Mourvèdre, and Aupilhac's old-vine Carignan. Yum, right? Well, come and get it.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE

\$486.00 PER CASE

2006 VIN DOUX NATUREL RIVESALTES "FUT DE COGNAC"

Kick your shoes off, Have no fear, Pass that bottle over here.

You are in for one of the most luxurious, delicious moments of your winedrinking career. Settle in with a friend, someone with whom you can concentrate on this very special experience.

By the way, once it's uncorked, you can return to enjoy the wine during several days.

There is not another wine anywhere like this one.

\$75.00 PER 500-ML BOTTLE

\$405.00 PER 6-BOTTLE CASE

2011 FITOU ROUGE "ATSUKO"

Pure Grenache from seventy-five-year-old vines. Incredibly small yields. The aroma is deep and complex, the palate is grand, generous, and miraculously weightless given the intensity. How did Valérie do that?

\$75.00 PER BOTTLE **\$810.00** PER CASE



Valérie Guérin © Gail Skoff

DON'T MISS IT SAMPLER

by Clark Z. Terry

E DO OUR BEST to import just enough of each of our wines. However, small vineyards and old vines can produce miniscule amounts of wine, and sometimes they sell out quickly. A number of these limitedavailability, once-a-year selections just hit our shores, and we wanted to call your attention to them—raise their profiles, so to speak. Here's your chance; don't miss out.

	PER BOTTLI
2012 TERRASSES DU LARZAC ROUGE • LES VIGNES OUBLIÉES The forgotten vines from the Languedoc's most up-and-coming appellation. Old-vine Grenache, Syrah, and Carignan planted at 1,000 feet above sea level produce this deep, chewy red.	\$32.00
DOMAINE DE CHERISEY	62.00
2011 CHINON "LA CROIX BOISSÉE" • BERNARD BAUDRY The most structured and complex of Baudry's line of Chinons. Undervalued, it is a true prize that has decades of aging potential.	39.00
2012 LANGUEDOC BLANC "SAINTE AGNÈS" ERMITAGE DU PIC SAINT LOUP	23.00
2012 SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE BLANC "DESSUS LES GOLLARDES' DOMAINE PIERRE GUILLEMOT	
2010 RIESLING "CLOS MATHIS" • DOMAINE OSTERTAG Many great wines come from granite soils, and the Clos Mathis fits that bill. Chiseled, refined, and pure—notable complexity.	42.00

Normally \$238

SPECIAL SAMPLER PRICE **\$190**(a 20% discount)

HONEST CABERNET

by Anthony Lynch

2012 BOURGUEIL "LES GALICHETS" CATHERINE & PIERRE BRETON

Pierre Breton makes a wine for every occasion, from jovial sippers to reds of real consequence. The only consequence of drinking a glass of Les Galichets, an old-vine bottling characterized by delightful fruit and a soft, welcoming texture, is the inevitable urge to pour a second glass. This one would be right at home in a cozy neighborhood bistro, the perfect companion to comfort food and boisterous friends. Drink it ever-so-slightly chilled to fully activate its thirst-quenching properties.

\$29.00 PER BOTTLE

\$313.20 PER CASE

2011 CHINON "LE CLOS GUILLOT" BERNARD BAUDRY

Sipping this single-vineyard Chinon takes us on a relaxing walk through a forest after a light rainfall. The aromas are rather earthy, reminiscent of fallen leaves and twigs, herbs, humus, and moist bark. On the palate, it recalls little red fruits: freshly foraged wild raspberries and currants, tart yet filled with sweet juice. The finish features focused tannins that mimic the sensation of damp earth. This is a classic Chinon that will continue to improve for several years.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE

2011 CHINON "LES VARENNES DU GRAND CLOS" • CHARLES JOGUET

Most uses of the word *varenne* date back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, referring to a wooded area where wild rabbits and other game roam free. This Chinon certainly suits the definition, given its fleshy tannins and voluptuous dark fruit. I picture it on the table of a humble peasant from centuries past—a soulful symbol of country life for a Frenchman exhausted from toil in the fields. Its woodsy and gamey qualities make it a nice match for wild rabbit, or whatever else lurks within the *varenne*.

\$37.00 PER BOTTLE

\$399.60 PER CASE

—BURGUNDY—

NEW ARRIVALS FROM GUILLEMOT

by Dixon Brooke

he GUILLEMOTS OF SAVIGNY hold a close place in our hearts, thanks to their adherence to family tradition, which is summed up best by the old label in their archives: "Bon Vin Guillemot." Year after year, they turn out delicious Pinot Noirs infused with the heart, soul, and flavor of Burgundian wine country.



2012 SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE "LES GRANDS PICOTINS"

A Savigny we can enjoy already while waiting for their *premiers crus* to open up. Classic Burgundian Pinot nose, good grip, substantial deliciousness!

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE

\$388.80 PER CASE

2012 SAVIGNY-LÈS-BEAUNE PREMIER CRU "AUX SERPENTIÈRES"

The ageability of these Guillemot wines defies all logic and expectation. It is not at all uncommon to taste wines produced over six decades ago in their *centre ville* cellar, yet it is rare to find a tired bottle. As usual, Serpentières shows some spice and black pepper in the bouquet and is coiled tight like a serpent.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE

\$486.00 PER CASE

2012 CORTON GRAND CRU "LE ROGNET ET CORTON"

A regal aroma introduces the Guillemots' latest Corton, followed by a full-bodied yet silky palate and a very long finish. Bon vin de Guillemot, indeed.

\$98.00 PER BOTTLE

\$1,058.40 PER CASE

TERREBRUNE BANDOL A PROVENÇAL GEM

by Dixon Brooke

2009 BANDOL • DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE

We sell a lot of Bandol around here; it is a proud tradition by now. One of the many things we love about it is its impressive versatility at table. From young reds served cool alongside bouillabaisse, simpler fish stews, or *daubes* from octopus or squid (especially tasty with a black olive component) to older wines served with roast fowl, grilled meats, and wild game—there are so



many occasions when Bandol is appropriate. And its savory qualities lend so much to a meal. The virtues we appreciate most in a bottle of Terrebrune Bandol are its fine tannins and its drinkability. Neither attribute prevents it from aging gracefully.

\$36.00 PER BOTTLE

\$388.80 PER CASE

2006 BANDOL • DOMAINE DE TERREBRUNE

The only thing better than a young Terrebrune Bandol that is accessible immediately and can be served cool in the summertime is a Terrebrune with almost eight years of age on it. Vintage 2006 produced classic wines in Bandol, and by that I mean they are built to age. Much like in Bordeaux—or in Burgundy and Barolo, for that matter—the vintage is tightly wound, with solid tannic structure and a serious personality. It isn't austere, but it isn't a wide-open, flamboyant vintage, either. Vintages like this after a hyped year such as 2005 are often forgotten or overlooked, only to surface later as prizes in the cellars of those who didn't overlook them and frustrate those who did. This Terrebrune has certainly reached the point where you can enjoy it now, but it is many years from its apogee. If you can, I advise buying a few more bottles than you normally would in order to drink a few now and let a few more mature so that you can follow their evolution.

\$48.00 PER BOTTLE

\$518.40 PER CASE

—NEW ARRIVALS—

CORSICA

by Kermit Lynch

NCE IN A WHILE on a buying trip, I'll run into a wine that I can't forget. Then I have to wait until it arrives so I can consummate the affair at table. Last summer I went to Corsica with my old pal François Sack from Clos Sainte Magdeleine, and we fell in love with two Vermentinos from Patrimonio. Now in stock, they live up to my expectations.

2012 PATRIMONIO BLANC • YVES LECCIA

Asked what's so good about Patrimonio, here's the one to uncork. Here you find its best qualities shining brightly—the lovely saline fruit, the stony palate, the length of a great wine, the mouthwatering freshness throughout. It will dazzle alongside charcuterie or seafood. We usually have to pay a lot more to find the kind of magic this wine delivers.

\$38.00 PER BOTTLE

\$410.40 PER CASE

2012 PATRIMONIO *BLANC* "CARCO" ANTOINE ARENA

Leccia's Patrimonio can make me think of Raveneau's Montée de Tonnerre. If you can imagine that, then Arena's 2012 could be described as more like Coche-Dury's Meursault.

White Burgundies are oaky, however. Chardonnay likes oak. Vermentino doesn't, according to Leccia and Arena, so you have to factor that into a comparison.

Different grapes, different winemakers, oak vs. no oak—whatever likeness is due to similar chalky soils.

The Arena, like the white Burgs, finished its malo, so it seems thicker, weightier. With aeration it turns more limestony, and an apricot pit fruit flavor emerges.

\$45.00 PER BOTTLE

\$486.00 PER CASE

2010 CORSE CALVI ROUGE "E PROVE" DOMAINE MAESTRACCI

Deep, earthy, funky and fine all at once, at this moment in time, this Corsican red is also one of our greatest values.

\$22.00 PER BOTTLE

\$237.60 PER CASE

DOMAINE FAURY, SYRAH EXPERTS

by Anthony Lynch

2012 SAINT JOSEPH ROUGE

The release of Faury's Saint Joseph is always eagerly awaited here in Berkeley, as this wine consistently delivers loads of goodness right off the bat. This is honest, pure, utterly satisfying, old-fashioned Syrah—rife with aromas of pepper and spice, with a long finish reminiscent of dark berries. If you're looking for heaviness, oakiness, and jammy fruit, look somewhere else. Faury's wines are a product of *terroir* and generations of *savoirfaire*, and this one's appeal goes straight to the heart.

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



Lionel Faury

© Gail Skoff

2012 SYRAH "L'ART ZÉLÉ"

L'Art Zélé is made from vigorous young Syrah vines planted just outside of the Côte-Rôtie appellation. Like a classic Côte-Rôtie, it expresses a savage sort of meatiness, with a chewy structure to back it up. Notes of slain beast contribute to its wild gaminess, yet an abundance of heady blueberry fruit adds a touch of beauty. From the enticing aroma through its fleshy presence on the palate and flavor-packed, schist-tinged finish, L'Art Zélé fires on all cylinders. I would recommend it just as strongly if it cost double the price.

\$32.00 PER BOTTLE

\$345.60 PER CASE

KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT—TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All wines purchased from Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant are deemed sold in California and title passes to the buyer in California. We make no representation relative to the customer's right to import wine into his/her state. In placing an order, the customer represents to Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant that he/she is at least 21 years of age and the person to whom delivery will be made is at least 21 years old.

FIRST-CLASS MAIL J.S. POSTAGE PRESORTED

SAN FRANCISCO, CA PERMIT NO. 11882

KERMIT LYNCH

MERCHAN

3ERKELEY, CA 94702-1317 605 SAN PABLO AVE.

W W W. KERMITLYNCH. COM

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OPEN • Tuesday—Saturday 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. CLOSED • Sunday & Monday



2010 ROYAL SEYSSEL BRUT GRAND CRU RÉGIONAL

LAMBERT DE SEYSSEL

by Clark Z. Terry

HERE CAN YOU FIND the finest sparkling wine outside of Champagne? Customers, journalists, and connoisseurs alike have posed this question. We have many excellent options, but the Royal Seyssel is at the top of my list.

First, it is made in the same way as Champagne, with the méthode traditionnelle. This meticulous winemaking process and three years of bottle aging delivers a wine with depth and finesse. With the Royal Seyssel, you'll find a soft dryness on the palate and very fine bead. What's more, it is aromatic -notes of pear and hints of honeysuckle knowingly tempt you to refill your glass.

That's basically what people want when they ask for a Champagne substitute—all the character without the price. Here's your solution.

\$25.00 PER BOTTLE

\$270.00 PER CASE